

**REVIEW: 4517  
MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE  
ILLINOIS STATE POLICE**

**FIREARM OWNER'S IDENTIFICATION CARD AND  
CONCEALED CARRY LICENSE PROGRAMS  
SEPTEMBER 2021**

**FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS – 6**

**ACCEPTED AND PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED – ALL**

**Background**

On July 21, 2020, the Legislative Audit Commission adopted Resolution Number 155 requiring a management audit of the Illinois State Police's administration of the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act (430 ILCS 65) and the Firearm Concealed Carry Act (430 ILCS 66) for 2018 and 2019. The Resolution contained eight determinations.

Illinois residents are required by the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act to have a valid Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card in order to possess or purchase firearms or ammunition. The Act originally became effective in 1968.

The Firearm Concealed Carry Act, effective July 2013, allows an individual to carry a handgun on or about a person completely or mostly concealed from view of the public or on or about a person within a vehicle.

**Recommendations**

- 1. ISP should seek to reduce manual verifications and checks of applicant information, reduce multiple and overlapping checks, and seek legislative remedies, if necessary, in order to increase the efficiency of the FOID and CCL application processes.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs and has begun working towards a multi-faceted approach to increase efficiencies to help meet the statutory directories with the FOID and CCL Acts. Beginning in March 2020 the Firearms Services Bureau (FSB) began work with Illuminative Strategies (ISI) on a Lean 6 assessment of the FOID process. As a result of a coordinated effort between ISI and the FSB 72 opportunities to improve were identified. Several of the recommended changes had already been identified and were either implemented or in the process of implementation when the process review was completed, many more of the recommendations are still under development with the software vendor Appriss and

are pending implementation. Not long after the Lean 6 assessment was completed the FSB was provided the assistance of a member of the ISP legal office to conduct a thorough review of statutory language to identify other areas where efficiencies could be identified and to provide recommendations to the ISP Governmental Affairs Office for changes to legislation. As a result, several “streamlined” processes were proposed for ISP Senior Command consideration. Many of the recommendations have already been approved, developed and implemented showing a drastic decrease in backlog numbers for FOID renewal applications. As a result of the streamlined processes for FOID renewal applications the FSB has been able to reduce the number of backlogged applications from its peak of nearly 140,000 in early 2021 to under 6,192 by September of 2021. Additional streamlined proposals are pending approval and future development, which the FSB anticipates will have significant effects on new FOID applications as well as CCL new and renewal applications.

In addition to the streamlined enhancements the ISP advocated for numerous legislative changes in the spring and summer of 2021. House Bill 562 passed during the 2021 spring legislative session which contained the first significant rewrite of the FOID Act since 1968, as well as multiple revisions to the CCL Act and Appeals processes. Many of the changes were specifically crafted to address redundancies in processes and lifts much of the burden from both the citizen and the FSB for multiple renewal applications, renewal date issues and FTIP transactions. HB 562 will likely reduce or limit the potential for future backlogs.

**2. ISP should ensure that all FOID and CCL applications are approved or denied within the required statutory timeframes.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs and has been working towards compliance with the directories identified within both the FOID and CCL Acts. As a result of the Lean 6 Assessment, streamlined process developments and hiring additional staff the FSB will be in compliance with the directory for FOID renewal applications at or near the end of September 2021. In addition, due to social unrest and the pandemic the FSB saw an unprecedented number of new FOID and CCL applications received in 2020. The FSB saw a peak in the number of new FOID applications backlogged in November of 2020 at nearly 139,000 applications but as of August 30, 2021 the number of new FOID applications on backlog has dropped to under 48,000. Average processing times has dropped from 205 days in July of 2021 to less than 190 days in September of 2021. As new and renewal FOID applications are approved the backlog number of CCL applications experiences a corresponding increase. The new CCL application backlog saw its peak in December of 2020 at 27,589 before dropping to 7,967 in May of 2021. As the streamlined process for renewal FOID applications were put into production the FSB experienced a surge in CCL applications pushing the backlog number of CCL applications back to nearly 25,000 by July 2021 before the number again began to drop. In addition to the streamlined process improvements a number of provisions passed in House Bill 562 allow for combining expiration dates of FOID and CCL cards to further reduce redundancies and increase the probability of processing applications within statutory guidelines.

It is important to note that FOID and CCL card holders that had submitted a renewal application on file in late 2019 did not expire and remained valid through the time of this report as a result of the Governor’s emergency declaration, if the renewal application had been submitted prior to expiration. Those cards with submitted renewal applications identified within this report for October, November, and December of 2019 were not expired.

**3. ISP should:**

- **ensure that Sheriffs are notified of revocations as is required by the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act; and**
- **continue to work with local law enforcement agencies to ensure revoked FOID cards and Concealed Carry Licenses are returned to ISP in accordance with the Firearm Owners Identification Card Act and the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs and is actively working towards compliance with the FOID and CCL Act by engaging outside agencies by providing training seminars hosted by the FSB on FOID / CCL revocations and other administrative processes. The FSB has provided messaging to encourage participation through revocation details and by providing instructions on how to access and use the Law Enforcement Portal with the total number of agencies on the portal at the time of this report at 745. Since July of 2020, the FSB has presented 15 seminars to ISP Investigative Zones, Sheriff’s Departments and local law enforcement agencies on how to complete and process clear and present danger request as well as firearm disposition records (FDR), including the process to return recovered cards to the ISP. In addition, the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) which is the legacy criminal justice information sharing system in Illinois was recently modernized and a new LEADS platform was deployed. As a result of the deployment, new LEADS will auto generate the status of an individual’s FOID and/or CCL status for all law enforcement personnel in Illinois, when an individual’s identifiers are queried through LEADS.

