



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership
to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

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CACP Statement: Replica Firearms

On February 16, 2021, the federal government of Canada introduced Bill C-21, a comprehensive package of proposed legislative measures to combat firearms crime and reduce firearms-related deaths. One such measure is to update the *Criminal Code* to ensure that any device, including an unregulated airgun that looks exactly like a conventional regulated firearm, is prohibited for the purposes of import, export, sale, and transfer.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) has been advocating for this legislative change since August 2000, when the membership adopted [resolution 2000-01](#) on replica firearms, urging the Minister of Justice to amend the *Criminal Code* to include replica firearms as prohibited weapons.

One of the key reasons for advocating for this legislative change then and now is that replicas resemble real firearms and many of them are virtually indistinguishable from the real thing. They are encountered in the hands of criminals for street-level extortion, robbery, personal protection from other criminals, and to intimidate or terrorize victims when committing an offence. As a result, there has been a regrettable need for police officers to resort to the use of deadly force in situations where they believe replica firearms to be authentic.

Not only can they appear to be authentic but, in certain cases, some replicas can easily be converted into deadly weapons. Contributing to police concerns for public safety are also the facts that imitation firearms are largely unregulated and that users can acquire them easily without proof of age, licence, or competency.

Those who use replica firearms for recreational purposes and who emphasize the importance of the 'likeness' of replica firearms to real guns to enhance the gaming experience have never found themselves in a real-life situation facing an individual engaged in criminal activity who is armed with a gun.

The CACP is not opposed to recreational activities involving the use of airsoft guns but wholeheartedly supports the statement by Public Safety Canada that "*these replica firearms should look like 'toy guns'.*" One such way to achieve a noticeable difference and make imitation guns easily distinguishable from real firearms would be to produce them in a bright colour such as red, yellow, orange, etc. Furthermore, we agree that no recreational activity requires a replica firearm with the capacity to shoot over 500 feet per second. If the activity is meant to be 'a game', then the equipment should reflect that in their appearance, design, and velocity.