

Airdrie, Alberta
September 7, 2019

MY FILE: 247

Ms. Suzanne Legault
The Information Commissioner of Canada
Place de Ville, Tower B
112 Kent Street, 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1H3

Dear Ms. Legault:

Re: INADEQUATE SEARCH COMPLAINT RCMP FILE: A-2019-05230

Please find attached a copy of my original *Access to Information Act* request dated July 21, 2019 and a copy of the RCMP response dated August 23, 2019. I wish to complain about the inadequate search the RCMP conducted for the records I requested. In 2006, the Commissioner of the RCMP and Public Safety Canada's website both admitted there were automatic hits of the Canadian Firearms Registry Online (CFRO). See these two references below. I have also attached three pages of research conducted by the office of MP Garry Breitkreuz summarizing government responses to *Access to Information Act* requests that provide more admissions of automatic hits of the CFRO by government officials.

Reference is also being made to the following exchange between MP Dave MacKenzie and RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Wednesday, June 7, 2006:

MP Dave MacKenzie: *All I'm trying to indicate to Canadians, though, is that there are not 5,000 checks a day just for firearms registry. Those are automatic checks done by police officers on the street for names and for a variety of things.*

RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli: *They're automatic CPIC checks that they automatically go over. I don't have the number of how many are direct checks.* [Page 11] http://cssa-cila.org/garryb/publications/2006_new/71.htm

Question 18 from Frequently Asked Questions: Changes to the Firearms Program on the website of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. (May 17, 2006)

Q18. How can you say that the gun registry is a useless criminal justice tool when the police use it 6,500 times per day?

A18. The "6,500 hits" figure for the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) is misleading. **Whenever police officers access the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) for any reason, such as for a simple address check, an automatic hit is generated with CFRO whether the information is desired or not.** This is the case, for example, with the Toronto Police Service (5,000 officers), the Vancouver Police (1,400 officers), and the BC RCMP (5,000 officers)

Please ask the RCMP to conduct a proper search and provide records showing the statistical breakdown described in my request.

Yours sincerely,

[Original signed by]

Dennis R. Young
1330 Ravenswood Drive SE
AIRDRIE AB T4A 0P8
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E-Mail1: dennisryoung@telus.net
E-Mail2: dennisryoung.ca@gmail.com
Website: www.dennisryoung.ca

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Access to Information Request Form

For official use only:

My File: 247

Federal Government Institution:

RCMP OTTAWA HQ

Details regarding the information being sought:

Reference is being made to the “Average number of daily queries to the Canada Firearms Registry Online (CFRO)” reported to the RCMP ‘Geographical Firearms Report’ prepared by Canadian Firearms Program Firearms Management and Strategic Services Directorate and made public in the RCMP response to Access to Information Act File: A-2018-09415. <https://dennisryoung.ca/2019/07/19/rcmp-geographical-firearms-report-2019/>

Reference is also being made to the following exchange between MP Dave MacKenzie and RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Wednesday, June 7, 2006:
MP Dave MacKenzie: All I'm trying to indicate to Canadians, though, is that there are not 5,000 checks a day just for firearms registry. Those are automatic checks done by police officers on the street for names and for a variety of things.
RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli: They're automatic CPIC checks that they automatically go over. I don't have the number of how many are direct checks. [Page 11] http://cssa-cila.org/garryb/publications/2006_new/71.htm

For the years 2004 to 2018, please provide copies of all records (records as defined broadly under the Act) showing a statistical breakdown of ‘average daily queries to the CFRO’ that are:
(1) the number of queries that are automatically generated, (2) the number of queries that are direct checks or requests by officers and, (3) the number of queries that result in firearms charges being laid.

Method of access preferred: Receive copies of originals Examine originals in government offices

Name of Applicant: Dennis R. Young
Address: 1330 Ravenswood Drive SE
Airdrie, Alberta T4A 0P8

Telephone Number: 587-360-1111 E-Mail: dennisryoung@telus.net

This request for access to information under the Access to Information Act is being made by:

- a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or another individual present in Canada, or
 a corporation present in Canada

Cheque # 725

Signature: _____
[Original signed by]
Dennis R. Young

Date: July 21, 2019



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AUG 23 2019

Mr. Dennis R. YOUNG
1330 Ravenswood Drive South East
Airdrie, Alberta T4A 0P8

RECEIVED
AUG 29, 2019
[Signature]

Dear Mr. YOUNG:

This is in response to your request under the *Access to Information Act*, which was received by this office on July 26, 2019, to obtain:

For the years 2004 to 2018, please provide copies of all records (records as defined broadly under the Act) showing a statistical breakdown of average daily queries to the CFRO that are: (1) the number of queries that are automatically generated, (2) the number of queries that are direct checks or requests by officers and, (3) the number of queries that result in firearms charges being laid.

The specific breakdown of the information requested is not recorded within the Canadian Firearms Program. However, we have located records which meet the parameters of the request.

Please be advised that you are entitled to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner concerning the processing of your request within 60 days after the day that you become aware that grounds for a complaint exist. In the event you decide to avail yourself of this right, your notice of complaint should be addressed to:

Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada
30 Victoria Street, 7th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 1H3

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, you may contact Ms. Lisa Nancarrow at Lisa.Nancarrow@rcmp-grc.gc.ca. Please quote the file number appearing on this letter.

Regards,

Supt. Richard Haye
Access to Information and Privacy Branch
Mailstop #61
73 Leikin Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R2

Yearly CFRO Queries (2004 - 2018)

Yearly CFRO Query Counts	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	766,127	1,495,573	2,419,016	2,593,690	3,514,165	4,138,076	5,375,548	6,490,178	6,655,080	6,353,650	5,884,502	6,471,994	6,192,687	6,197,972	6,287,170

Aug 13, 2019

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Average Daily CFRO Queries (Yearly Count / Days in a year)

CFRO Daily Query Average	2004 *	2005	2006	2007	2008 *	2009	2010	2011	2012 *	2013	2014	2015	2016 *	2017	2018
Total	2,093	4,097	6,627	7,106	9,602	11,337	14,728	17,781	18,183	17,407	16,122	17,731	16,920	16,981	17,225

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N.B. * denotes leap Year (366 days)



Police use of the gun registry exaggerated.

That wacky "6,500 hits per day" figure.

<https://cssa-cila.org/rights/police-use-of-the-gun-registry-exaggerated/>

The proponents of the Gun Registry often quote various (and varying) numbers of "hits" that the Firearms Centre database receives per day from police. Presumably each hit is an instance of an officer querying the database to obtain firearms information. This bolsters their position that the registry is a "valuable policing tool."

We've watched this useful figure grow from 2,000 per day in late 2004, up to 5,000 per day during the Dec 2005 federal election, then jump to 6,000 per day in early May 2006 as the Conservative government started to talk about dismantling the duck-gun Registry, and again get bumped to 6,500 per day as Auditor General Sheila Fraser released her damning report on the Gun Registry.

More recently, as a Bill to scrap the Long-gun registry wends its way through parliament (and bureaucrats desperately try to defend their comfy turf), we've seen ever-spiraling claims of 11,000 or even **14,000** hits-per-day! (so-claimed in the Toronto Star, Aug 25, 2010.) Wow! Does that handy number ever grow and grow! (Like some politicians' noses...)

From the information below, it would seem that very few of the "hits" on the Registry database are actually instances of a police officer looking for firearms information.

Frequently Asked Questions: Changes to the Firearms Program

Question 18 from [Frequently Asked Questions: Changes to the Firearms Program](#) on the website of *Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada*. (May 17, 2006)

Q18. How can you say that the gun registry is a useless criminal justice tool when the police use it 6,500 times per day?

A18. The "6,500 hits" figure for the Canadian Firearms Registry On-Line (CFRO) is misleading. Whenever police officers access the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) for any reason, such as for a simple address check, an **automatic hit** is generated with CFRO whether the information is desired or not. This is the case, for example, with the Toronto Police Service (5,000 officers), the Vancouver Police (1,400 officers), and the BC RCMP (5,000 officers).

Police Use Of The Gun Registry Exaggerated

The following is the results of various ATI (Access To Information) requests by MP Garry Breitkreuz on the subject of how many times the police actually query the Firearms database for firearms-related information. The original web page may be found [here](#).

November 24, 2004 - At a Standing Committee On Justice meeting held on November 24, 2004, Garry Breitkreuz, MP asked Public Safety Minister Anne Mclellan the following question:

I want to follow up what my colleague was asking here. I didn't intend to do this, but when I talk to front line police officers, there's a real disconnect between what they tell me and what you are telling the committee today.

For example, this figure of 2,000 hits per day or 14,000 per week is very misleading. In actual fact—I don't know if you've been told Madam Minister—when a police officer accesses the CPIC system, I understand, very often it also searches the **firearms registry automatically** and he has no interest in what that has to say as far as the information he wants, but you count that as a hit to the firearms registry and it's included in those 2,000 times per day.

I have been unable, after several years of questioning, to find out exactly who and what information is being searched. That is a very misleading statistic.

[November 29, 2005 – We finally get an answer in response to our Access To Information Act Request – Canada Firearms Centre File: A-2005-0016]

ATI PAGE 000270- E-MAIL #1 DATED DECEMBER 6, 2004 – TO KEN MCCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS AND BEVERLY HOLLOWAY, OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE FROM JAMES DEACON, DIRECTOR OF POLICY:

“Can we differentiate between **“automatic hits”** and what is counted in our 2000 figure?”

ATI PAGE 000270- E-MAIL #2 DATED DECEMBER 6, 2004 – TO JAMES DEACON, DIRECTOR OF POLICY FROM KATHLEEN ROUSSEL, SENIOR COUNSEL:

“I think what is missing in the responses below is exactly what that **automatic query** gets you – as I understand it from RCMP CPIC services, it tells you that some info is returned from the CFRO but you don't get access to exactly what that is without some extra button-punching.

*I also understand that the 2000 hits we count come from this secondary search, whether done after an **automatic** “matching or independently.*

[Section blanked-out under authority of ATI Act, section 23, Solicitor Client Privilege].”

ATI PAGE 000271- E-MAIL #3 DATED DECEMBER 3, 2004 – TO JAMES DEACON, DIRECTOR OF POLICY FROM KEN MCCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS:

“In sum, CFRO is indeed automatically queried in many cases when police officers query CPIC.”

ATI PAGE 000271- E-MAIL #4 DATED DECEMBER 2, 2004 – TO KEN MCCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS ‘ET AL’ FROM PIERRE RIOPEL, FIP COORDINATOR:

“MP Garry Breitkreuz is partially correct in his assertions that CFRO queries are generated automatically. This statement is however not true in all cases. While, it is confirmed that all queries done through the CIIDS in British Columbia does generate automatic CFRO query, it is unknown if all other provincial CIIDS users do the same. It is also unknown how many other police agencies querying CFRO through there local interface system automatically query the CFRO.

ATI PAGE 000272- E-MAIL #5 DATED DECEMBER 1, 2004 – TO KEN McCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS 'ET AL' FROM GINA NJOLSTAD-LALONDE, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS:

“For many provinces, approx. 50% of the queries against the CFRO (by RCMP only) do come through the Computerized Integrated Dispatch System (CIIDS) as this query is set as a default in CIDS.

According to Jean-Paul St. Pierre, any police department using an interface to CPIC can have their system automatically queried against CFRO. According to both Jean-Paul and Mike Lavigne of the RCMP, there is no way to tell which agencies or how many queries.”

ATI PAGE 000272 E-MAIL #6 DATED NOVEMBER 30, 2004 – TO DIANE BOUDREAU, ACTING MANAGER, BUSINESS ANALYST FROM KEN McCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS:

“Jamie Deacon advised me that the Commissioner’s Office needs specific information relating to CFRO usage by police. Specifically, MP Garry Breitzkreuz is alleging that our CFRO statistics (2000 hits per week) are misleading.

He argues that CFRO is automatically queried (intentionally or not) whenever a police officer checks CPIC. As such, police are not really using the system. Would you please confirm whether this is true (or not).

Can we safely say that these 2000 hits are intentional queries of the CFRO? Can we prove it?

Also can we find out the percentage of CFRO hits coming from police officers, versus other public agents. You should get Gina involved in this analysis.”

ATI PAGE 000321 - E-MAIL #7 DATED JUNE 6, 2005 –TO IRÈNE ARSENEAU, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS FROM AND KEN McCARTHY, REGISTRAR OF FIREARMS FROM PIERRE RIOPEL, FIP COORDINATOR:

“I have followed up on the Ontario Stats and the reason why the CFRO query stats have gone up so dramatically is as follows:

Toronto Metro Telecommunications had requested a change in their Intergraph Dispatch System that would auto query all address responses that was returned from their records management system. The requested change was never fully researched and for some reason was implemented as an emergency maintenance issue. Toronto Metro Technical Security Branch was contacted and they stated they are going to remove this feature ASAP. The address query responses from CFRO are not being passed on to anyone. There is a privacy issue about this type of query. Note that the CFRO auto query of addresses is based on any valid address query response returned through their Intergraph System query.

This means that if a parking ticket had a valid address and was returned the Intergraph system, it would generate a CFRO address query.

There is nothing here and the Ontario stats should return to normal (4,000 to 5,000) queries per week in CFRO once the auto query through Intergraph is removed.”