

Statistical Bulletin

Crime and Justice Series

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

FIREARM CERTIFICATES STATISTICS, SCOTLAND, 2007 27 May 2008

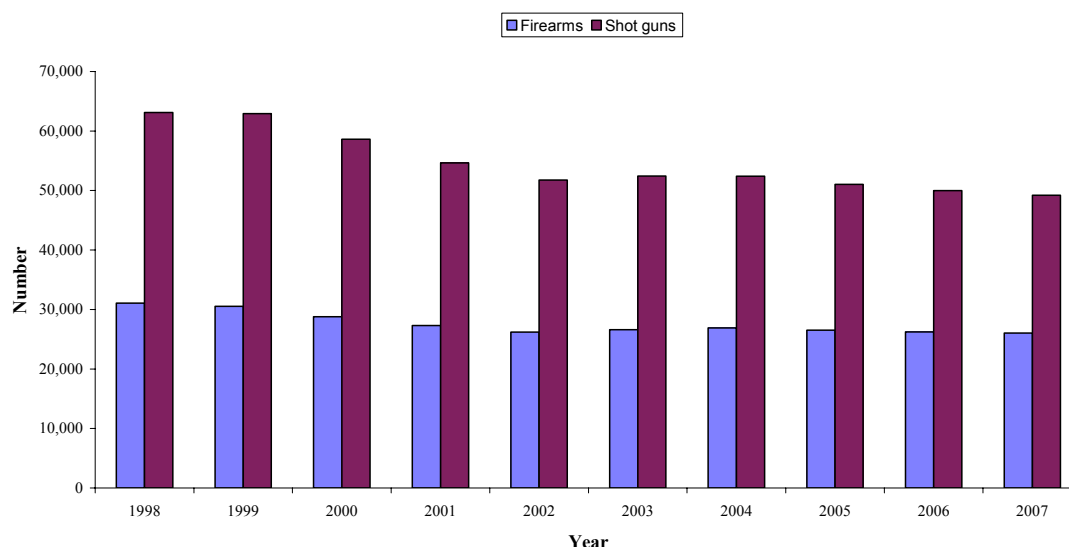


1. Introduction

This bulletin presents information for the years 1998 to 2007 on the issue of firearm and shot gun certificates under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended). Statistics on the number of crimes and offences involving the *alleged* use of a firearm in 2006-07 were published in the National Statistics bulletin "*Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland, 2006-07*", in October 2007.

Changes in regulations regarding the length of time a firearm or shot gun certificate was valid for took effect from 1 January 1995, increasing the period of certification from three to five years. As this includes both applications for new certificates and renewals of existing certificates this effectively meant that no certificates required renewal in either 1998 or 1999. This had the knock-on effect of reducing numbers of renewals in 2003 and 2004, with numbers rising again in 2005 and 2006. Numbers of cancellations are similarly affected. Further information is given in the Notes in the Annex.

Chart 1 Firearm and shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December, Scotland, 1998-2007



