



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER  
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CHARLES EDACHERIL  
Acting City Controller

September 20, 2023

Honorable Rochelle Bilal, Sheriff  
Philadelphia Sheriff's Office  
Land Title Building, Fifth Floor  
100 S Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19110

Dear Sheriff Bilal,

Thank you for providing information and documentation in response to our most recent follow-up request regarding the Sheriff's Office's missing weapons. After reviewing the materials, we have concluded that there is sufficient evidence to account for 25 out of the original list of 101 missing service firearms reported in November 2020. However, there is still insufficient evidence to account for the whereabouts of other 76 service firearms and 109 Protection From Abuse (PFA) weapons reported as missing. Controller's Office therefore still considers 76 service firearms and 109 PFA weapons to remain unaccounted for. Attached is a brief report detailing our assessment of the follow-up materials provided.

We urge your office to confirm whether the retired deputies either possess the weapons as assumed or have proof of their disposal, and thereafter to enter any weapons that remain missing into NCIC, so that this investigation can be brought to a conclusion. We appreciate your dedication to the safety of all Philadelphians and your cooperation in these efforts to account for inherently dangerous City resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Edacheril".

Charles Edacheril, CPA  
Acting City Controller

Attachment: <Follow-Up Review of Missing Guns>

CC: Erica Davenport, Chief of Staff, Philadelphia Sheriff's Office  
Tariq El-Shabazz, Undersheriff, Philadelphia Sheriff's Office



**OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER**  
Philadelphia Sheriff's Office: Follow-Up Review of Missing Guns  
August 2023

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## **Background**

On November 18, 2020, the Office of the City Controller (Controller's Office) published a report of its investigation into the allegations of missing weapons at the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office). The investigation revealed that 101 service firearms and 109 Protection From Abuse (PFA) weapons were "unaccounted for," that is, missing without sufficient documentation as to their whereabouts. During a follow-up inventory conducted by the Controller's Office in August 2021, 16 of those 101 service firearms were accounted for, bringing that number down to 85 missing service firearms.

During the Fiscal Year 2024 budget hearing with City Council, and in media releases on its website, the Sheriff's Office stated that all but 20 of the original 101 missing service firearms had been found. To confirm those statements, the Acting Controller sent a letter to the Sheriff's Office on May 23, 2023, requesting information on which weapons were purportedly found. The correspondence from the Controller's Office included Excel spreadsheets that listed the 101 service weapons originally identified as unaccounted-for in the November 2020 report, with highlighted markings to indicate the 85 service firearms still considered missing after the August 2021 follow-up.

In its response, the Sheriff's Office reiterated that all but 20 of the 101 service firearms originally reported missing were now accounted for. The Sheriff's Office provided lists describing whether the weapons or records of their disposal were found, presumed to be disposed of, or otherwise accounted for. Of the 20 guns that the Sheriff's Office agrees are still missing, most are believed to be in the possession of retired deputy sheriffs.

## **Follow-Up Review 2023**

After a thorough review of the materials provided, the Controller's Office determined that the August 2021 follow-up already accounted for 16 weapons of the originally reported missing 101. The recent response from the Sheriff's Office only provided sufficient proof for an additional 9 service firearms (three guns physically located; two guns found in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) as registered to civilians; and four unlocated guns but placed in NCIC as missing). Considering those 25 guns now accounted-for with sufficient proof thus brings the current count down to **76 missing service firearms**. These still-missing weapons are as follows:

- 1 shotgun
- 4 semi-automatic handguns
- 71 revolvers/handguns

## Latest Findings Breakdown

The Controller’s Office reviewed the 101 firearms in the categories defined by the Sheriff’s Office (Found, Presumptively Found, Missing and Duplicates) and evaluated the documentation provided to ascertain the current status of each gun. A breakdown of the latest findings:

| SHERIFF’S OFFICE                         |  | CITY CONTROLLER  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Sheriff’s Inventory (defined by Sheriff) | Sheriff’s Breakdown & Definition   | Controller’s Count & Finding   | Still Missing                                 |
| 58 “Found” Guns                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 guns – traded/burned</li> <li>• 7 shotguns – located</li> <li>• 2 handguns – located</li> <li>• 1 gas launcher – located</li> <li>• 2 guns sold to new owners – located</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46 guns – 10 accounted for (previously confirmed traded); remaining 36 lacked sufficient documentation*<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• 7 shotguns – accounted for (3 previously confirmed as located; 4 placed into NCIC)</li> <li>• 2 handguns – accounted for</li> <li>• 1 gas launcher – accounted for</li> <li>• 2 guns sold to new owners – accounted for</li> </ul> | <p>36</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> |
| 20 “Presumptively Found” Guns            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 guns – traded/burned</li> <li>• 5 retiree guns – traded/burned, never at Sheriff’s Office</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 guns – all lacked sufficient documentation*<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• 5 retiree guns – all lacked sufficient documentation*<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>  | <p>15</p> <p>5</p>                            |
| 20 “Missing” Guns                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 retiree guns</li> <li>• 1 shotgun – not located</li> <li>• 1 gun – did not have sufficient information</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All guns determined to be missing by the Sheriff’s Office lacked documentation to confirm disposition</li> </ul>  | <p>20</p>                                     |
| 3 “Duplicates”                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 guns were duplicate serial numbers on the original list</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 guns confirmed to be duplicate serial numbers and deemed accounted for</li> </ul>   | <p>0</p>                                      |
| <b>Total Missing as of August 2023</b>   |  |  | <b>76</b>                                     |

\* Response lacked sufficient identifying information (i.e., the date of disposal, method of disposal, name or address of the business, person or facility that disposed of these weapons) to confirm the disposition of these guns, and therefore these are still considered missing.

<sup>1</sup> Documentation provided showed that 10 specified guns were disposed of on a specific date at a specific place. The remaining 36 guns were identified on a list of weapons in a folder labeled “WEAPONS BURN LIST” without documentation, notation, or confirmation of any specific gun burn event (i.e., the date of burn and the name or address of the business, person or facility that disposed of these weapons).

<sup>2</sup> Response stated that these 15 guns were registered to the Sheriff’s Office on a specific date, that guns registered together are typically disposed of together, and that there was documentation of the disposal of other guns that had been registered on the same date. But, no documentation of disposal was provided for these specific guns.

<sup>3</sup> Response stated that these 5 guns had been assigned to employees that have retired: 3 guns were registered to the Sheriff’s Office on a specific date, and there was documentation of the disposal of other guns that had been registered on the same date; and 2 guns were not registered to the Sheriff’s Office in NCIC despite having been assigned to a specific employee, and therefore were never located at the Sheriff’s Office. No documentation of disposal was provided for these guns.

## **Recommendations**

The Controller's Office continues to recommend the Sheriff's Office take the appropriate steps to account for the missing service firearms:

- Confirm whether the retired deputies have the guns assumed in their possession (missing but assigned and without receipt of return), or have proof of their disposal. In particular, incarcerated former Sheriff John Green should turn over the gun assumed to be in his possession. If the retired deputies cannot confirm possession or disposal, those guns should be placed in NCIC as missing.
- Any remaining service firearms that cannot be located should be reported to the PPD and entered into NCIC. Moving forward, all missing firearms should be reported to the PPD as soon as the Sheriff's Office is made aware of missing gun inventory.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office made no mention regarding the status of the missing 109 PFA weapons, at either their budget hearing or in their press releases, that were identified in the initial investigation by the Office of the City Controller released in November 2020. As part of a PFA order, a judge can order an individual to turn over their personal firearm to the Sheriff's Office until the order is dismissed or expires. These weapons are maintained by the Sheriff's Office through a separate inventory list from the service firearms.

### **The Controller's Office continues to recommend for PFA weapons that:**

- The Sheriff's Office should attempt to locate the missing PFA weapons through tracking of court dockets and other information provided in the logbook. PFA weapons that are located and considered abandoned should be disposed of in accordance with the PFA Act and established City protocols for City property.

### **Supporting Information/Documents Supplied by the Sheriff's Office:**

- Letter to Controller from Sheriff Bilal, dated June 8, 2023, with summary and charts
- Justification Memorandum for Record, dated January 25, 2022.
- Memorandum of Understanding between PPD and Sheriff's Office, April 2022.
- Statement from Lawmen Supply to Sheriff's Office, dated April 30, 2002, with list of 216 weapons traded.
- Memorandum from DSO Sharamatew, dated September 14, 2020, with attached list of weapons found in a folder labeled WEAPONS BURN LIST.
- NCIC checks for 97 of the 101 firearms (performed in 2020).
- Before and after photographs of the Sheriff's Office Armory.
- Four guns placed in NCIC.