**Firearms Licensing FAQS**

**How long will my application take to process?**

All applications are processed as quickly as possible but there are a number of factors which can affect the time it takes to process applications and no definitive time scale can be given. It is therefore imperative that you read and understand the guidelines before completing your application as this will help to ensure that your application is completed correctly and will not have to be returned to you to amend. It is advisable that renewal applications reach the firearms licensing department at least eight to ten weeks before the current certificate expires.

**What is the minimum age for applying for a firearm/shotgun certificate?**

There is no minimum age to apply for a shot gun certificate. You must be aged fourteen or over to have a firearm certificate

**As a certificate holder, what do I do if I move address?**

You must notify the firearm licensing office, who issued your certificate, in writing, of any change in your permanent address. If your guns are still being kept at your old address you still need to notify that you have moved. A firearm enquiry officer will contact you and arrange for a security inspection at your new home. If you have returned your certificate for amendment you will be provided with a new one.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your weapons are secure during the moving process. The easiest way to do this is to store your weapons with a registered firearms dealer. Shot guns can be temporarily stored with another shot gun certificate holder, providing the holder has secure accommodation. The holder cannot however store them for more than 72 hours without adding them to his or her shot gun certificate.

**How do I transfer a gun?**

Before you transfer any gun you must ensure that the person you wish to transfer the gun to has a valid certificate authorising them to acquire that particular type of gun. Only original certificates should be accepted not photocopies. In the case of a Section 1 firearm the person must be authorised to acquire that particular calibre of gun. A sound moderator is classed as a firearm and requires authority on your certificate before it can be acquired.

You must then complete the relevant table of that person’s certificate in the boxes provided giving details of the transfer and then notify the firearms licensing department who issued your certificate, in writing, that you have disposed of the gun.

The notification should be sent to the firearms licensing department within seven days. There is no need to send in your certificate.

**How do I dispose of an unwanted gun?**

You should not destroy an unwanted gun and dispose of it yourself as you will not be able to prove that this has been done. If you wish to dispose of a gun and you do not wish to sell it, you can take it to your local police station during office hours when the gun can be surrendered for destruction. Firearms and shot guns which are held on certificate should not be disposed of by the certificate holder without informing the firearms licensing department who issued the certificate.

**How do I apply for an additional firearm?**

You will need to complete an application to vary a firearm certificate (Form 202) giving ‘good reason’ for your requirement for the additional firearm. The completed from should be returned to the firearms licensing department along with your current certificate and statutory fee of £20 for this service.

**What is a 1 for 1 variation?**

This is a free variation for a firearm certificate. To qualify you should submit your application form (Form 202) following the disposal of the firearm or if you have an existing authority you wish to replace. If you wish to increase the number of firearms in your possession the fee is £20 (see above)

**What happens to firearms/shogun certificate in the event of the certificate holders’ death?**

In the event of the death of a licence holder the person inheriting the effects must surrender or declare the weapons to the police or a registered firearms dealer. Failure to do so would result in the inheritor being in breach of law by having the firearms in their possession; it is the responsibility if the inheritor to find out whether firearms are part of the deceased effects. Registered firearms dealers will be able to advice on the value of the items and how best to proceed in accordance with the inheritors wishes. Options include applying for a temporary permit, firearm / shot gun certificate, selling the firearm or destroying it by surrender to the police.

**How can I take my licensed weapons abroad?**

If you possess a shot gun or a firearm certificate and you wish to take your weapons abroad within the EEC, then you will need a European Firearms Pass. The pass is issued free of charge on written application to the firearms licensing department  
You will need to specify what weapons you are taking with you. A European Firearms Pass cannot have an expiry date later than that of your firearm and shot gun certificate. All weapons must be declared to customs and to the travel company carrying you, whether by land, sea or air

If you wish to take your guns to any other country, whether in or outside of the EEC, you should seek advice from the embassy or consulate of the country. Even in countries within the EEC, other documents may be required as well as your European Firearms Pass.

Northern Ireland:

Holders of British firearm and shot gun certificates wishing to take their firearms to Northern Ireland will need a valid certificate of approval from the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in addition to their usual certificates. Air weapons also require licenses in Northern Ireland and approval, as above to taken them there.

**How do I import or export firearms?**

To permanently import or export firearms will normally require the grant of a licence from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The import and export of firearms is a complex subject and advice should be sought from the following:

**Imports**

Import Licensing Branch (ILB)

**BIS**

Email: [enquiries.ilb@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.ilb@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

**Exports**

Export Control Organisation (ECO), BIS, 3rd Floor, 1 Victoria Street, LONDON. SW1H 0ET.

Tel: 020 7215 4594

Fax: 020 7215 2635

Email: [eco.help@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eco.help@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

**How can a visitor to this country possess a firearms or shotguns?**

Under Section 17 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, visitors to Great Britain may, if they are granted a visitors permit, have in their possession firearms, shot gun or ammunition without holding a certificate. The holder of a visitors firearm permit may have in his possession any firearm (but not purchase one) and purchase, acquire or have in his possession any ammunition to which Section 1 of the Firearms Act 1968 applies.

The holder of a visitor’s shot gun permit may have in his possession, purchase or acquire shot guns and is exempt from the requirement to produce a shot gun certificate when purchasing cartridges. Both permits are valid for a period of up to 12 months and must show the full details of weapons covered and in the case of a firearms permit, show details of the quantity of ammunition to be purchased/acquired and held. Similarly, territorial and other conditions as would appear on a firearm certificate will normally be imposed on a firearms permit.

Separate permits for each police area are not required as both permits will cover the visitor throughout Great Britain.

**How do I apply for a visitors permit?**

Applications for a visitor’s firearm or shot gun permit will be made by a sponsor to the chief officer of police for the area in which the sponsor resides on the prescribed form of application (Form 107) and in the case of visitors from other EU states, must be accompanied by the visitors EFP (European Firearms Pass) or a copy there of. The sponsor may be:

(a) a private individual; or

(b) the representative of, for example, a club, shooting syndicate, country estate or national shooting organisation.

Group applications can be made for parties up to 20 people provided they are all shooting at the same location and at the same time, or are participating in the same event or competition.

Applications should be made well in advance of the required date (at least 6 weeks prior to arrival in the UK), to allow the necessary enquiries to be made. The information required will be provided by the sponsor to whom all enquiries will be made.

**What constitutes a ‘prohibited person’ in terms of possessing firearms?**

Persons who are sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three years or more are never allowed to possess firearms or ammunition, and persons who are sentenced to a term of imprisonment for three months or more but less than three years must not possess them until five years have passed since the date of release. The prohibition extends to all air weapons, air gun pellets and shot gun ammunition.

**Can I try shooting without holding a certificate?**

Yes under certain circumstances. Many approved shot gun clubs and some registered firearms dealers hold special ‘open days’ where non-certificate holders can fire club guns to test their interest in the sport. The club or dealer must hold an exemption under Section 11(6) of the Firearms Act 1968 issued by the police, which allows these events on a limited number of days per year.

Approved rifle and muzzle loading clubs will allow the shooting of club guns providing you are a club member. Clubs also allow non-members to use clubs guns on a limited number of days as guests.

You may also shoot shot guns and rifles when accompanied by a certificate-holding land owner (occupier or servant). You must however shoot on the owners land, using their weapons within the limitations of the certificate for that weapon.

You may not borrow another person’s gun if they do not occupy the land you intend to shoot on.