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2. Main Points

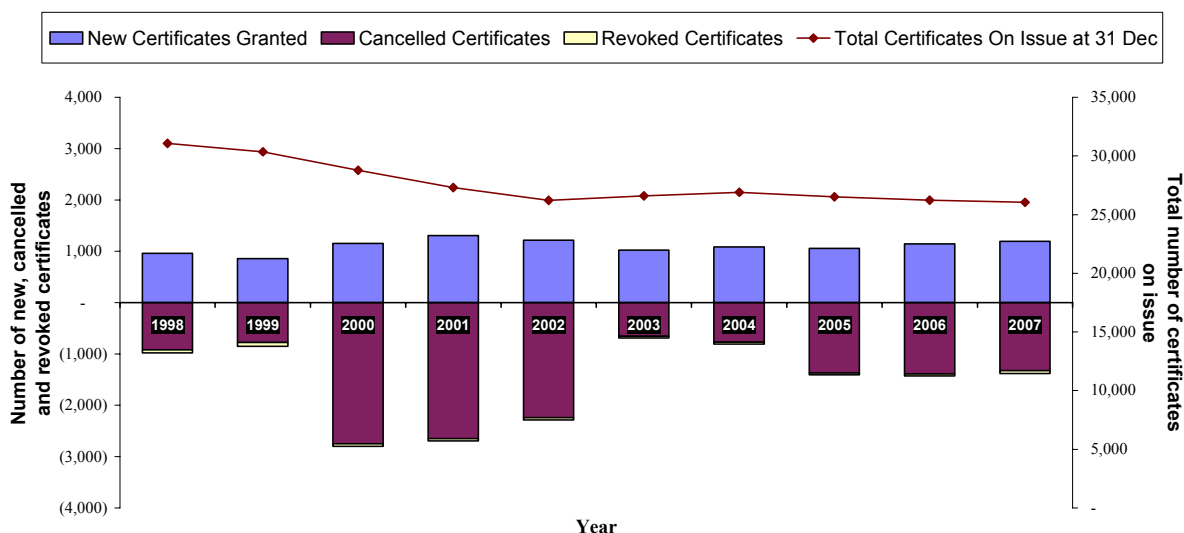
- There were 26,056 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2007, a decrease of 1 per cent on the previous year, and 16 per cent lower than the number in 1998.
- The 26,056 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2007 covered the possession of 66,893 firearms, a 1 per cent increase compared to 2006. The number of firearms held on certificate has been rising in recent years and the number held in 2007 was the highest in the 10 years covered by this bulletin.
- In 2007, there were 1,203 applications for new firearms certificates, of which 1,194 (99 per cent) were granted. There were 6,641 applications for renewal, of which 6,634 were granted.
- There were 1,327 cancellations of firearm certificates and 55 firearm certificates were revoked.
- The majority (82 per cent) of certified firearms where the type of weapon was known were rifles.
- There were 49,213 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2007, a decrease of 2 per cent from 2006, and 22 per cent lower than at the end of 1998.
- The 49,213 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2007 covered the possession of 133,940 shot guns, an increase of 1 per cent compared to 2006 and the highest number in the 10 years covered by this bulletin. In 2007, the average number of shot guns possessed for each certificate was 2.7.
- The number of applications for a new shot gun certificate was 1,891 in 2007, 2 per cent higher than in 2006. Ninety eight per cent (1,860) of these applications were granted. There were 13,142 applications for renewal of shot gun certificates, 13,133 of which were granted.
- In 2007, there were 2,608 cancellations of shot gun certificates and 83 revocations of shot gun certificates.
- The numbers of both firearm and shot gun certificates on issue, per head of population, were highest in the Northern police force area and lowest in Strathclyde.
- There were 301 registered firearms dealers in Scotland at the end of 2007, an increase of 6 per cent from the 283 registered dealers at the end of 2006.

3. Commentary

3.1 Firearm Certificates (Tables 1 to 3)

- There were 26,056 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2007, a decrease of 1 per cent from 2006 and continuing the general downward trend in numbers over the 10 years covered by this bulletin.
- However, the number of firearms held on certificate increased slightly from 66,164 in 2006 to 66,893 in 2007 (see Annex Note 9). The number of firearms held on certificate in 2007 was 10 per cent higher than in 1998, and the highest number in the 10 years covered by this bulletin.
- In 2007, there were 1,203 applications for new firearm certificates, an increase of 4 per cent compared with 2006. The vast majority (1,194 or 99 per cent) of applications were granted, with 9 applications (less than 1 per cent) being refused.
- In 2007, 6,634 firearm certificates were renewed, representing nearly 100 per cent of all applications. Only 7 applications for renewal were refused in 2007.
- There were 1,327 cancellations of firearm certificates in 2007, compared to 1,389 cancellations in 2006 (see Annex Note 10). In addition, 55 firearm certificates were revoked. Cancellations outnumbered successful applications, thus decreasing the number of certificates on issue at the end of 2007 compared to the previous year.

Chart 2 New granted applications, cancellations and revocations, and total on issue of firearm certificates, Scotland, 1998-2007⁽¹⁾



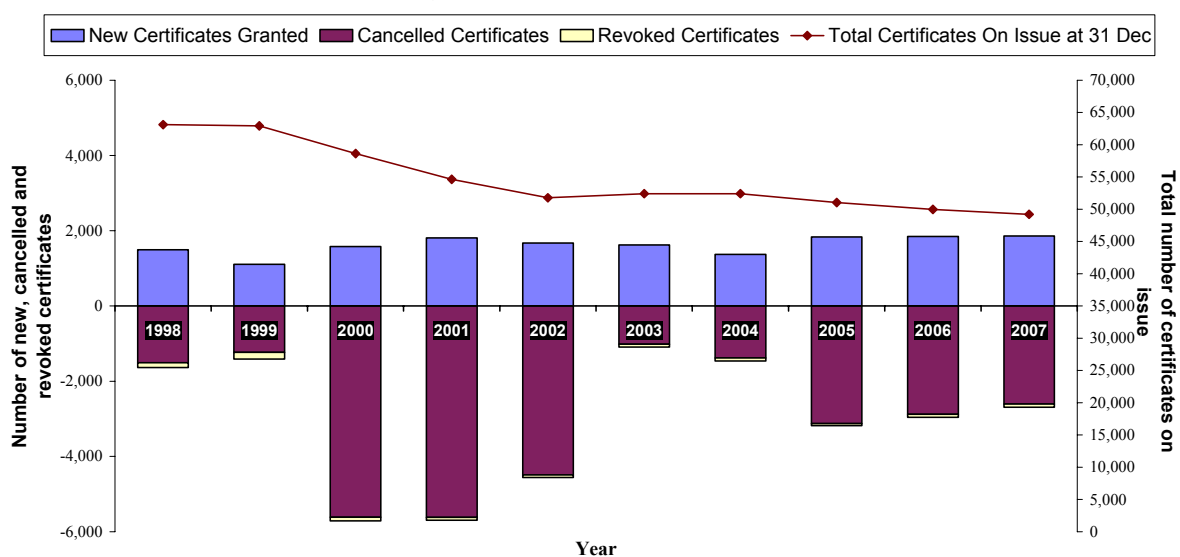
(1) Figures for 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004 are affected by changes in regulations. See Annex Note 10.

