

Backgrounder: Points to consider

Rally Opposing Federal Ban and Buyback of Prohibited Assault Weapons

Quebec City, February 28, 2026

1) BAN ON SPECIFIC TYPES OF FIREARMS

Contrary to the gun lobby's rhetoric, the federal ban (and buyback) does not target regular hunting rifles. Military-style weapons were banned based on the following technical criteria – NOT on appearances:

Description

The Regulations have been amended to prescribe as prohibited approximately 1 500 models of firearms. Of those, nine principal models of assault-style firearms are prohibited as they (1) **have semi-automatic action with sustained rapid-fire capability (tactical/military design with large magazine capacity)** ... Also included are two new categories of firearms that exceed safe civilian use. These are characterized by the following physical attributes: **a 20 mm bore or greater (e.g. grenade launcher)** and the **capacity to discharge a projectile with a muzzle energy greater than 10 000 joules (e.g. a .50 calibre BMG)**. These weapons are primarily **designed to produce mass human casualties or cause significant property damage at long ranges**, and the potential power of these weapons exceeds safe or legitimate civilian use.

Samples of models banned (2025):



2) THE GOAL OF BANNING ASSAULT WEAPONS

The goal of banning assault weapons is to prevent mass shootings, not to solve all gun crime. Domestic homicides and gang-related crime are also problems but require different measures to address. One mass shooting is one too many. No matter the tools given to police and the courts to remove guns from potentially dangerous individuals, there will always be a risk some bad apples fall through the cracks, as all humans and all systems are fallible. That is why, in addition to striving to improve these tools, we also need to remove guns designed for mass casualties from circulation.

3) LEGAL VS ILLEGAL GUNS

a) **When it comes to guns seized by police**, RCMP data shows most are domestically sourced, and most are long guns:

“There were over 30,000 firearms seized [...] in 2020. We received tracing requests for 2,094 and were able to successfully trace 1,472. **Seventy-three per cent of those were deemed to be imported legally or manufactured in Canada,** and 27%, as mentioned, were smuggled or possibly smuggled. Of that 1,472, **71% were long guns** and, **of these, 85% were domestically sourced,** while **29% were handguns,** and **58% of those handguns were identified as smuggled** or possibly smuggled.”

- Stephen White, RCMP Deputy Commissioner for Specialized Policing Services

SECU, 16 December 2021, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/SECU/Reports/RP11706338/securp03/securp03-e.pdf>

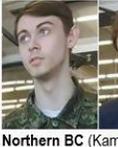
(The gun lobby usually cites statistics on crime guns in large urban centers, not all gun crime across Canada.)

b) **When it comes to gun-related homicides**, about half are committed with guns that were legally purchased, according to Statistics Canada:

Few accused in firearm-related homicides had a valid firearm licence

The firearms used in homicides ²¹ were rarely legal firearms used by their legal owners who were in good standing. In around half of the firearm-related homicides in 2022 for which this information was known (113 homicides), the firearm was legal in origin—that is, it had initially been obtained legally in half of cases (58 of 113 homicides). Rifles or shotguns were slightly more likely to be of legal origin (58%, or 22 of 38 homicides) than handguns (49%, or 36 of 74 homicides). Among incidents in which the firearm had initially been obtained legally, the accused was the legal firearm owner in 44% of cases (24 of 54 homicides).

- c) **When it comes to mass shootings specifically**, there are no formal Canadian studies. However, among the high-profile mass shootings in Canada in recent years where the legal status of the guns involved **was known**, most were legally purchased, like Polytechnique, Concordia, Moncton, Dawson College, Quebec Mosque, Penticton, Fredericton, Toronto, Bourget, etc. While details are still being withheld, we know the Tumbler Ridger shooter had **access** to legal assault weapons.

Multiple murderers who used legally acquired guns:					
 École Polytechnique, QC (Marc Lépine, 1989), 14 murdered, 13 wounded; (Ruger mini-14)	 Edmonton, AB (Gavin Mandin, 1991), murdered mother, father and two sisters; (.22 rifle)	 Concordia, QC (Valery Fabrikant, 1992), 4 murdered, 1 wounded; (handguns)	 Vernon, BC (Mark Vijay Chahal, 2005), 9 murdered (semi-auto handgun & revolver)		
 Dawson College, QC (Kimveer Gill, 2006), 1 murdered, 19 wounded; (Beretta CX4 Storm and handgun)	 Metropolis club, QC (Richard Bain, 2012), 1 murdered; injured 1 before CZ-858 jammed, the used handgun	 Moncton, NS (Justin Bourque, 2014), 3 RCMP killed, 2 wounded; (Norinco M305)	 Edmonton, AB (Phu Lam, 2014) 8 murdered (incl 2 children); (9mm semi-auto handgun)		
 Penticton, BC (John Brittain, 2015), 4 murdered; ("high-power rifle" according to judge)	 Quebec Mosque, QC (Alexandre Bissonnette, 2017), 6 murdered, 8 wounded; (Glock & jammed VZ58)	 Upper Big Tracadie, NS (Lionel Desmond, Jan. 3, 2017) shot his wife, daughter & mother; (SKS)	 Burk's Falls, ON (Mark Jones, 2018), shot neighbour, her son, her mother in triple murder-suicide (12-gauge shotgun & .40 cal handgun)		
 Fredericton, NB (Matthew Raymond, 2018) 4 murdered incl 2 police; (SKS)	 Calgary, AB (Robert Leeming, 2019), killed his ex and her 2-yr-old daughter (had RPAL, owned numerous guns)	 Northern BC (Kam McLeod & Bryer Schmegelsky, 2019) 3 murdered, 2 suicides; (SKS)	 Strathcona County, AB (Gregory Gartner, 2021) Killed his wife and his 13-year-old daughter (non-restricted gun legally owned)		
 Saanich BC (Matthew & Isaac Auchterlonie, 2022): shot six police officers, three with life-threatening injuries (owned SKS)	 Toronto, ON (Richard Jonathan Edwin, 2022) killed 2 strangers (handgun, had arsenal legal guns incl one that could cause "great carnage", likely planning future attacks)	 Innisfil, ON (Chris Doncaster, 2022) shot and killed two RCMP officers (SKS, registered gun owner)	 Vaughan, ONT (Francesco Villi, 2022): 6 murdered and 1 injured (semi-auto handgun; has license according to neighbor)		

Studies in the US shows most are legally purchased:

Firearms

Notably, most individuals who engaged in mass shootings used handguns (77.2%), and 25.1% used assault rifles in the commission of their crimes. Of the known mass shooting cases (32.5% of cases could not be confirmed), 77% of those who engaged in mass shootings purchased at least some of their guns legally, while illegal purchases were made by 13% of those committing mass shootings. In cases involving K-12 school shootings, over 80% of individuals who engaged in shootings stole guns from family members.