In addition, the ISP legal office has submitted updates to the FOID Act and the administrative rules to allow an option for Sheriff’s Departments, local law enforcement and courts to destroy the cards received and make note of the destruction on the firearm disposition record rather than mailing the cards back to the ISP. This process is an attempt to encourage compliance by removing the need to mail the card(s) to the ISP.

Although ISP concurs with the recommendation it should be noted that ISP has limited ability to meet compliance with the finding as ISP has no authority to force compliance with outside agencies.

<b>FOID CARD Revocation</b>	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	<b>Total</b>
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2019-FOID Cards Revoked	879	877	957	942	908	922	1,078	956	885	894	728	844	<b>10,870</b>
2019-Firearm Disposition Forms Received	Data Not Available						617	478	479	465	358	422	<b>2,819</b>
2020 - FOID Cards Revoked	857	805	762	836	754	879	1,036	939	957	1,163	1,172	1,582	<b>11,742</b>
2020 - Firearm Disposition Forms Received	579	477	408	242	301	286	438	432	440	431	293	572	<b>4,799</b>
2021 - FOID Cards Revoked	1,363	1,498	1,579	1,575	1,525	1,636	1,092						<b>10,268</b>
2021 - Firearm Disposition Forms Received	310	265	382	476	464	423	582						<b>2,902</b>

**4. ISP should consider including enforcement details in its procedures to ensure consistency among zones.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs but reemphasizes that the agency currently conducts enforcement details as staffing and circumstances allows. The Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) has created the position of Statewide Gun Coordinator within the DCI which will be staffed beginning October 1, 2021. The duties of this position will include the creation of procedures and policies to be used by the Department for conducting FOID revocation details. This will create consistency through development of standard operating procedures to be used throughout the state. These details will facilitate the recovery of revoked FOID cards and Firearm Disposition Records with a team assembled by the Zone Gun Liaison Officers (GLO), for the Zones that do not have a designated gun unit. Coordination with external agencies such as local police departments and the sheriff's office may be required.

Recent amendments to the Gun Trafficking Information Act have expanded funding sources and strengthened the ISP's ability to trace firearms data, conduct revocation details with local agencies and expand enforcement of firearms restraining orders and orders of protection. Additionally, ISP is directed to establish multi-jurisdictional Task Force's to carry-out the enforcement details and provide mutual assistance for recovery of firearms as well as FOID and CCL cards.

**5. ISP should:**

- **establish a case management system for tracking appeals; and**
- **update its administrative rules to reflect the current appeals process.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs and has taken the following steps to address the issues prior to the recommendations suggested:

- Firearms Safety Counsel and Office of Firearms Safety
  - On September 1, 2020, the Director created the Office of Firearms Safety and named a Firearms Safety Counsel, which are situated within the Director's Office and are separate from the Firearms Services Bureau. The Firearms Safety Counsel provides guidance and direction on public safety issues relating to the removal and restoration of firearms rights and privileges under Illinois law.
  - Since creating the Office of Firearms Safety, the Firearms Safety Counsel have developed updated protocols and procedures for evaluating risks regarding individuals whose access to firearms has been denied or revoked under Illinois law and processing appeals received from these individuals.
  - Through July 31, 2021, the Office of Firearms Safety has reduced the overall backlog of appeal cases awaiting a determination by approximately 17% and the pre-Office of Firearms Safety backlog by approximately 35%. The vast majority of complete appeals are now worked within 60 days of receiving all required information.
  
- Case Management
  - In December 2020, the Office of Firearms Safety began working with the ISP's Office of Finance to participate in an agency wide procurement for a Case Management System. As recently as August 2021, this procurement was pending action within the State's Chief Procurement Officer's office. ISP continues to work with each of these offices to answer their questions regarding this procurement and have been advised that the Request for Purchase should be forthcoming in the near future.
  - In the interim, the Office of Firearms Safety transitioned from its no longer supported Lotus Approach database to a Microsoft Access database that has a cloud backup for tracking its open cases. While Access is not a case management system, this does allow the office to categorize appeals and better track numbers for reporting purposes.
  - Additionally, the Office of Firearms Safety has assigned a contractual employee to transition the office from a paper-based filing system to an electronic based filing system ensuring all information within Microsoft Access agrees with the electronic files so that once the case management procurement is final, all case information will be ready for the transition.
  
- Administrative Rules

- On Monday, August 30, 2021, ISP filed proposed rules with the Secretary of State and JCAR. Sections 1230.70 and 1231.170 amend the appeals rules for FOID and Concealed Carry to more accurately reflect its current appeals process.
- Additionally, HB562 recently was passed making extensive changes to the FOID and Concealed Carry Acts, including but not limited to, appeals filed pursuant to these two Acts. While some of these changes were addressed in the rulemaking filed on Monday, others will take effect in January 2023 and will require additional rule changes.

**6. ISP should update its administrative rules to reflect the current process for determining issuance date and expiration date.**

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE RESPONSE:**

ISP concurs and has submitted changes to JCAR to ensure compliance with the Act under PART 1230.30 FIREARM OWNER'S IDENTIFICATION CARD ACT Duration, Renewal, and Expiration of FOID Card which states: The date the FOID Card becomes active within ISP's system is designated as the date of issuance for purposes of this Part.