- Over a quarter (7,097) of all firearms certificates on issue at the end of 2007 were in the Northern police force area. Grampian police force area contained the second highest number of firearm certificates (4,531), followed by Strathclyde (3,663) and Lothian and Borders (3,619).
- The number of firearm certificates on issue per head of population was highest in the Northern police force area (2,505 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Strathclyde (166 per 100,000 population).
- The 26,056 firearm certificates on issue at 31 December 2007 covered the possession of 66,893 firearms. In addition, the certificates on issue authorised a further 8,157 firearms to be purchased or acquired (see Annex Note 9).
- Eighty-two per cent of certified firearms where the type of weapon was known were rifles (possessed or authorised to be purchased or acquired).

3.2 Shot Gun Certificates (Tables 4 to 5a)

- There were 49,213 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2007, a decrease of 2 per cent from 2006.
- The 49,213 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2007 covered the possession of 133,940 shot guns, an increase of 1 per cent compared to 2006, and the highest number in the 10 years covered by this bulletin.
- The number of applications for a new shot gun certificate was 1,891 in 2007, 2 per cent higher than the 2006 figure of 1,862. There were 1,860 successful applications in 2007, compared to 2,608 cancellations.

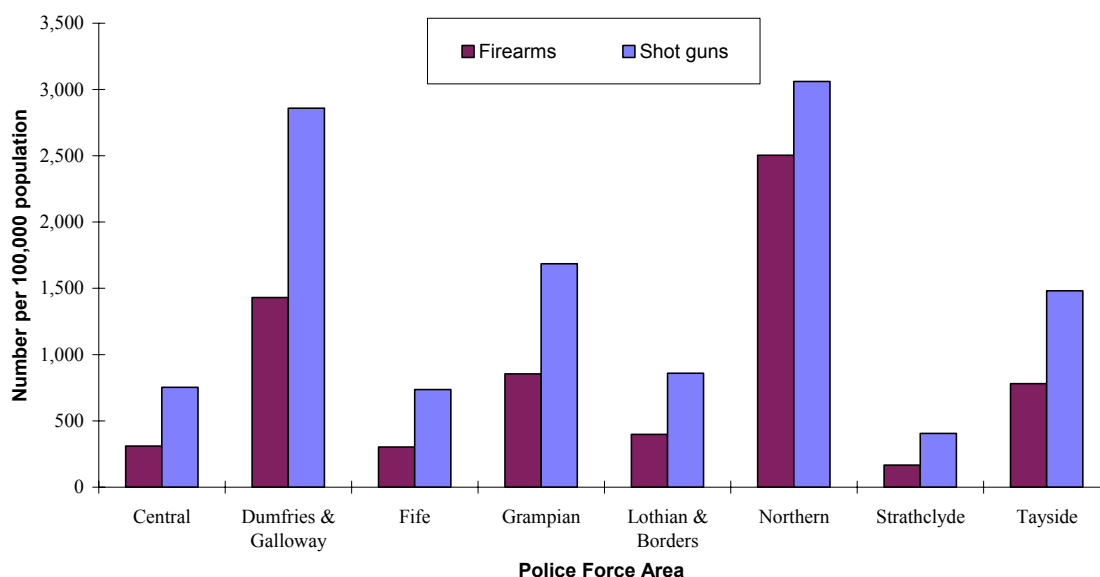
Chart 3 New granted applications, cancellations and revocations, and total on issue of shot gun certificates, Scotland, 1998-2007 ⁽¹⁾



(1) Figures for 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004 are affected by changes in regulations. See Annex Note 10.

- There were 13,133 renewed shot gun certificates in 2007. Only 9 applications for renewal were refused, compared to 30 refusals in 2006.
- In 2007, 2,608 shotgun certificates were cancelled, a decrease of 9 per cent compared with 2,879 cancellations in 2006 (see Annex Note 10), while 83 were revoked, an increase of 8 per cent on the 77 certificates revoked in 2006.
- Strathclyde (8,940), Grampian (8,935) and Northern (8,673) police force areas jointly accounted for more than half of all shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2007.
- The number of shot gun certificates on issue per head of population was highest in Northern police force area (3,061 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Strathclyde (405 per 100,000 population).

