

Database of Small Arms Production and Transfers

Path: North America : Canada : Canada : Laws & Policies

Canadian Export Laws & Policies

This section contains summary information and links on Canadian export law, policy statements, and small arms export data sources.

The Law

Click here for the Military and Technology Export/Import Controls Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. This site contains copies of relevant laws, regulations and reports.

Under Canadian law, permits are required for the export of any military goods from Canada, with the exception of those shipped to the United States. The definition of "military goods" is based on that of the Wassenaar Arrangement's munitions list, and it includes items such as target pistols and hunting rifles, regardless of whether the foreign consignee is a private, non-military end user or a government and/or military end user.

The following summary of Canadian small arms export policy is taken from *Export of Military Goods from Canada: Annual Report 1997* (published November 1998).

Canada, in cooperation with like-minded partners, is looking at ways to address the proliferation of small arms, which can undermine the security and development efforts of many developing countries as well as contribute to human suffering. We recognize that dealing with excessive accumulations of small arms is a complex problem that necessitates a coordinated and cooperative approach on multiple tracks and in a number of fora.

Canada has been active in several fora including the United Nations, the OAS and the P-8 (the group of eight countries that participate in the political discussion at the annual economic summit) to promote international initiatives aimed at addressing aspects of this problem. Canada signed the OAS's Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials on November 3, 1997, and is looking at action in other fora such as the UN Crime Commission. In addition to such efforts, which are aimed at controlling the supply of small arms, Canada is supporting practical on-the-ground projects to remove such weapons from regions of conflict, as well as exploring ways to promote effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in post-conflict situations. ...

Canada imposes strict controls over the export of firearms, particularly automatic or assault weapons which are allowed to be exported only on a government-to-government basis to a small group of 13 countries with which Canada has concluded intergovernmental defense, research, development and production agreements. These countries, which make up the Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCCL), are [Australia, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United States].

The vast bulk of firearms export applications do not involve such modern military weapons, but rather firearms that are controlled only because they fall under the Wassenaar definition. Often these weapons will in fact be used for sporting purposes (such as hunting and target shooting) or are World War I or World War II firearms sought by collectors and re-encactors. All required permits, and for most destinations the Minister is consulted. Because many of these Canadian firearms are exported to private end users, we want to satisfy ourselves that they do not slip into the illegal arms trade or fuel local lawlessness or violence. Information may therefore be sought--from our embassies abroad and from other sources--about the end user as well as about destination countries' firearms control laws and procedures. We want to know not only what protection local laws offer but also how strict enforcement is, and whether these requirements are open to corruption.

All applicants seeking export permits for firearms are now required to produce an import permit, or some equally valid assurance, that their shipment will be allowed into the destination country. This ensures that firearms do not leave Canada without an assurance that they will be allowed into their country of destination and that the

recipient will, indeed, be permitted to take possession of them. It is also in keeping with the spirit of the OAS convention on firearms and explosives.

Policy Statements

Canada-EU Common Approach to Combat the Spread and Destabilizing Accumulations of Small Arms and Light Weapons, *Helsinki, Finland, Foreign Ministers Meeting, 2 September 1999*

Norwegian-Canadian Lysøen Declaration on Human Security, *11 May 1998, Press Release from Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

Notes for an address by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy to the International NGO Consultation on Small Arms, *Orilla, Ontario, 19 August 1998.*

Press release on Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy's participation in the International NGO Consultation on Small Arms, *17 August 1998.*

Press release on Canadian government support for projects in El Salvador to curb small arms proliferation, *19 August 1998.*

Canadian-EU Summit Statement on Small Arms, *18 December 1998.*

Draft Proposed Global Convention Prohibiting the International Transfer of Military Small Arms and Light Weapons to Non-State Actors.

Data Sources and Notes on Methodology

The source of data on Canadian small arms exports is the annual report *Export of Military Goods from Canada: Annual Report 1996 and 1997.*

The data in these annual reports is collected quarterly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) from exporters on shipments they have made in the preceding three months. The annual reports name the country of destination, describe the exported military goods in general terms, and list their value. No data is provided in the annual reports on the quantity of items shipped abroad.

Exports to the United States are omitted from these reports, as an export permit is not required in Canada for shipments to the United States.

Data is provided for calendar years, and it is in current year Canadian dollars. To provide for comparability with other data in the database, we have converted these dollars into current year US dollars by using the year-long average interbank exchange for the particular year in question. The source of the conversion multiplier is OANDA.

In terms of categories of relevance for this database, there are two Export Commodity List (ECL) munitions numbers that we have included: 2001--firearms and firearms parts; and 2003--ammunition and ammunition components. In the latter case, it is not always clear that the ammunition in question is small caliber. In cases where it was clearly designated in a comment or note that the shipment was large caliber ammunition, we did not include it.

◀ Back

This document contains the following shortcuts:

Shortcut Text	Internet Address
Canadian export law	http://www.nisat.org/database_info/country_laws.asp?Key=36&type=3&alph=C#The Law
policy statements	http://www.nisat.org/database_info/country_laws.asp?Key=36&type=3&alph=C#Policy Statements
export data sources	http://www.nisat.org/database_info/country_laws.asp?Key=36&type=3&alph=C#Data Sources and Notes on Methodology
Military and Technology Export/Import Controls Bureau	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/~eicb/export/milit_tech-e.htm
law	http://canada.justice.gc.ca/ftp/en/Regs/Chap/E/E-19/index.html
Wassenaar Arrangement	http://www.wassenaar.org/
Export of Military Goods from Canada: Annual Report 1997	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/~eicb/export/Military97/mil97front-e.htm
Canada-EU Common Approach to Combat the Spread and Destabilizing Accumulations of Small Arms and Light Weapons	http://www.nisat.org/export_laws-regs%20linked/canada/canada_eu_statement_2_sept_99.htm
Lysøen Declaration on Human Security	http://www.nisat.org/export_laws-regs%20linked/Norway/lysoern.htm
Notes for an address by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy to the International NGO Consultation on Small Arms	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statements/98_state/98_050e.htm
Press release	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/press_releases/98_press/98_191e.htm
Press release	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/press_releases/98_press/98_195e.htm
Statement on Small Arms	http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/98/1152 0 AGED&lg=EN
Draft Proposed Global Convention	http://www.nisat.org/export_laws-regs%20linked/canada/discusion_papera_proposed.htm
Export of Military Goods from Canada: Annual Report 1996	http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/~eicb/export/Military96/mil96front-e.htm
OANDA	http://www.oanda.com/
Back	http://www.nisat.org/database_info/country.asp?Key=36&type=3&alph=C