

Since March, there has been a new way for Police to capture firearms data and already it is producing more accurate and telling results.

Thanks to Operation Gun Safe, Police is now able to report officially that since going live in March there were 480 firearms “events” recorded nationwide, with 662 firearms seized.

Operation Gun Safe gives us a far more precise picture of the operating environment frontline staff are working in where firearms are involved. Previously the way information was recorded meant that only a fraction of firearms incidents were being correctly entered into NIA and able to be used as official information.

As *Police News* reported in June 2018, of 86 incidents reported over one 79-day period, only five were correctly documented.

Both the Police Association and PNHQ were aware of the disparities between what was happening on the street and what was ending up in the official record.

Since then, Operation Gun Safe has been developed, including a pilot which begun in December last year in Tāmaki Makaurau and rolled out nationally in March.

Acting Superintendent Andrew Sissons, National Manager Response and Operations, says the executive is very keen to get a clearer picture of the prevalence of firearms nationwide and want to understand the operating environment. That way, data can be used to inform decisions on staff safety and resourcing. The feedback received from our frontline people regarding this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive.

The challenge for the team setting up Gun Safe was to create a recording process that was not a burden on the frontline, who, suffice it to say, often have more pressing matters to attend to than filling out forms and ticking boxes.

The answer was to use RIOD (Real-time Intelligence for Operational Deployment), an existing application that is managed by the District Command Centres (DCCs) and feeds into NIA, but had not previously been used to capture this information.

They DCCs are tasked with entering details of each reported firearms incident and staff are encouraged to refer all events involving weapons, be they search warrants, 3Ts, family harm incidents, warrants to arrest, threats and intimidation, inquiries and investigations or mental health call outs.

The data is then broken down by seizure and location, firearm type and incident, including any anecdotal information, which was previously never recorded.

The results speak for themselves and clearly back what staff have been saying about the increasing prevalence of firearms in the community and those being encountered by police.

The Gun Safe team have created a dashboard of stats showing the “firearms event” landscape for the whole country.

In the March figures, districts with the highest reporting were Bay of Plenty (47 events), Waikato (40) and Counties Manukau (38), the majority of those broken down into “firearms incidents”, family harm, search warrants and 3Ts. The most common firearms involved nationwide were rifles.

In April, Counties Manukau topped the list, followed by Waikato and then Bay of Plenty, with “firearms incidents” again topping the list.

Such incidents can include:

- If staff have armed themselves in relation to a firearms incident
- If staff have had firearms presented at them
- If firearms have been seized and located, or surrendered (note: Gun Safe is completely separate from the Government firearms buy-back)
- If there is any evidence firearms were involved
- Or, if the DCC deems a firearms event relevant.

Acting Superintendent Sissons says districts are working hard to get their reporting as accurate as they can. “This data is the most accurate Police currently have, and this has never been captured before. These reports are going to the executive and the district leaders to raise awareness and help inform decision making.”

“A key objective is to provide the Police executive with clear, real time data and insights into the current environment that frontline staff are operating in.”

A huge focus of Gun Safe is on creating a safer environment for staff and the community. Previously, Police has been unable to accurately say whether the risk from firearms has been increasing or decreasing because the data was not available.

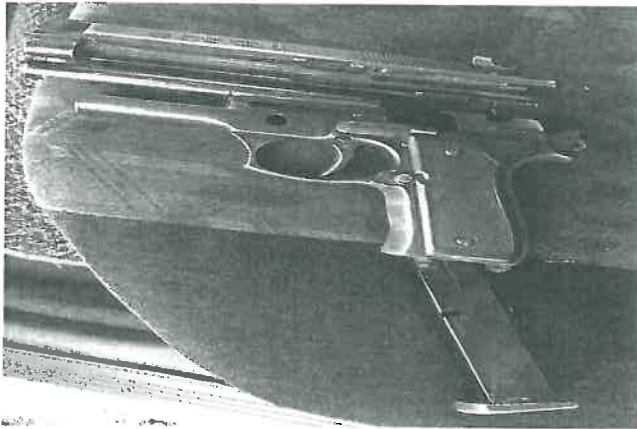
In time, the data now being captured could translate into changes in training and equipment, but, perhaps more importantly, for our members, it’s an acknowledgment that what frontline police have been saying for some time is the real deal, and that what they are seeing on a daily basis is being reflected in official figures.

All these photos are from events within the last month which may be of note.

Please find below, homemade firearm located Auckland:



Firearms seized in Waitematā:



Pistol seized in the Waitematā and Auckland:

