



# Impact of (former Bill) C-21 on Alberta's firearms businesses:

## August 2024 update

### About

This fact sheet (updated August 2024) explains the changes resulting from Bill C-21 that are of greatest relevance to firearms businesses and their clientele. This sheet replaces previous versions. The latest fact sheets and C-21 updates are on the ACFO website and supersede this information.

### Background

Former federal Bill C-21 became law on December 15, 2023. Many of its clauses with implications for businesses are already in force, such as those that:

- Codified the handgun “freeze” in the federal *Firearms Act* by prohibiting the issuance of new registration certificates for handguns, with minor exemptions;
- Granted chief firearms officers (CFOs) the ability to issue Authorizations to Transport for the temporary storage of a prohibited or restricted firearm;
- Changed the definition of a “prohibited firearm”;
- Created a new criminal offence for depicting violence in firearms marketing; and
- Created a requirement for a firearms licence for the transfer of cartridge magazines and prohibited the acquisition of cartridge magazines during the “licence extension” period.

Many portions of C-21 did not come into force at the time the bill became law and will come into force through Orders in Council (OIC). The federal government has not announced when all remaining C-21 provisions will take effect.

### Recent news: September 1<sup>st</sup> changes

As of August 2024, two OICs have been announced and will result in regulatory changes this fall.

Starting on September 1, 2024, individuals must have a valid Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) to :

- Be transferred “firearm parts” (i.e., *barrels* and *slides*) by a business or individual and
- Import “firearm parts” (i.e., *barrels* and *slides*), ammunition, and cartridge magazines.

Individuals are impacted both changes, while businesses are impacted by only the former change (regarding *firearm parts transfer*).

The federal government's “firearm parts” definition includes *firearm barrels* and *handgun slides*, and any other prescribed part. Other parts may become firearm parts if so, prescribed by the Government of Canada.

### Overview of C-21 impacts for businesses

#### Handgun “freeze”

On October 21, 2022, a freeze on the sale, purchase, or transfer of handguns by individuals within Canada, and the transport of newly acquired handguns into Canada came into force through regulations. With the passage of bill C-21 the handgun freeze became law. As such, the Registrar of Firearms can no longer issue registration certificates for handguns to individuals unless they fall within the following exemptions:

- Individuals who hold an Authorization to Carry (ATC) for personal protection or lawful occupation (such as remote wilderness hunting and/or trapping); and
- Individuals who train, compete or coach in a handgun shooting discipline that is on the programme of the International Olympic Committee or the International Paralympic Committee.

Pertaining to the exceptions noted above:

- Individuals and businesses cannot transfer a handgun to an individual unless that individual belongs to one of the groups identified above.
- Individuals and businesses cannot submit applications to transfer handguns when the buyer is an individual, unless the buyer belongs to one of the groups identified above.

Individuals can continue to possess and use their currently registered handguns and sell or transfer their registered handguns to businesses or exempted individuals. Authorized retailers can continue to sell handguns to other authorized businesses (e.g., gunsmiths, museums, valuable goods carriers, retailers, members of the film and theatrical

industry), law enforcement, Armed Forces personnel and exempted individuals.

A business can import handguns if it has the appropriate activities on its business firearms licence to acquire restricted firearms. A business requires an Import Permit issued by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to import a handgun.

### Change to definition of prohibited firearm

Pre-existing business inventories are not impacted by this change. This definition applies to a firearm that is not a handgun and that 1) discharges centre fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner; 2) was originally designed with a detachable magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more; AND was designed and manufactured on or after December 15, 2023.

For example: A Ruger PC 9 mm carbine is **not** a prohibited firearm under this definition, despite meeting the first two criteria. This is because it was designed and likely, also manufactured before December 15, 2023.

However, if at a future event a new design of a 9mm carbine that meets these criteria is sold by Ruger or another firearms manufacturer, this firearm would be a prohibited firearm under this newly adopted definition.

### ATTs for the temporary storage of prohibited or restricted firearms

CFOs can now issue an Authorization to Transport (ATT) for temporary storage to address a mental health issue. These ATTs allow an individual to transport a prohibited or restricted firearm to an individual or business who has a licence to possess prohibited or restricted firearms. This temporary storage allows the mental health condition to be addressed by the owner.

### Violence in firearms marketing offence

It is now a criminal offence for a business to advertise a firearm in a manner that depicts, counsels, or promotes firearms violence against a person. Individuals convicted of this offence may face a maximum of two years' imprisonment for a first offence and five years for each subsequent offence.

This offence does not apply to persons or businesses that advertise in their usual course of business directly to or on behalf of the film industry, the Canadian Forces, or public safety personnel.

### “Firearm parts” may not be transferred to someone without a valid PAL as of Sept.1, 2024

As of September 1, 2024, firearm parts (*barrels* and *slides*) may not be transferred/sold unless the buyer holds a valid PAL that is verified by the seller prior to the transfer/sale.

### Cartridge magazines may not be transferred to someone without a valid PAL as of Sept. 1, 2024

Cartridge magazines may not be transferred/sold unless the buyer holds a valid PAL that is verified by the seller prior to the transfer/sale.

### PAL required to import ammunition, cartridge magazines and firearm parts as of Sept. 1, 2024

These changes will impact individuals, who will now be required to have a valid PAL to import ammunition, cartridge magazines, and “firearm parts” (*barrels* and *slides*).

Businesses licence holders are not impacted by this change; however, they will still require import permits from Global Affairs Canada (for firearms and related goods) and Natural Resources Canada (for ammunition). See links below.

### Alberta’s C-21 position and response

[Alberta's written submission to the Senate of Canada](#)

The ACFO advocated strongly against C-21. We continue to advocate for Alberta’s law-abiding firearms community and keep business informed of federal legislative and policy changes.

### Associated federal links

C-21 (44-1) - LEGISinfo - Parliament of Canada  
<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/en/bill/44-1/c-21>

GAC: Firearms and Related Goods  
[https://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/firearms\\_armes\\_a\\_feu/index.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/controls-controles/firearms_armes_a_feu/index.aspx?lang=eng)

Natural Resources Canada: Ammunition  
[Permits, licences, certificates and regulations for ammunition and propellant powders \(canada.ca\)](#)

Canadian Firearms Program  
<https://rcmp.ca/en/firearms>

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