**Miscellaneous – Gun ownership and gun laws**

**When comparing gun laws in Canada and the United States,** a key difference is that Canada handles gun laws on the federal level, while the U.S. handles them on a state-by-state basis.

* Canada's gun laws are federal, whereas gun laws in the U.S. vary state to state
* Federal Canadian law requires people who apply for a gun license to take a safety course
* The safety course is a minimum of eight hours and goes over how a gun works, how to safely handle a gun, and how to safely transport a gun
* Students take two exams at the end and must get at least 80% on each

**Firearms ownership in Canada**

**Government of Canada – Department of Justice**

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/wd98_4-dt98_4/p2.html#:~:text=Canada%20reported%20that%20approximately%2022,%2C%20and%20Tunisia%20(Ibidem)>.

**Based on old data from the 1990s**

* In Canada - Overall, surveys suggest that more people in rural areas own firearms than in urban locations. For example, 37.3 percent of respondents from small towns own a firearm compared to 2.8 percent in communities with populations over one million. Residents of small towns are also more likely to own long guns than people living in large cities: 33.6 percent compared to 1.2 percent respectively (Block, 1998: 24).
* Block’s analysis of the results of the ICVS data for Canada and eight other Western countries showed **that 48 percent of U.S. households owned at least one firearm**, **Canada’s rate of 22 percent of households owning firearms** was in the middle range of the nine countries (Ibidem).
* **According to the survey, 95 percent of households in Canada owning firearms had a long gun and less than 12 percent owned handguns**. **In the United States, 81 percent of firearm-owning households had long guns and 58 percent had handguns** (Block, 1998:3-6).
* The extent to which Canadians own firearms to protect themselves from criminals or animals is the subject of some controversy. However, survey findings have consistently shown that the **proportion of Canadians who state self-defense or self-protection as a reason or their main reason for owning a firearm is very low.** Even when those who use a firearm in their job are included in that figure, it is still likely to be **lower than five percent** (Block, 1998: 12-13; Gabor, 1997:5; Sacco, 1995). Block (1998) found that protection was a common reason to own firearms for **39 percent of owners in the United States,**

**2.6 Summary – re Canada**

* Little new research was conducted in the last five years on firearm ownership in Canada.
* Research continues to rely on surveys to estimate the number of firearm-owning households, firearm owners and firearms in circulation. Survey findings are fairly consistent but may underestimate the prevalence of firearms in Canada.
* Recent estimates indicate that 26 percent of Canadian households own at least one firearm.
* Ninety-five percent of firearm-owning households in Canada possess long guns and **less than 12 percent own handguns.**
* The prevalence of Canadian households that own firearms varies considerably across regions.
* Canadian firearm owners tend to be male and are more likely to reside in smaller communities.
* Approximately 7 million firearms are estimated to be owned by private individuals; this number includes as many as 1.2 million restricted firearms. The overall rate of firearm ownership is at least 241 per 1,000 population and is comparable to ownership rates in other countries where hunting is a significant activity.
* There has been little new research on the reasons for owning a firearm. Hunting continues to be the main reason for owning a firearm. Self-protection is rarely cited as a main reason for owning a firearm.

**Gun laws in the US**

https://www-statista-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/statistics/1381099/us-gun-laws-by-state/

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| **“Description** |  |  |  |  |
| In the United States, gun laws vary from one state to the next and many states have differing laws in place as to whether residents are allowed to purchase or carry a gun without a permit, whether residents must register their guns with the state, and whether residents can openly carry a gun in public. As of 2023, seven U.S. states have completely banned any open carry activity while eight states required residents to register their firearms with the state.   A constitutional right  The Second Amendment of the Constitution, which states that citizens have the right to bear arms, has made it difficult for any gun control legislation to be passed on a national level in the United States. As a result, gun control laws in the U.S. are state-based, and often differ based on political perspectives. States with strong gun laws in place, such as Massachusetts, generally experience less gun violence, however, some states with strong gun laws, such as Maryland, continue to face high rates of gun violence , which has largely been attributed to gun trafficking activity found throughout the nation.   A culture of gun owners  In comparison to other high income countries with stricter gun control laws, the United States has the highest gun homicide rate at 4.38 gun homicides per 100,000 residents. However, despite increasing evidence that easy access to firearms, whether legal or illegal, encourages higher rates of gun violence, the United States continues to foster an environment in which owning a firearm is seen as a personal freedom. Almost half of U.S. households have reported owning at least one firearm and 43 percent of registered voters in the U.S. were found to believe that it was more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns, compared to 23 percent who said it was more important to limit gun ownership.” | | | | |

**Gun ownership in Canada**

Gun ownership rates in Canada are on par with those of Western Europe and much lower than its southern neighbor, the United States, which is consistently the highest in the world . The main reasons for gun ownership in Canada are hunting and target shooting. Guns are not kept for self-defense as its legality is extremely restricted.

Although it has been relaxed some in recent years, legislation on gun-control is also comparatively strict. First time gun owners must complete a safety course and pass a background check, but since 2015’s C-19 bill, non-restricted firearms are no longer required to be registered for ownership. Firearms that fall into this class are ordinary rifles and shotguns that do not meet the requirement for being restricted or prohibited, the two other of Canada’s three-tiered firearms classification system. Restricted firearms are those that are semi-automatic, handguns not prohibited, and rifles and shotguns shorter than the minimum regulated size. Prohibited firearms, despite the name, are not completely barred from ownership. The guns that fall into this class are pistols with a barrel under the minimum legal length, sawed-off shotguns and rifles below the minimum legal length, fully automatic weapons, weapons converted from auto to semi-automatic fire, and those firearms prohibited by the Criminal Code Regulations