Chart 4 Firearm and shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December 2007 per 100,000 population⁽¹⁾



(1) Population figures: GROS mid year estimates 2006

3.3 Firearm Dealers (Tables 6 and 7)

- There were 301 registered firearms dealers in Scotland at the end of 2007, an increase of 6 per cent from the 283 registered dealers at the end of 2006.
- In 2007, 143 dealers had their request for renewal of their registration granted compared to 31 requests granted in 2006. The number of dealers applying for renewal was much higher in 2007 than 2006, mainly due to the 3 year registration period cycle for dealers. See Annex note 13 for more details. There were 6 refusals for new registration and 1 refusal for renewal of registration among dealers, while 24 registrations were cancelled.

3.4 ***Visitors' Permits (Table 8)***

- The number of applications for Visitors' Permits from both EC and non-EC residents in 2007 totalled 2,573 for firearms (up from 2,401 in 2006) and 4,685 for shot guns (up from 4,380 in 2006).

3.5 ***European Firearm Passes (Table 9)***

- The number of European Firearm Passes on issue at the end of 2007 was 1,092, compared to 974 in 2006.

3.6 ***Article 7 Authorities (Table 10)***

- There were 2 applications (granted) for Article 7 Authorities made by certificate holders in 2007, compared to 3 in 2006.

4. Appendix of tables

Firearm certificates

- Table 1* Firearm certificates : New applications (granted and refused) and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007
- Table 2* Firearm certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); variations, cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area
- Table 2A* Firearm certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007
- Table 3* Firearm certificates : Number of firearms possessed on certificate and firearms authorised to be purchased or acquired on certificate in force at the end of the year by type of weapon, 2007

Shot gun certificates

- Table 4* Shot gun certificates : New applications (granted and refused) and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007
- Table 5* Shot gun certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area
- Table 5A* Shot gun certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007

Firearm dealers

- Table 6* Firearms dealers : New applications for registration (of which granted and refused) and dealers registered at 31 December, 1998-2007
- Table 7* Firearms dealers : New and renewal applications for registration from dealers (granted and refused); dealers registered at 31 December 2007, by police force area

Visitors' Permits

- Table 8* Visitors' Permits : Number of applications from EC and non-EC residents by police force area, 2007

European Firearm Passes

- Table 9* European Firearm Passes : Applications for new and renewals; variations, cancellations and passes on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area

Article 7 Authorities

Table 10 Number of applications (granted) by certificate and non-certificate holders and for possession outside UK, 1998-2007

**Firearm certificates : New applications (granted and refused)
and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007**

Table 1

Scotland

Number

Year	Applications ⁽¹⁾ for new firearm certificate		Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(2) (3)}	Number of firearms held on certificate
	Granted	Refused		
1998	962	20	31,072	60,728
1999	857	12	30,536	62,421
2000	1,152	10	28,778	58,862
2001	1,308	15	27,302	59,129
2002	1,214	17	26,212	60,599
2003	1,023	14	26,605	60,440
2004	1,086	12	26,897	63,115
2005	1,059	18	26,511	63,710
2006	1,147	9	26,234	66,164
2007	1,194	9	26,056	66,893

(1) A software problem on the Firearms Licensing system affected the figures returned by Fife police force in 2005 and 2006 in relation to the data on the numbers of applications, variations and cancellations which are not wholly consistent with the totals shown. The force resolved the problem for the provision of the 2007 data.

(2) Grampian police force, up to and including 1998, relied upon a manual auditing system. The year 1999 was the first to be monitored by a dedicated firearms licensing computer and the figures produced for the annual return in January 2000 (for the year 1999) showed serious differences when compared with the previously submitted figures for 1998. The previously produced manual figures relied upon an arithmetical calculation which it is now clear, over the course of many years, produced increasingly inaccurate figures.

(3) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return. This resulted in the number of firearm certificates, shotgun certificates (on issue) and registered firearms dealers at 31 December 2001 being recorded as very slightly over than expected based on the equivalent figures recorded on 31 December 2000.

Firearm certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); variations, cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area

**Table 2
Number & Rate**

Police force area	Applications						Cancellations ⁽²⁾	Revocations ⁽²⁾	Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December	Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December per 100,000 popn ⁽³⁾
	New firearm certificate		Renewal of firearm certificate		Variation of firearm certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused	Fee ⁽¹⁾	No Fee				
					Charged	Charged				
Central	32	1	224	-	39	30	53	1	888	310
Dumfries & Galloway	86	1	545	-	65	101	112	7	2,118	1,431
Fife	75	-	250	-	25	63	115	1	1,084	302
Grampian	235	-	1,024	1	184	118	202	8	4,531	855
Lothian & Borders	200	3	907	1	142	126	174	15	3,619	397
Northern	237	2	1,808	1	284	520	273	14	7,097	2,505
Strathclyde	189	2	1,140	4	157	208	220	5	3,663	166
Tayside	140	-	736	-	151	305	178	4	3,056	780
All forces	1,194	9	6,634	7	1,047	1,471	1,327	55	26,056	509

(1) A fee is charged where a variation increases the number of firearms authorised by the certificate.

