

RCMP ACCESS TO INFORMATION RESPONSE CFRO EFFECTIVENESS AT “RISK ASSESSMENT”?

RCMP ATI RESPONSE DATED: SEPTEMBER 6, 2011 RCMP FILE #: GA-3951-3-04195/11

BACKGROUND CFRO (Canadian Firearms Registry Online)

The Canada Firearms Program “Facts and Figures (April to June 2011)” states that police agencies *Average Daily Queries to the CFRO* for “addresses” = 3,800/day.

http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/facts-faits/archives/quick_facts/2011/ju-eng.htm

WORDING OF ORIGINAL ATI REQUEST SUBMITTED TO RCMP (August 1, 2011)

The RCMP website states: *“Police officers can access CFRO from their vehicle, giving them more information when conducting a preliminary situational risk-assessment.”*

Please provide copies of any reports, documents, investigations and correspondence related to instances where police have been confronted with a firearm or find firearms at the indicated address or location after using the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line to conduct a *“preliminary situational risk-assessment”* and officers received a response from the CFRO system that suggested no *“potential threat to safety”*.

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“The CPI Centre can only provide a report on how many times the CRFO was queried within a specific time frame and by whom. The CPIC system is an intelligence tool and not a records management system nor a statistical tool. In order to be able to determine the response to each of these queries specific to the request we would require the names and identification number of ALL the police officers specific to each query. The CRFO functionality within the CPIC system is only used to assist police officers in their *“preliminary situational risk-assessment”*. Any action taken or decision taken based on the information obtained from the CPIC system must be confirmed with the originating agency that entered the information on the system. The CFRO functionality with CPIC does not “suggest” whether or not there is any potential threat to safety. It only provides information that may or may not assist an office in making decision.”

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO RCMP – SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

Reference is being made to your letter dated September 6, 2011 advising us of the limitations of the CPIC system to provide the information requested. Please note that we did not ask you to limit your search to CPIC. We specifically asked for “copies of any reports, documents, investigations and correspondence related to instances where police have been confronted with a firearm or find firearms at the indicated address or location after using the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line to conduct a *‘preliminary situational risk-assessment’* and officers received a response from the CFRO system that suggested no *‘potential threat to safety’*.”

What we are trying to uncover are documents showing instances when the CFRO told police officers that there were no guns present and but when they arrived at the residence in question officers were confronted with a firearm or firearms. Considering that your website states that

police officers across Canada are making 3,800 address-specific queries a day of the CFRO and considering the millions of unregistered guns there are in Canada, this must happen quite often. Surely, the RCMP has accumulated a number of such “reports, documents, investigations and correspondence” since the registry went into effect in 1998.

On May 31, 2006, the Auditor General testifying before a House of Commons Committee said of the firearms program, “...5,000 hits a day is more of what we call an activity indicator than an indicator of effectiveness. There could be 5,000 hits, and they could say yes, it was very helpful and helped me in this way; or they could say no, it wasn't helpful because the information wasn't correct.” Everyone in Canada needs to see the documents that show what happens when the CFRO information given police officers is incorrect.

FINAL “NO RECORDS” REPLY FROM THE RCMP – OCTOBER 12, 2011

Based on the wording of your request, a search for records was conducted in Ottawa, Ontario. Please be advised as previously stated in our letter dated September 6, 2011 the RCMP does not have any records or track information pertaining to instances where police have been confronted with a firearm or find firearms at the indicated address or location after using the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line.

COMPLAINT TO THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER – OCTOBER 21, 2011

Please ask the RCMP to complete the search in accordance with the wording of my original request. Front-line RCMP officers claim it is dangerous to rely on information in the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line when responding to violent situations. Front-line RCMP officers must have made many complaints about the inadequacies of this computer system to identify potential threats to their safety. I respectfully request the Information Commissioner's assistance to get the RCMP to conduct a proper search for the records requested regardless of how embarrassing the results might be for the RCMP brass and the unsafe policies they recommend their front-line officers to follow when responding to violent incidents.

NOTE: Anyone wanting copies of the original RCMP response to my Access to Information request please contact: Dennis R. Young: dhyoung@shaw.ca