


26 March 2024

s.9(2)(a) OIA



Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 13 February 2024, regarding firearms data.

*Under the terms of the Official Information Act 1982, may I please have the following data sets or documents:*

- 1) In a recent press statement, Superintendent Richard Wilson said that "over 70% of firearms seized by police Over 70% of firearms are rifles and shot guns that can be obtained by standard licence holders". Can I please have the data which backs up that statement, in terms of the numbers of firearms seized by police, broken down by type, and the corresponding licence which would be needed to legally purchase the firearm. It would be helpful if this was further broken down by year, either calendar or financial, for the purposes of comparison for as far back as the data exists. Also, does this data exist at a police district level?*

When Police officers encounter firearms in the course of their normal duties, and they have concerns about those firearms, they have the option to seize the firearms under the provisions of the Search and Surveillance Act 2012.

Two provisions commonly used are sections 18 (warrantless searches associated with arms) and 6 (search warrant). When firearms are seized by police under these provisions, they are recorded in the Firearms Search and Seizure database. This database contains data beginning 1 October 2012, when those sections of the Act came into force. Prior to 2012, firearms were seized under the now repealed section 60 of the Arms Act 1983.

Between 1 October 2012 and 31 December 2023, police seized 16,941 firearms under section 6 or section 18 of the Search and Surveillance Act 2012. There were 11,953 rifles and shotguns seized, which represents 70.5 per cent of all firearms seized during this period. A further 16.5 per cent were airguns and 3.5 per cent were imitation firearms, both of which do not normally require a licence to acquire by adults.

This data including incident district, calendar year, and firearm type is included in the attached spreadsheet on the first tab.

- 2) *Could I please have similar data in terms of firearms reported stolen (broken down by type/year/police district) ?*

When members of the public report a stolen firearm to Police, these are recorded in the National Intelligence Application (NIA). Data showing stolen firearms, including scene district, calendar year, and firearm type is included in the attached spreadsheet under the stolen firearms tab.

In addition, please find attached two tables titled *Table 1: Seized firearms (totals by type per year)* and *Table 2: Stolen firearms (totals by type per year)*, which summarise the data contained in the spreadsheet. Table 1 shows seized firearms broken down by year and firearm type, and Table 2 shows stolen firearms broken down by year and firearm type, from 2012 (from 1 October) to 2023.

The data provided in this response is drawn from a dynamic operational database and is subject to change as new information is recorded or updated.

- 3) *Could I also have the number of people who have tried to purchase a firearm from a retailer, but have been declined because of the 'licence check' function of the Firearms Registry? If this data exists, could it please be broken down by the reason the purchase was declined (for example expired or suspended licence) and any other related data which exists (the type and number of firearms in the attempted purchase).*

The Firearms Licence Checker helps ensure that firearms, parts, and ammunition are being sold legally, and prevents the misuse of invalid or fake licence cards. The tool helps firearms dealers and private sellers to meet their obligations by confirming that the firearms licence presented at the point of sale is valid. It is unable to be determined by looking at a physical firearms licence card whether it has expired, been revoked, or been granted an expiry extension. The Firearms Licence Checker instantly confirms if a licence card is current and legitimate.<sup>1</sup>

On 6 March 2024, Pete Coleman, Communications Manager, Te Tari Pūreke, explained to you that this was the first time the data team had extracted this type of data from the system, and any result they could provide would be described as provisional only. Answering your question would require more time for the Performance and Insights data team to validate the methodology and results to ensure the data is accurate.

You confirmed that you would prefer accurate data to run a credible story. Pete suggested that the data team would do the data validation expeditiously but also could not put an exact timeframe on it.

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<sup>1</sup> Source <https://www.firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz/tools-and-application-forms/firearms-licence-checker>

- 4) *Could I also please have any reports, briefings, slide shows etc prepared to brief the Police Minister Mark Mitchell and associate Justice Minister Nicole McKee about the firearms environment in New Zealand since they took up their respective roles.*

On 26 February 2024, Police emailed you to advise that this part of your request had been transferred to the Office of the Minister of Police for response. Te Tari Pūreke advises that any briefings to the Associate Minister of Justice (Firearms) from Police would be provided through the Minister of Police.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review this decision if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

For your information, Police has developed a process for proactive release of information, so the anonymised response to your request may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Nāku noa, nā



Matt Boddy  
**Acting Director Operations**  
**Firearms Safety Authority**

Table 1: Seized firearms (totals by type per year)

Firearm type	2012 from 1 Oct	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Rifle - full length <sup>1</sup>	143	531	508	506	619	571	682	699	702	617	541	530	6649
Shotgun - full length	52	243	280	236	276	251	302	335	316	266	254	210	3021
Airgun - rifle	33	160	123	123	115	118	158	229	227	192	215	189	1882
Shotgun - cut down	14	63	69	83	116	127	143	133	171	158	134	128	1339
Rifle - cut down	6	21	41	44	100	87	80	115	128	102	121	99	944
Handgun - pistol	8	40	48	43	79	73	98	90	143	131	93	86	932
Airgun - handgun	19	82	72	75	70	74	71	96	86	73	112	89	919
Imitation - handgun	8	21	20	30	28	21	33	49	47	66	54	70	447
Handgun - revolver	5	12	12	14	15	11	24	18	32	53	22	31	249
MSSA - Military Style Semi Automatic	2	23	32	28	54	30	40	21	12				242
Prohibited rifle								23	47	31	22	22	145
Imitation - rifle	3	14	5	8	16	4	11	21	5	14	14	18	133
Prohibited shotgun								5	8	9	6	11	39
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>1190</b>	<b>1488</b>	<b>1367</b>	<b>1642</b>	<b>1834</b>	<b>1924</b>	<b>1712</b>	<b>1588</b>	<b>1483</b>	<b>16941</b>

Table 2: Stolen firearms (totals by type per year)

Firearm type	2012 from 1 Oct	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Rifle	43	283	310	456	475	417	480	401	267	240	192	245	3809
Shotgun	20	154	190	247	277	214	207	222	139	111	99	98	1978
Airguns and similar	9	83	101	168	180	218	183	142	91	120	93	116	1504
Pistols	3	21	6	19	53	17	3	37	35	9	13	14	230
Restricted Weapon	13	35	145		3	2		1		1	2	7	209
Other	2	25	9	2	14	3	6	3	20	7	3	21	115
Prohibited Firearm	1	1	7	2	12	7	4	16	3	1			54
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>7899</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Firearm type differences (between table 1 and table 2) reflect the firearms type categories in two separate source systems - one being the Firearms Search and Seizure database (for seized firearms) and the other being the National Intelligence Application (for stolen firearms)