(2) Cancellation of a certificate is undertaken by the holder; revocations are at the authority of the Chief Constable and occur in instances where it is believed the holder should no longer be allowed to possess a firearm.

(3) Population as at mid-June 2006.

Firearm certificates : Number of cancellations⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾, revocations and certificates and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1998 - 2007

**Table 2A
Number & Percentage**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(3) (4)}	31,072	30,356	28,778	27,302	26,212	26,605	26,897	26,511	26,234	26,056
Number of cancellations	918	777	2,752	2,651	2,241	657	772	1,372	1,389	1,327
<i>Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December</i>	3.0	2.5	9.0	9.2	8.2	2.5	2.9	5.1	5.2	5.1
Number of revocations	61	74	48	44	48	34	37	35	41	55
<i>Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December</i>	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2

(1) Figures for 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004 are affected by changes in regulations. See Annex Note 10.

(2) A software problem on the Firearms Licensing system affected the figures returned by Fife police force in 2005 and 2006 in relation to the data on the numbers of applications, variations and cancellations which are not wholly consistent with the totals shown. The force resolved the problem for the provision of the 2007 data.

(3) Grampian police force, up to and including 1998, relied upon a manual auditing system. The year 1999 was the first to be monitored by a dedicated firearms licensing computer and the figures produced for the annual return in January 2000 (for the year 1999) showed serious differences when compared with the previously submitted figures for 1998. The previously produced manual figures relied upon an arithmetical calculation which it is now clear, over the course of many years, produced increasingly inaccurate figures.

(4) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return. This resulted in the number of *firearm certificates, shotgun certificates* and registered firearms dealers at 31 December 2001 being recorded as very slightly lower than expected based on the equivalent figures recorded at 31 December 2000

Firearm certificates : Number of firearms possessed on certificate and firearms authorised to be purchased or acquired on certificate in force at the end of the year by type of weapon, 2007 ⁽¹⁾ **Table 3**

Scotland											Number
Firearms on certificate	Type of weapon										Total ⁽⁵⁾
	Section 1 shot gun	Rifle	Handgun ⁽²⁾	Carbine		Muzzleloader		Air weapon ⁽³⁾		Miscellaneous ⁽⁴⁾	
				Under lever	Bolt action	Rifle	Handgun	Rifle	Handgun		
Possessed	1,710	43,306	510	141	15	196	476	249	309	5,301	66,893
Authorised to be purchased / acquired	202	4,996	61	5	-	48	125	91	-	1,109	8,157
Total	1,912	48,302	571	146	15	244	601	340	309	6,410	75,050

(1) See Note 9 of Annex

(2) Includes those weapons which were exempt from the Firearms (Amendment)(No 2) Act 1997 e.g. single shot humane killers, shot pistols, grade 1 starters, trophies of war, antique firearms and 'handguns' used by the SSPCA.

(3) See Note 4 of Annex

(4) Includes weapons such as section 5 firearms, tranquillising rifles etc.

(5) Scotland Total does not match the sum of weapon types as, due to the computer system used, Tayside police could not provide a breakdown by type of weapon. Tayside's figures are however included in the Scottish totals shown above.

Shot gun certificates : New applications (granted and refused) and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1998-2007 **Table 4**

Scotland				Number
Year	Applications ⁽¹⁾ for new shot gun certificate		Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(2) (3)}	Number of shot guns held on certificate
	Granted	Refused		
1998	1,494	36	63,100	129,563
1999	1,107	35	62,919	127,494
2000	1,579	52	58,627	123,994
2001	1,806	34	54,634	121,472
2002	1,672	46	51,778	122,551
2003	1,618	38	52,421	125,395
2004	1,369	31	52,409	129,218
2005	1,833	26	51,029	129,630
2006	1,844	18	49,974	132,181
2007	1,860	31	49,213	133,940

(1) A software problem on the Firearms Licensing system affected the figures returned by Fife police force in 2005 and 2006 in relation to the data on the numbers of applications, variations and cancellations which are not wholly consistent with the totals shown. The force resolved the problem for the provision of the 2007 data.

