



Statistical Bulletin

Criminal Justice Series

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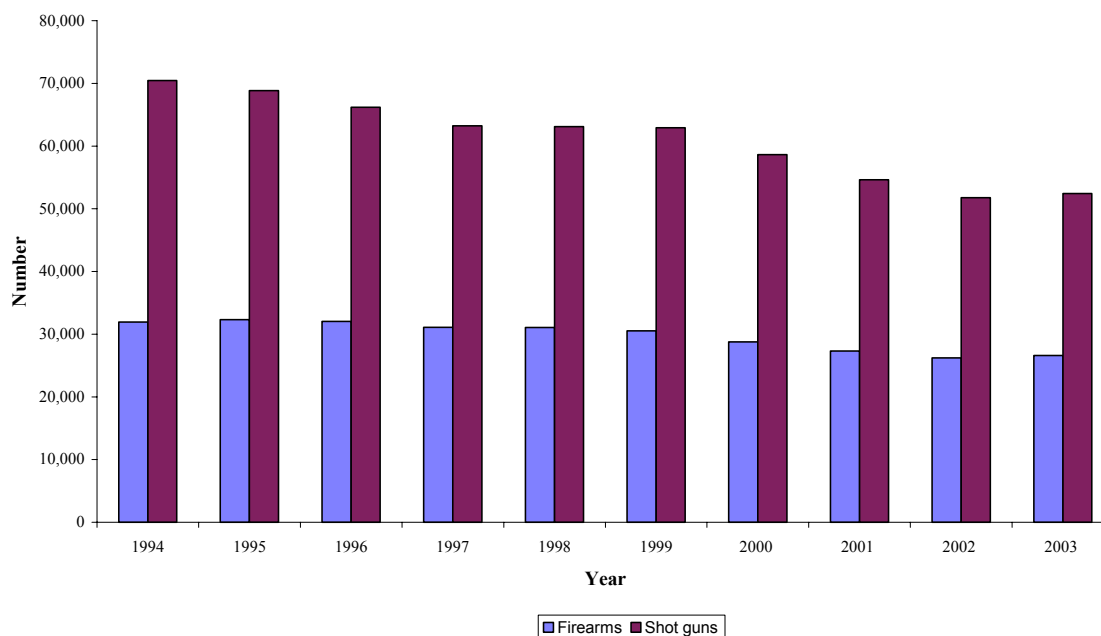
FIREARM CERTIFICATES STATISTICS, SCOTLAND, 2003

1. Introduction

This bulletin presents information for the years 1994 to 2003 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 2002 were published in The Scottish Executive statistical bulletin, "*Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland, 2002*" in September 2003. The corresponding figures for 2003 will be published in a bulletin later in the year.

Changes in regulation regarding the length of time a firearm or shot gun certificate was valid for changed with 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 that primarily only those certificates which were newly applied for in 1998 required renewal in 2003. This has meant that the number of renewals of firearm and shot gun certificates are very low for 2003, as is the number of cancellations. Further information is given in the Notes in the Annex.

Chart 1 Firearm and shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December, Scotland, 1994-2003



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2. Main Points

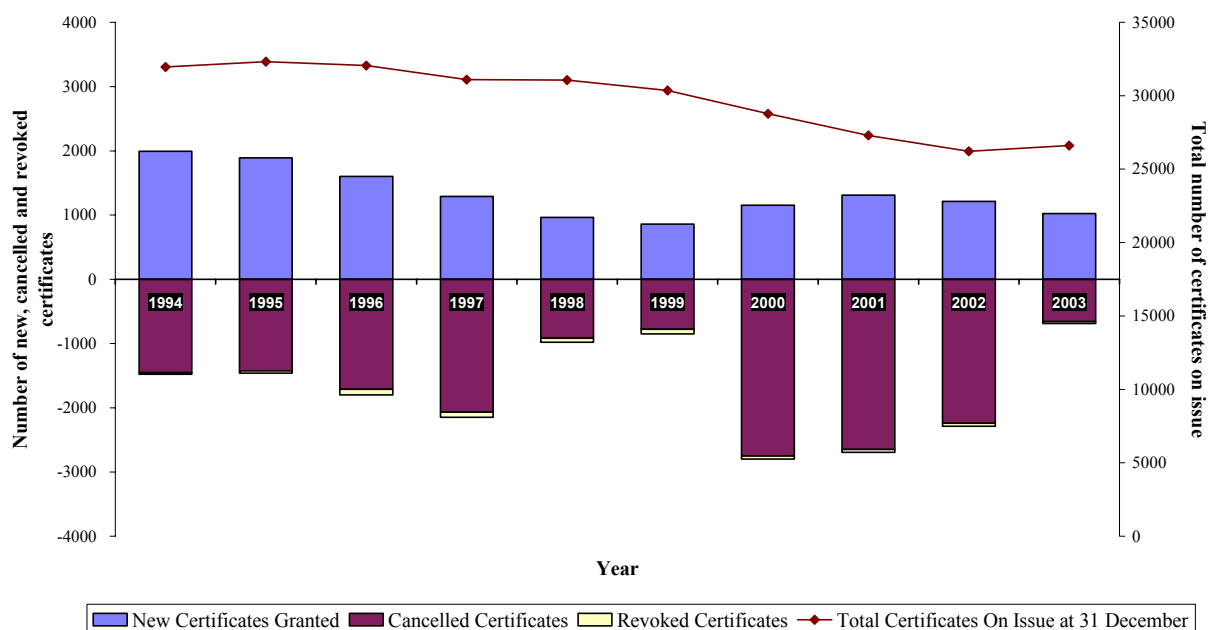
- There were 26,605 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2003, an increase of 1 per cent (393) on the previous year and the first increase since 1995.
- In 2003, there were 1,037 applications for new firearms certificate, a decrease of 16 per cent when compared with 2002. Although the number of applications fell between 2002 and 2003, there were nevertheless more applications than cancellations in the year; thus increasing the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.
- In 2003, 1,536 firearm certificates were renewed, a decrease of 78 per cent compared with 7,005 renewals in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9), and 10 applications for renewal were refused.
- Over a quarter of all firearms certificates on issue were in the Northern police force area, whilst Grampian and Strathclyde jointly accounted for around a further third of the total.
- The 26,605 firearm certificates on issue at December 31 2003 covered the possession of 60,440 firearms. This represents a 0.3 per cent decrease on the number of firearms in 2002, and the average number of firearms possessed on each certificate remained at 2.3.
- There were 52,421 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2003, an increase of 1 per cent (643) on the previous year and the first increase since 1988.
- The number of applications for a new shot gun certificate was 1,656 in 2003, 62 (4 per cent) less than the number recorded in 2002. Although the number of applications fell between 2002 and 2003, there were nevertheless more applications than cancellations in the year; thus increasing the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.
- There were 2,802 renewed shot gun certificates in 2003, a decrease of 81 per cent compared with 14,617 renewals in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9), with 10 applications for renewal being refused.
- Strathclyde, Grampian and Northern police force areas jointly constituted more than half of all shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2003.
- The number of firearm and shot gun certificates on issue per head of population was highest in the Northern police force area and lowest in Strathclyde.
- The 52,421 shot gun certificates on issue covered the possession of 125,395 shot guns, a 2.3 per cent increase on 2002. The average number of shot guns possessed on each certificate remained at 2.4.

3. Commentary

3.1 Firearm Certificates

- There were 26,605 firearm certificates on issue at the end of 2003, an increase of 1 per cent (393) on the previous year and the first increase since 1995.
- In 2003, there were 1,037 applications for new firearms certificate, a decrease of 16 per cent when compared with 2002. Over the ten-year period 1994-2003 the annual number of applications for new firearms certificates has decreased by 48 per cent, from 2,005 in 1994. Although the number of applications fell between 2002 and 2003, there were nevertheless more applications than cancellations in the year; thus increasing the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.
- The number of applications granted was 1,023. Fourteen applications (1.4 per cent) were refused.
- In 2003, 1,536 firearm certificates were renewed, a decrease of 78 per cent compared with 7,005 renewals in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9), and 10 applications for renewal were refused.
- There were 657 cancellations of firearm certificates, a decrease of 71 per cent compared with 2,241 cancellations in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9). In addition, the police revoked 34 firearm certificates.

Chart 2 New granted applications, cancellations and revocations, and total on issue of firearm certificates, Scotland, 1994-2003



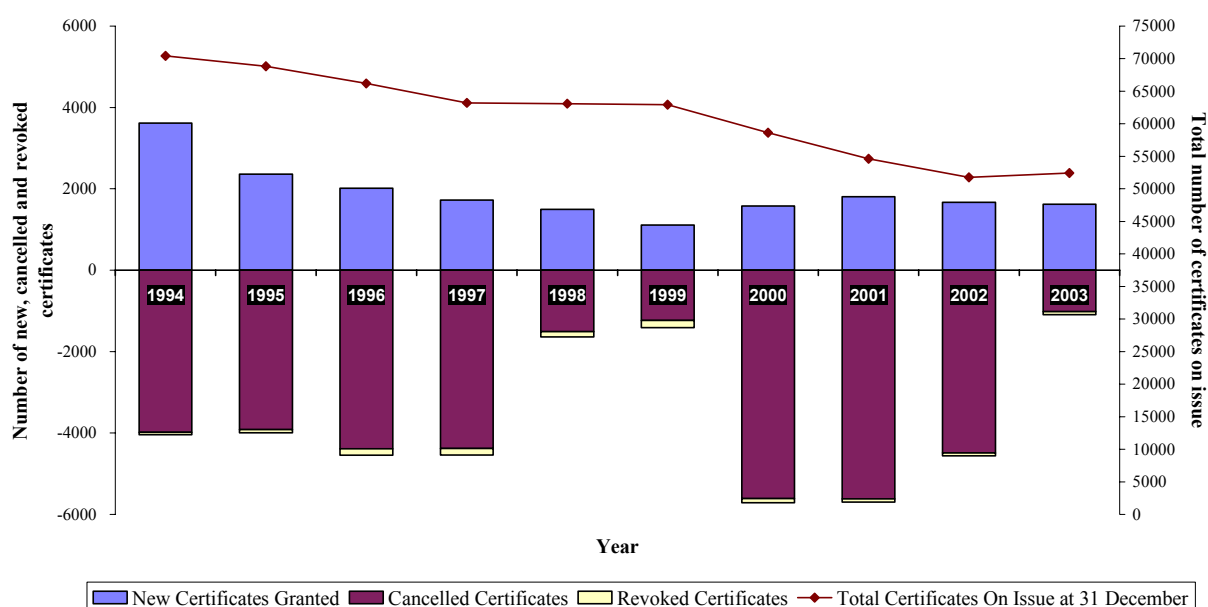
- Over a quarter (7,236) of all firearms certificates on issue were in the Northern police force area, whilst Grampian and Strathclyde jointly accounted for around a further third of the total.
- The number of firearm certificates on issue per head of population was highest in the Northern police force area (2,627 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Strathclyde (174 per 100,000 population).
- The 26,605 firearm certificates on issue at December 31 2003 covered the possession of 60,440 firearms (0.3 per cent decrease on 2002). In addition, a further 8,120 certificates authorised the purchase or acquisition of firearms (see Note 8). The average number of firearms possessed for each certificate remained at 2.3 for 2003.

- Nearly ninety per cent of certified firearms where the type of weapon was known were rifles possessed or authorised to be purchased.

3.2 Shot Gun Certificates

- There were 52,421 shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2003, an increase of 1 per cent (643) on the previous year and the first increase since 1988.
- The number of applications for a new shot gun certificate was 1,656 in 2003, 62 (4 per cent) less than the number recorded in 2002. Although the number of applications fell between 2002 and 2003, there were nevertheless more applications than cancellations in the year; thus increasing the number of certificates on issue at the end of the year.
- Permission was granted for 1,618 new shot gun certificates, a decrease of 3 per cent (54) from the 1,672 granted in 2002. Thirty eight applications (2 per cent) were refused.

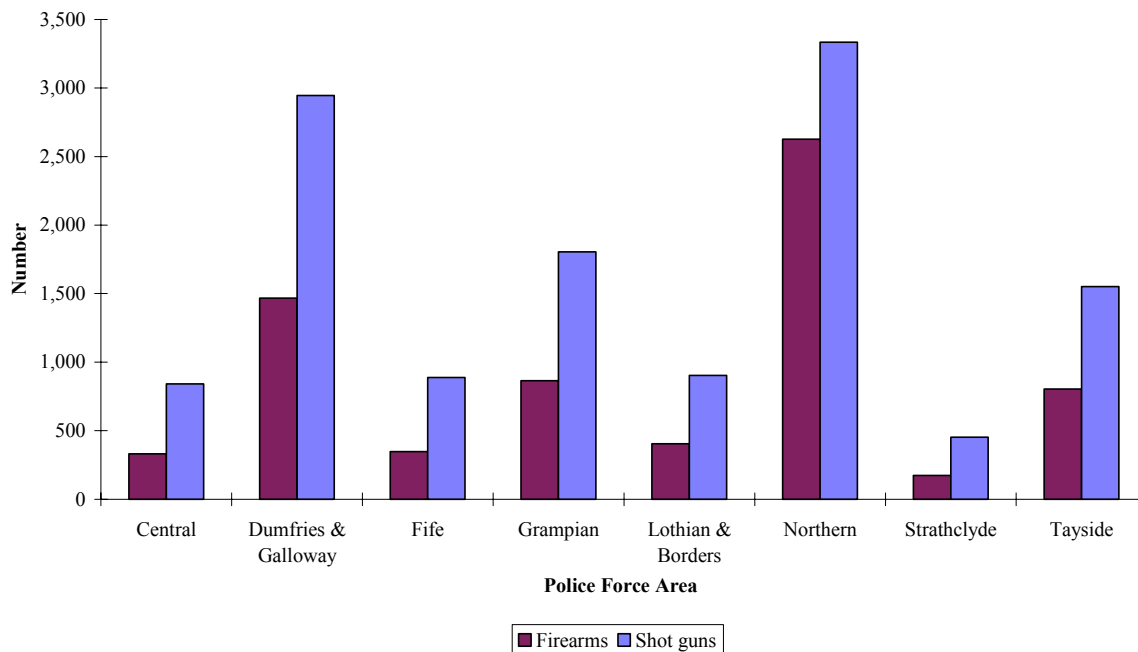
Chart 3 New granted applications, cancellations and revocations, and total on issue of shot gun certificates, Scotland, 1994-2003



- There were 2,802 renewed shot gun certificates in 2003, a decrease of 81 per cent compared with 14,617 renewals in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9), with 10 applications for renewal being refused.
- In 2003, 1,016 shotgun certificates were cancelled, a decrease of 77 per cent compared with 4,492 cancellations in 2002 (see Introduction and Note 9), whilst 78 were revoked.
- Strathclyde (9,972), Grampian (9,439) and Northern (9,183) police force areas jointly constituted more than half of all shot gun certificates on issue at the end of 2003.
- The number of shot gun certificates on issue per head of population was highest in Northern police force area (3,333 per 100,000 population) and lowest in Strathclyde (452 per 100,000 population).

- The 52,421 shot gun certificates on issue covered the possession of 125,395 shot guns (2.3 per cent increase on 2002). The average number of shot guns possessed for each certificate has remained at 2.4 for 2003.

Chart 4 Firearm and shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December 2003 per 100,000 population



3.3 *Firearm Dealers*

- There were 284 registered firearm dealers in Scotland in 2003.
- In 2003, 29 dealers had their request for renewal of their registration granted, with 16 new dealer registrations granted. There was one refusal for new registration amongst dealers, whilst 16 registrations were cancelled.

3.4 *Visitors' Permits*

- The number of applications for Visitors' Permits from both EC and non-EC residents in 2003 totalled 2,585 for firearms (down from 2,831 in 2002) and 5,111 for shot guns (up from 4,956 in 2002).

3.5 *European Firearm Passes*

- The number of European Firearm Passes on issue at the end of 2003 was 709, compared to 618 in 2002.

4. Appendix of tables

Firearm certificates

Table 1 Firearm certificates : New applications (granted and refused) and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1994-2003

Table 2 Firearm certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); variations, cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December by police force area, 2003

Table 2A Firearm certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1994-2003

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, 2003

Shot gun certificates

Table 4 Shot gun certificates : New applications (granted and refused) and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1994-2003

Table 5 Shot gun certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused); cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December by police force area, 2003

Table 5A Shot gun certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1994-2003

Firearm dealers

Table 6 Firearms dealers : New applications for registration (of which granted and refused) and dealers registered at 31 December, 1994-2003

Table 7 Firearms dealers : New and renewal applications for registration from dealers (granted and refused); dealers registered at 31 December by police force area, 2003

Visitors' Permits

Table 8 Visitors' Permits : Number of applications from EC and non-EC residents by police force area, 2003

European Firearm Passes

Table 9 European Firearm Passes : Applications for new and renewals; variations, cancellations and passes on issue at 31 December by police force area, 2003

Article 7 Authorities

Table 10 Number of applications (granted) by certificate and non-certificate holders and for possession outside UK, 1994-2003

**Firearm certificates : New applications (granted and refused)
and certificates on issue at 31 December, 1994-2003**

Table 1

Scotland

Number

Year	Applications for new firearm certificate		Firearm certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(1) (2)}
	Granted	Refused	
1994	1,991	14	31,952
1995	1,889	9	32,317
1996	1,600	22	32,053
1997	1,291	13	31,094
1998	962	20	31,072
1999	857	12	30,536
2000	1,152	10	28,778
2001	1,308	15	27,302
2002	1,214	17	26,212
2003	1,023	14	26,605

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

Firearm certificates : Applications for new and renewals (granted and refused);
variations, cancellations, revocations and certificates on issue at 31 December 2003, by police force area

Table 2
Number & Rate

Police force area	Applications						Cancellations ⁽²⁾	Revo-cations ⁽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⁾ Charged	No Fee Charged				
Central	26	-	23	-	24	23	23	4	927	331
Dumfries & Galloway	90	1	44	-	55	76	50	4	2,162	1,468
Fife	56	-	21	-	39	32	21	3	1,220	348
Grampian	191	1	128	-	134	116	159	2	4,525	865
Lothian & Borders	141	-	111	-	98	115	87	7	3,590	405
Northern	231	8	143	3	190	350	115	9	7,236	2,627
Strathclyde	151	1	112	6	167	182	109	2	3,832	174
Tayside	137	3	954	1	92	148	93	3	3,113	803
All forces	1,023	14	1,536	10	799	1,042	657	34	26,605	526

(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 2002. Population estimates for 2003 were not available at the time of going to press.

Firearm certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates
and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1994 - 2003

Table 2A
Number & Percentage

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of certificates on issue at 31 December ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	31,952	32,317	32,053	31,094	31,072	30,356	28,778	27,302	26,212	26,605
Number of cancellations	1,453	1,427	1,711	2,069	918	777	2,752	2,651	2,241	657
Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December	4.6	4.5	5.3	6.5	3.0	2.5	9.0	9.2	8.2	2.5
Number of revocations	23	33	86	80	61	74	48	44	48	34
Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1

(1) 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.

(2) 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, 2003 ⁽¹⁾

Table 3

Scotland

Number

Firearms on certificate	Type of weapon									Total ⁽⁴⁾	
	Section 1 shot gun	Rifle	Handgun ⁽²⁾	Carbine		Muzzleloader		Airweapon			Miscellaneous ⁽³⁾
				Under lever	Bolt action	Rifle	Handgun	Rifle	Handgun		
Possessed	1,555	42,740	488	200	12	176	426	186	23	3,274	60,440
Authorised to be purchased / acquired	165	5,754	57	46	1	67	120	67	6	694	8,120
Total	1,720	48,494	545	246	13	243	546	253	29	3,968	68,560

(1) See Note 8 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) Includes weapons such as section 5 firearms, tranquillising rifles etc.

(4) Total number of firearms possessed and firearms authorised to be purchased/acquired for Tayside was 11,360 and 1,143 respectively.

However, due to the computer system in use a breakdown by type of weapon could not be provided. 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, 1994-2003**

Table 4

Scotland

Number

Year	Applications for new shot gun certificate		Shot gun certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(1) (2)}
	Granted	Refused	
1994	3,618	35	70,424
1995	2,365	24	68,815
1996	2,015	52	66,185
1997	1,727	34	63,215
1998	1,494	36	63,100
1999	1,107	35	62,919
2000	1,579	52	58,627
2001	1,806	34	54,634
2002	1,672	46	51,778
2003	1,618	38	52,421

(1) 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.

(2) In 2001, Lothian & Borders implemented a fully computer-generated firearms certificates statistical return. This resulted in the number of *firearm certificates*, *shotgun certiciates (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 2003, 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	67	7	43	-	38	14	2,352	841
Dumfries & Galloway	112	3	82	-	87	7	4,337	2,944
Fife	72	8	64	1	40	6	3,119	889
Grampian	276	1	183	-	228	5	9,439	1,804
Lothian & Borders	306	5	206	-	144	15	8,008	903
Northern	246	5	146	4	169	16	9,183	3,333
Strathclyde	306	5	212	5	207	9	9,972	452
Tayside	233	4	1,866	-	103	6	6,011	1,551
All forces	1,618	38	2,802	10	1,016	78	52,421	1,037

(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 2002. Population estimates for 2003 were not available at the time of going to press.

Shot gun certificates : Number of cancellations, revocations and certificates and percentage on issue at 31 December, 1994 - 2003

**Table 5A
Number & Percentage**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of certificates on issue at 31 December ^{(1) (2)}	70,424	68,815	66,185	63,215	63,100	62,919	58,627	54,634	51,778	52,421
Number of cancellations	3,983	3,916	4,389	4,379	1,509	1,235	5,612	5,618	4,492	1,016
Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December	5.6	5.6	6.4	6.6	2.4	2.0	8.9	9.6	8.2	2.0
Number of revocations	61	77	157	159	129	175	102	81	67	78
Percentage of number on issue at end of previous December	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2

(1) 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.

(2) 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, 1994-2003

Table 6

Scotland

Number

Year	New application for registration from dealers		Dealers registered at 31 December ⁽¹⁾
	Granted	Refused	
1994	27	-	350
1995	21	-	328
1996	15	-	319
1997	12	-	313
1998	23	-	295
1999	13	-	283
2000	13	-	278
2001	25	-	273
2002	33	-	285
2003	16	1	284

(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 2003, 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	-	-	-	-	-	6
Dumfries & Galloway	1	-	3	-	1	19
Fife	1	-	-	-	-	12
Grampian	5	-	7	-	6	45
Lothian & Borders	2	-	3	-	3	32
Northern	2	-	3	-	1	62
Strathclyde	4	1	7	-	4	66
Tayside	1	-	6	-	1	42
All forces	16	1	29	-	16	284

**Visitors' Permits ⁽¹⁾ : Number of applications from
EC and non-EC residents by police force area, 2003**

**Table 8
Number**

Police force area	Applications				Total Applications	
	EC residents		Non - EC residents			
	Firearms	Shot guns	Firearms	Shot guns	Firearms	Shot guns
Central	79	47	6	4	85	51
Dumfries & Galloway	148	335	9	52	157	387
Fife	25	335	2	66	27	401
Grampian	375	657	31	121	406	778
Lothian & Borders	128	356	10	80	138	436
Northern	914	922	71	158	985	1,080
Strathclyde	458	247	48	32	506	279
Tayside	272	1,628	9	71	281	1,699
All forces	2,399	4,527	186	584	2,585	5,111

(1) See Note 14 of Annex.

**European Firearm Passes : Applications for new and renewals; variations, cancellations
and passes on issue at 31 December 2003, 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	2	3	-	2	40
Dumfries & Galloway	7	-	-	3	66
Fife	2	4	3	1	37
Grampian	15	5	-	3	97
Lothian & Borders	31	11	-	9	130
Northern	29	6	4	23	52
Strathclyde	32	4	3	3	214
Tayside	17	2	1	-	73
All forces	135	35	11	44	709

(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, 1994-2003
Scotland

Table 10
Number

Year	Number of applications (granted)		
	Cert. holders	Non-cert. holders	For possession outside UK
1994	4	-	-
1995	3	-	1
1996	-	-	1
1997	1	-	1
1998	1	-	1
1999	2	-	1
2000	3	-	-
2001	4	-	-
2002	1	-	-
2003	-	-	-

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 the Scottish Executive Justice Department. They are subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system.

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 specially 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. 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.

5. 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 granted by the Secretary of State after careful enquiries by the police.

6. Following the Dunblane incident changes to the existing firearms legislation were introduced to enhance public safety. As a result, the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 ("the 1997 Act") was implemented and thereafter the Firearms (Amendment)(No.2) Act 1997 ("the 1997 (No.2) Act"). Under the 1997 Act, all pistols (otherwise referred to as "handguns") over .22 calibre were banned with effect from 1 October 1997. A hand-in scheme between 1 July and 30 September 1997 resulted in the surrender of 6,262 large calibre handguns in Scotland, while 1,751 small calibre handguns were also handed in voluntarily. Similarly, there was a second hand-in period between 1 February and 28 February 1998 for the surrender of all small calibre handguns (up to and including .22 calibre) under the 1997 (No.2) Act, which came into effect from 1 March 1998. The Scottish surrender saw 1,013 small calibre guns handed in. A number of types of handgun were exempted from the 1997 (No.2) Act including muzzle-loading guns, shot pistols, slaughtering instruments, firearms used for the humane killing of animals, trophies of war etc. A further amnesty ran from 31 March to 30 April 2003 and saw the surrender of 3,392 firearms including 298 rifles, 986 shotguns, 4,776 rifles and 463 air pistols along with 143,916 rounds of ammunition.

7. 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 legally held.

8. 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

9. In 1994 firearm certificates were valid for three years and required renewal in 1997, 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 were based primarily on the number of new certificates granted in 1998. This has meant that the number of renewals for 2003 were 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 is also low.

10. 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).

11. 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

12. 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.

Regulations on visitors' permits and European firearm passes

13. 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.

14. Information on the number of applications for Visitor's Permits from EC and non-EC residents was collected centrally for the first time in 1994.

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 throughout the tables in the bulletin.

- = nil

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE STATISTICAL SERVICES

Our aim

The aim of the Statistical Service is to provide relevant and reliable statistical information, analysis and advice that meet the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.

Our Objectives

1. To ensure that all statistics work is relevant to meeting user needs by

- Improving the range of statistics and analysis we produce for users inside and outside of government (including for key cross cutting policy areas such as the economy, social justice, area regeneration, equality and rural issues)
- Reviewing and where practicable improving timeliness.
- Providing more statistics disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity and other characteristics.
- Developing more data for small areas through the Neighbourhood Statistics project
- Maintaining comparability of statistics across the UK.

2. To make better use of our statistics by

- Contributing more directly to policy processes inside and where possible outside government. These include community planning, performance information, measurement of government targets, better policy making and modernising government objectives.
- Improving access to and presentation of data and analysis, through better use of the Web, improved publications and improved systems for holding and accessing background data.
- Improving the advice provided on statistics to Ministers and senior management within the Executive.

3. To develop the reliability and integrity of official 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
- Maintaining and promoting integrity through implementation of the National Statistics Code of Practice and related protocols.

4. To ensure the efficient and effective delivery of statistics products and services by

- Making full use of all sources including administrative sources.
- Minimising the burden on data providers through Survey Monitoring & Advice
- Ensuring value for money.
- Employing staff with the necessary skills and ensuring development of expertise amongst existing staff.
- Ensuring effective use of Information and Communications Technology.
- Managing, promoting and upholding the integrity of the statistics profession.

5. To plan effectively and work together by

- Producing and implementing an annual Scottish Executive Statistics Plan.
- Developing more co-ordinated working arrangements with other analytical services in and out of the Executive.
- Working with the rest of the Government Statistical Service to develop joint approaches/solutions where appropriate.
- Improving the involvement of users and providers, working on a partnership basis wherever possible.

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Details of pre-release access will be provided in the Scottish Executive Statistics Website under 'Forthcoming Releases'

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General Register Office for Scotland - Vital statistics and publications - Population statistics, census statistics or digital boundary products	(0131) 314 4243 (0131) 314 4254

For **general enquiries about National Statistics** in the United Kingdom Government contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on
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You can also find National Statistics on the internet - go to **www.statistics.gov.uk**

Current staff names, e-mail addresses and the publications listed below as well as a range of other statistical publications can be found on the Scottish Executive Web site at **www.scotland.gov.uk/stats**.

Further information on the General Register Office for Scotland is available on the website **www.gro-scotland.gov.uk**

Most recent Justice Statistical Publications relating to the Crime and Justice theme

Ref no.	Title	Last published	Price
CrJ/2003/6	Prison Statistics Scotland, 2002	September 2003	£2.00
CrJ/2003/7	Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland, 2002	September 2003	£2.00
Statistics Release	Criminal Appeals Statistics, 2002	October 2003	N/A
CrJ/2003/8	Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police In Scotland, 2002	November 2003	£2.00
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CrJ/2004/1	Criminal Proceedings in Scottish Courts, 2002	February 2004	£2.00
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