

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

CROWN POLICY MANUAL

March 21, 2005

FIREARMS

PRINCIPLES

Protection of the public, and communities, is the primary focus of the Ministry's firearms policy. Easy access to guns is a factor in violent crime, gang-related crime, accidents and suicides. Indeed, there is a general perception that the use of firearms and weapons in crimes is on the rise. A reduction in the availability and proliferation of firearms and other weapons should have a positive impact on the incidence of violence in our society. At all stages of the prosecution, from bail to sentencing, the prosecution of firearms offences should be premised on providing the greatest protection to the community, not on considerations of expediency.

The gravity of firearms offences is highlighted by mandatory minimum sentences for offences involving the use of a firearm. In any case involving the use of a firearm, whether or not the offence carries a minimum period of incarceration, denunciatory and deterrent sentences should be sought.

While the use of a firearm in any criminal offence is a serious matter, guns play a frequent and fatal role in spousal violence*. Almost fifty percent of women killed by their husbands were shot to death.

A designated firearms Crown counsel is available in each region for advice.

* *Domestic Violence*