(2) Grampian police force, up to and including 1998, relied upon a manual auditing system. The year 1999 was the first to be monitored by a dedicated firearms licensing computer and the figures produced for the annual return in January 2000 (for the year 1999) showed serious differences when compared with the previously submitted figures for 1998. The previously produced manual figures relied upon an arithmetical calculation which it is now clear, over the course of many years, produced increasingly inaccurate figures.

(3) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return. This resulted in the number of firearm certificates, shotgun certificates (on issue) and registered firearms dealers at 31 December 2001 being recorded as very slightly lower than expected based on the equivalent figures recorded on 31 December 2000.

Shot gun certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area

**Table 5
Number & Rate**

Police force area	Applications				Cancellations ⁽¹⁾	Revo-cations ⁽¹⁾	Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December	Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December per 100,000 popn ⁽²⁾
	New shot gun certificate		Renewal of shot gun certificate					
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused				
Central	69	3	574	-	110	1	2,159	754
Dumfries & Galloway	157	8	1,188	-	196	10	4,233	2,860
Fife	170	1	618	-	294	3	2,640	736
Grampian	317	1	2,146	1	410	16	8,935	1,686
Lothian & Borders	323	7	2,048	-	363	22	7,832	859
Northern	248	7	2,417	2	400	14	8,673	3,061
Strathclyde	354	4	2,741	4	532	5	8,940	405
Tayside	222	-	1,401	2	303	12	5,801	1,481
All forces	1,860	31	13,133	9	2,608	83	49,213	962

(1) Cancellation of a certificate is undertaken by the holder; revocations are at the authority of the Chief Constable and occur in instances where it is believed the holder should no longer be allowed to possess a shotgun.

(2) Population as at mid-June 2006.

Shot gun certificates : Number of cancellations⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾, revocations and certificates and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1998 - 2007

**Table 5A
Number & Percentage**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(3) (4)}	63,100	62,919	58,627	54,634	51,778	52,421	52,409	51,029	49,974	49,213
Number of cancellations	1,509	1,235	5,612	5,618	4,492	1,016	1,378	3,125	2,879	2,608
<i>Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December</i>	2.4	2.0	8.9	9.6	8.2	2.0	2.6	6.0	5.6	5.2
Number of revocations	129	175	102	81	67	78	83	58	77	83
<i>Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December</i>	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2

(1) Figures for 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004 are affected by changes in regulations. See Annex Note 10.

(2) A software problem on the Firearms Licensing system affected the figures returned by Fife police force in 2005 and 2006 in relation to the data on the numbers of applications, variations and cancellations which are not wholly consistent with the totals shown. The force resolved the problem for the provision of the 2007 data.

(3) Grampian police force, up to and including 1998, relied upon a manual auditing system. The year 1999 was the first to be monitored by a dedicated firearms licensing computer and the figures produced for the annual return in January 2000 (for the year 1999) showed serious differences when compared with the previously submitted figures for 1998.

The previously produced manual figures relied upon an arithmetical calculation which it is now clear, over the course of many years, produced increasingly inaccurate figures.

(4) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return. This resulted in the number of *firearm certificates*, *shotgun certificates* (on issue) and *registered firearms dealers* at 31 December 2001 being recorded as very slightly lower than expected based on the equivalent figures recorded at 31 December 2000.

Firearms dealers : New applications for registration (of which granted and refused) and dealers registered at 31 December, 1998-2007
Scotland

Table 6
Number

Year	New application for registration from dealers		Dealers registered at 31 December ⁽¹⁾
	Granted	Refused	
1998	23	-	295
1999	13	-	283
2000	13	-	278
2001	25	-	273
2002	33	-	285
2003	16	1	284
2004	18	1	280
2005	24	-	275
2006	26	-	283
2007	44	6	301

(1) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return.

This resulted in the number of firearm certificates, shotgun certificates (on issue) and registered firearms dealers at 31 December 2001 being recorded as very slightly lower than expected based on the equivalent figures recorded at 31 December 2000.

Firearms dealers : New and renewal applications for registration from dealers (granted and refused); dealers registered at 31 December 2007, by police force area

Table 7
Number

Police force area	Applications for registration from dealers				Cancellations	Dealers registered at 31 December
	New registration		Renewal of registration			
	Granted	Refused	Granted	Refused		
Central	1	3	-	-	-	8
Dumfries & Galloway	6	1	9	-	2	26
Fife	2	-	5	-	1	12
Grampian	6	-	20	-	3	50
Lothian & Borders	7	1	11	-	5	27
Northern	5	-	39	1	5	55
Strathclyde	12	-	37	-	5	75
Tayside	5	1	22	-	3	48
All forces	44	6	143	1	24	301

Visitors' Permits ⁽¹⁾ : Number of applications from EC and non-EC residents by police force area, 2007

**Table 8
Number**

Police force area	Applications				Total Applications	
	EC residents		Non - EC residents			
	Firearms	Shot guns	Firearms	Shot guns	Firearms	Shot guns
Central	63	42	5	9	68	51
Dumfries & Galloway	167	368	2	33	169	401
Fife	24	258	2	54	26	312
Grampian	446	527	60	65	506	592
Lothian & Borders	142	348	12	76	154	424
Northern	916	812	64	93	980	905
Strathclyde	413	251	36	10	449	261
Tayside	217	1,684	4	55	221	1,739
All forces	2,388	4,290	185	395	2,573	4,685

(1) See Note 14 of Annex.

European Firearm Passes : Applications for new and renewals; variations, cancellations and passes on issue at 31 December 2007, by police force area

**Table 9
Number**

Police force area	Applications issued			Cancellations	European Firearm Passes on issue at 31 December
	New European Firearms Pass ⁽¹⁾	Renewal of European Firearms Pass	Variation of European Firearms Pass ⁽²⁾		
Central	10	11	-	4	58
Dumfries & Galloway	17	20	-	8	80
Fife	7	9	-	3	45
Grampian	45	31	-	12	158
Lothian & Borders	56	31	4	-	291
Northern	24	10	3	17	63
Strathclyde	25	27	6	29	276
Tayside	21	28	8	14	121
All forces	205	167	21	87	1,092

(1) An applicant for an European Firearm Pass must hold a valid firearm or shot gun certificate.

If the applicant holds a certificate and applies for a pass then a European Firearm Pass will be issued.

(2) Variation refers only to the insertion or deletion of firearm particulars on the Pass.

Article 7 Authorities : Number of applications (granted) by certificate and non-certificate holders and for possession outside UK, 1998-2007
Scotland

Table 10
Number

Year	Number of applications (granted)		
	Cert. holders	Non-cert. holders	For possession outside UK
1998	1	-	1
1999	2	-	1
2000	3	-	-
2001	4	-	-
2002	1	-	-
2003	-	-	-
2004	-	-	-
2005	1	-	-
2006	3	-	-
2007	2	-	-

5. Notes on statistics used in this bulletin

Accuracy of the statistics

1. The statistics in this bulletin are provided by each Scottish police force in an annual aggregate return to Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services Division.

Regulations on the issue of firearm and shot gun certificates

2. All persons acquiring or in possession of a firearm or shot gun must have a certificate issued by the Chief Constable for the police force area in which the person lives, unless they are otherwise exempt. Persons sentenced to any form of custody for a period of three years or more may be prohibited from possessing firearms for a period of up to life, depending upon the sentence.

3. For weapons covered by Section 1 of the 1968 Act and Section 2 of the 1988 Act, which includes rifles, large magazine smooth bore guns and especially dangerous air weapons, the Chief Constable must be satisfied that an applicant has good reason for wanting a weapon, is fit to be entrusted with it, and that the public safety or the peace will not be endangered. The certificate lists the number, type and serial number of each weapon held and any conditions attached (a standard condition is that weapons and ammunition are held in a secure place when not in use).

4. A certificate is required for air weapons of a type declared by the Secretary of State under the Dangerous Air Weapons Rules 1969 (as amended) to be specifically dangerous. The vast majority of air weapons held in Scotland do not require a certificate. Since 20 January 2004 the sale, manufacture and import of Self Contained Gas Cartridge (SCGC) air weapons has been banned. Individuals had until 30 April 2004 to surrender these weapons or apply for a licence. This has had the result of significantly increasing the number of air weapons possessed on certificate compared to previous years.

5. Shot gun certificates, covered by Section 2 of the 1968 Act and Section 2 of the 1988 Act, permit the holder to possess any number of shot guns, which can include pump-action and self-loading weapons which have a magazine which is incapable of holding more than two cartridges but excluding large magazine smooth bore guns. Applications may not be granted or renewed if a Chief Constable has reason to believe that the applicant is prohibited by the Firearms Acts from possessing a shot gun. Nor may applications be granted or renewed unless the Chief Constable is satisfied that the applicant can be permitted to possess a shot gun without danger to public safety or to the peace (Section 3 of the 1988 Act). The certificate specifies the description of the shot guns including, if known, the identification numbers of the guns.

6. Certain types of weapons (e.g. machine guns) are prohibited under Section 5 of the 1968 Act as amended by Section 1 of the 1988 Act; their possession can only be authorised by the Secretary of State or Scottish Ministers after careful enquiries by the police.

7. Following the Dunblane incident changes to the existing firearms legislation were introduced to enhance public safety. As a result, the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 was implemented and thereafter the Firearms (Amendment)(No.2) Act 1997. Under these Acts, all pistols (otherwise referred to as “handguns”) were banned. A number of types of handgun were exempted from the Act including muzzle-loading guns, shot pistols, slaughtering instruments, firearms used for the humane killing of animals, trophies of war etc.

8. A firearm or shot gun certificate permits the holder to possess one or more weapons, thus changes in the number of certificates will not necessarily reflect changes in the number of weapons held legally.

9. It is accepted that the total number of firearms covered by certificates will include an element of double counting: two or more individuals may each hold a certificate that allows them to possess the same actual firearm. A certificate allows the holder to either **possess** or authorises them to **purchase or acquire** a weapon or a number of weapons.

Regulations on the renewal, cancellation and revocation and variation of firearm and shot gun certificates

10. In 1994 firearm certificates were valid for three years and required renewal in 1998, but with effect from January 1995 firearm certificates were valid for five years and therefore did not require renewal until January 2000. Certificates can be renewed on application for a further five years. This meant that for the years 1998 and 1999 no certificates required renewal as these were in effect ‘missing’ years in the regulations. Consequently, the number of certificates due for renewal in 2003 and 2004 was based primarily on the number of new certificates granted in 1998 and 1999. This meant that the number of renewals for 2003 and 2004 was very low compared to previous years. Similarly, the number of cancellations made in any year would appear to be linked to whether they require renewal or not and so the number of cancellations for 2003 and 2004 was also low.

11. To alter the number and type of weapons held on a firearm certificate, an application for a variation must be made to the Chief Constable. A fee is charged where the variation **increases the number** of firearms authorised by the certificate. The expiry date of a shot gun certificate can be aligned with the holder’s firearm certificate (Section 11 of the 1988 Act).

12. Following Lord Cullen’s Inquiry into the Dunblane incident in 1996, there was a review of information requirements in relation to both firearm and shot gun certificates. As a result, a revised return was introduced with effect from 1 January 1998. This was sent to Chief Constables for completion. The main changes to the form included the addition of new categories on the reasons for revocation and the collection, for the first time, of information on the number of firearms and types of weapon held on certificates.

Regulations on firearm dealers certificates

13. Section 13 of the 1988 Act increased the registration period for dealers from 1 to 3 years. The grounds for refusal for new applications for registration were extended and a register of transactions must be retained for at least 5 years. The

Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 introduced a requirement for anyone selling or transferring air weapons by way of trade and or business register with the police as a firearms dealer. This requirement came into effect on 1 October 2007, although businesses were able to start the registration process from 6 April 2007.

Regulations on visitors' permits and European firearm passes

14. The Firearms Act (Amendment) Regulations 1992 which came into force on 1 January 1993 amended firearms legislation in Great Britain to meet the requirement of the EC Weapons Directive which controls the acquisition and possession of weapons in EC Member states.

15. There is no charge for a variation to a Visitors' Permit for a firearm or shot gun when an amendment is made to the existing conditions specified on the permit (excluding numbers of firearms authorised and expiry date). If a change is required which increases the number of firearms or shot guns authorised on the permit, or which extends the expiry date of the permit, then this should be treated as a new application.

16. From January 1993 any EC resident who wants to buy or acquire a category B firearm (e.g. short and semi-automatic rifles, carbines and smooth bore guns, including repeating) in another EC State must, unless they are exempt under the EC Firearms Directive, be able to show that they have the agreement of the authority within their state of residence to purchase or acquire a firearm in another EC State. This agreement is obtained from the local Chief Police Officer for the area in which they reside, and is called an Article 7 Authority. Information relating to the authority of a person to purchase or acquire a firearm/shot gun when in another EC State was first collected centrally in 1994.

Other

17. The following symbol is used in the tables in this bulletin.

- = nil

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN GROUP

OUR AIM

To provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meet the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.

OBJECTIVES

1. To produce statistics and analysis relevant to user needs by
 - Developing our understanding of customer requirements to ensure statistics are kept relevant and analysis is well targeted;
 - Developing the range of statistics and analysis we produce;
 - Where practicable improving timeliness;
 - Providing more statistics disaggregated by age, gender and ethnicity;
 - Developing more data for small areas through the Neighbourhood Statistics project;
 - Contributing to production of comparable statistics across the UK and internationally.
2. To ensure effective use of our statistics by
 - Contributing more directly to policy processes inside and where possible outside government;
 - Improving access to and presentation of data and analysis;
 - Improving the advice provided on statistics.
3. To work effectively with users and providers by
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 - Involving users and providers in planning developments in outputs and processes;
 - Minimising the burden on data providers through dropping or streamlining collections as appropriate, to ensure the benefits of the information justify the costs of collection.
4. To develop the quality of statistics by
 - Assuring and improving quality as an integral part of data collection and analysis and through regular reviews in line with National Statistics quality strategy;
 - Developing statistical methods, systems and classifications;
 - Working with the rest of the Government Statistical Service to develop joint approaches/solutions where appropriate.
5. To assure the integrity of statistics by
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Correspondence and enquiries

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