

Notes For Guidance

1. Countersignatures - Shotgun

(a) The countersignatory may be a Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace, minister of religion, doctor, lawyer, bank officer (but not a clerk), manager or director of a substantial group of staff, sister in a hospital (but not nurse or staff nurse), dentist, optician, local government officer (grade 4 or above), accountant, architect, teacher, ranking officer of HM forces, solicitor, legal executive (not clerk), stockbroker, post master / mistress, ranking fire officer, ranking prison officer, parish, district or county councillor, or someone of similar standing.

Referees - Firearms

(b) The Firearms Act requires the applicant to supply names and addresses of two referees. The referees must be resident in Great Britain and cannot be a member of the applicant's immediate family. A firearms club official may be acceptable. A referee must be of good character and may be of similar standing to a shotgun countersignatory. However, the main criteria is that they have good personal knowledge of the applicant and include people from a wide variety of backgrounds. They must have known the applicant personally for at least two years.

If the application is for the renewal of a firearm certificate for target shooting then one referee must be an elected club official for the approved club to which the applicant belongs. Any referee form when completed is to be returned direct to the Firearms Licensing Unit and not via the applicant.

2. Good reason for the possession of firearms (not applicable to shotgun certificate applications)

Section 27 of the Firearms Act 1968 provides inter alia that a chief officer of police shall grant, or as the case may be, renew a firearms certificate if he is satisfied that the applicant has a good reason for having in his possession, or for purchasing or acquiring the firearm in respect of which the application is made. Good reason is demonstrated by the applicant showing that he/she has acceptable facilities for the use of the type of firearm(s) concerned. You MUST specify a good reason for each firearm. Please read on: -

(a) Target Shooting

Please enclose a copy of your shooting club membership card or a letter from your shooting club secretary confirming membership. If your certificate is to be conditioned for target shooting only, you MUST be a member of a Home Office approved club. You will be expected to be a fuR member rather than a probationary, temporary member etc. This does not apply to variation applications where there have been no changes in the applicant's club membership circumstances since his/her last certificate renewal and the additional firearm(s) applied for are covered by the shooting club's 'approval'.

(b) Vermin/Sporting Shooting

Please enclose a copy of your authority to shoot over one area of land per quarry species, e.g. if you have permission to shoot with a .22 rifle on one area of land and use a .270 rifle for deer shooting elsewhere, you will need to provide two authorities, one for each piece of land. This does not apply in the case of variation applications where there are no changes in the applicant's circumstances.

If you are seeking a variation to increase the number of firearms you wish to possess for vermin control/sporting purposes, please outline your particular reasons for the addition(s). Simply saying 'deer shooting' or 'vermin control' is not enough. If, for example, you already have a .22 rimfire rifle for vermin control and are applying for a second, you will need to explain why you consider that you have a need for two, in order that your 'good reason' for the possession of the addition(s) can be judged.

3. Co-terminous Certificates

(a) If you hold a shotgun certificate and are applying for the grant or renewal of a firearms certificate, you may, on surrendering your present shotgun certificate, apply for a new certificate to take effect on the same day on which the firearms certificate is granted or renewed. A reduced fee (currently £10.00) is payable for the grant of a shotgun certificate in such circumstances.

(b) If you are a holder of a firearms certificate and are applying for the grant or renewal of a shotgun certificate, you may request that it be granted or renewed for a period of less than five years to bring the expiry date into line with the expiry date of your firearms certificate. The fee for the grant or renewal of a shotgun certificate in these circumstances is £50.00 for a grant and £40.00 for a renewal.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are applying for co-terminus certificates you must complete a firearms certificate application form and a shotgun certificate application form and provide 8 photographs.

4. Security of Firearms and Shotguns

ALL firearms and shotguns should be securely locked away in an approved gun cabinet. It is only on rare occasions that one gun may be allowed on a purpose manufactured gun clamp. In the case of six or more guns an audible alarm may be required. If you live in a remote area, depending on your property, and the quantity of guns held, more strict conditions may be imposed and an alarm system may be required. Without the correct security your application will be delayed.

5. Prohibited Weapons and Ammunition

A firearms certificate or a shotgun certificate will not authorise the possession of any of the following firearms or ammunition unless one of the exemptions shown below applies: -

- (a) Firearms disguised as other objects e.g. walking stick/umbrella rifles or shotguns, high-powered air canes, pen pistols. (*See note below)
- (b) Incendiary ammunition for military use. (*See note below)
- (c) Armour piercing ammunition for military use. (*See note below)
- (d) Expanding ammunition. (*See note below)
- (e) Any missile which is designed to be, or has been, incorporated in any of the above-mentioned ammunition. (*See note below)
- (f) Any firearm which either has a barrel less than 30 centimetres in length or is less than 60 centimetres in length overall. Other than an air weapon, a muzzle loading gun or firearms designed as signalling apparatus. (*See note below)

*** There are exemptions in the case of (a) to (e) for the holders of 'collectors' certificates and there is an exemption in the case of (d) for the holder of a firearms certificate, which bears a condition authorising the possession of this type of ammunition. In the case of (f) there are other restricted exemptions. Advice in relation to the exemptions can be obtained from the Firearms Licensing Unit at Police Headquarters.**

6. Shotguns

A shotgun is defined under Section 2(2) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 as a smooth bore gun (not being an air gun) which: -

- (a) Has a barrel not less than 24 inches in length and does not have any barrel with a bore exceeding 2 inches in diameter.
- (b) Either has no magazine or has a non detachable magazine incapable of holding more than two cartridges and
- (c) Is not a revolver gun.

7. European Firearms Passes

If you intend to take firearms (including shotguns) to another E.E.C. country after the 1st January 1993, you will need to obtain a European, Firearms Pass. Advice concerning these passes can be obtained from the Firearms Licensing Unit at Police Headquarters.

8. Article 7 Authorities

From the 1st January 1993 any E.E.C. resident who wants to buy a Category 'B' firearm in another E.E.C. country must have an Article 7 authority. Advice on which firearms fall into Category 'B' and how to apply for an Article 7 Authority can be obtained from the Firearms Licensing Unit at Police Headquarters.

Issued by the Firearms Licensing Unit, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary