



March 22, 2022

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Oral Question 998-19(2) Firearms Storage and Lessons Learned

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Questions you raised on March 7, 2022 regarding the Department of Lands' policies and procedures with respect to the storage of firearms within our offices. You cited the recent break in at the Department of Lands Regional office in Fort Smith in early March, as well as a separate break and enter that occurred at the Environment and Natural Resources' Fort Smith office in 2019.

The Department of Lands has and continues to cooperate fully with the RCMP as their investigation into the break in at the Department of Lands' Regional Office in Fort Smith continues. I can confirm that all firearms and ammunition were safely and securely stored in compliance with both Federal legislation and the Department of Lands Firearms Policy.

In May 2019, two rifles were stolen from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (ENR) South Slave Regional office during a break in. The firearms were properly stored and locked up in compliance with the federal *Firearms Act*, but the individual who broke in used bolt cutters and a pry bar to get into the safe. The guns were later recovered when the individual was apprehended by the RCMP.

Following this break-in, security systems (Liberty System) were installed in ENR regional offices, and the system in Fort Smith proved beneficial in a more recent break-in at the Fort Smith Regional office that deterred an individual after they broke in and set off the alarm.

ENR and Lands both have a series of policies, directives and procedures that cover all aspects of firearm storage and use. This includes an inventory of firearms that includes the type, serial number and location on firearms.

ENR and Lands' policies and procedures are periodically reviewed and updated. The Lands' Firearm Policy was recently updated and a review of related procedures has been underway. A review of ENR's policies and procedures is also currently underway. This will include a review of the type of security systems and gun cases (both large regional safes and individual officer safes) in use, and any modifications and updates to procedures required.

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Considering these events, and to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness, Lands and ENR will work together as they review the storage of firearms in regional offices. We do not wish there to be a repeat of this type of criminal activity in our offices and will use this as an opportunity to determine what, if anything, could have been done differently to mitigate any future events.



Shane Thompson
Minister
Lands

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs