



Border Force

Firearms control at the Point of Entry into the UK from within the European Union

31 August 2016

Introduction

This document is intended to help ferry staff and ferry operators understand the controls on the importation of firearms into the UK. Information contained in this document is not exhaustive.

Summary of entry restrictions and authorities required

- all firearms, firearms components or ammunition for firearms have to be controlled at the point of entry into the UK - some are completely banned (or prohibited) and others may be brought into the UK if the traveller has obtained the relevant licence or permit
- a permit authorising a person to carry a firearm in the European Union (EU) does not provide a right to carry a firearm in the UK - a licence issued by a UK authority must be obtained
- section 1 and section 2 firearms may be imported with the correct paperwork - some examples of documents required can be below or on the internet
- section 5 firearms are in general terms prohibited to import and authority to possess in the UK is not normally issued to private individuals - it is therefore very unusual for a traveller to be authorised and have the correct paperwork
- travellers arriving in the UK from an EU country holding the correct documents are not required to declare the firearms to Border Force - however, they must produce the documents when requested by a Border Force or UK Police officer
- only original copies are acceptable - photocopies are unacceptable
- wherever possible, firearms should be separated from travellers on ferries and secured away and only returned on arrival

- Border Force request that all importations of firearms are reported on the manifest or to a Border Force Officer

Documentation required by travellers bringing firearms into the UK from within the EU

Firearms being brought into the UK from other EU Member States will usually need to be accompanied by a Transfer Licence or European Firearms Pass, both of which would be issued in the country of dispatch. These documents do not permit the holder to possess the firearm in the UK.

Any traveller bringing a firearm into the UK must hold the relevant authority to possess the weapon on a UK Firearms Certificate, UK Shot Gun Certificate, British Visitor's Permit issued by a UK Police force, section 5 authority issued by the Home Office or a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Import Licence.

Any traveller bringing a deactivated firearm in to the UK must have the relevant import licence from BEIS and the firearm must be physically accompanied by an EU Deactivation Certificate.

Any person who intends to import a firearm or requires issue of any of the above documents should be referred to BEIS, the Home Office or Police as appropriate.

- UK police forces can be found on the [UK police website](#)
- information about Home Office licensing of firearms is available at [Firearms Licensing](#)
- a person can enquire about Home Office firearms licensing requirements and legislation by emailing [firearms enquires](#)
- information about BEIS import licensing for firearms can be found in BEIS notice to Importer (NTI) 2878 and for deactivated firearms additionally in BEIS NTI 2875. Both notices are available at [Import Controls](#)
- a person can apply for a BIS import license on the [BEIS Importing Licensing Branch website](#)
- a person can enquire about BEIS import licenses by [email](#)

Types of firearms subject to control

A firearm is a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or missile can be discharged and includes:

- prohibited weapons
- component parts of a lethal or prohibited weapon
- accessories designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon

The Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) categorises firearms into three sections: Sections 1, 2 and 5.

Section 1 of the Firearms Act covers:

- bolt, lever, Winchester and Martini single action rifles
- self loading rifles chambered for .22 rim-fire cartridges
- pump-action or semi-automatic shot guns with a barrel length of not less than 24 inches (60cms) and a magazine capacity of more than two rounds
- guns designed to be loaded at the muzzle end of the barrel or chamber with a loose charge and a separate ball or other missile (for example reproduction black powder muskets, pistols and revolvers)
- air and compressed carbon dioxide (CO₂) powered rifles designed to be fired from the shoulder with a kinetic energy of more than 12 foot pounds (16.3 joules), and flares incorporating a barrel, other than pen launchers

Section 2 of the Firearms Act covers:

- double and single barrelled shot guns fitted with a barrel not less than 24 inches (60cms)
- Semi-automatic or pump action shotguns with a magazine capacity of no more than two cartridges

Section 5 of the Firearms Act covers:

- most hand guns (but not those loaded at the muzzle end of the barrel or chamber)
- air and carbon dioxide (CO₂) powered hand guns which on discharge from the muzzle have a kinetic energy in excess of 6 foot pounds (8.15 joules)
- stun-guns (electric shock weapons)
- self-defence sprays
- pump-action or semi-automatic shotguns with a barrel length of less than 24 inches (61cms) or, excluding any detachable, folding, retractable or other moveable butt-stock, is less than 40 inches (102cms) in length overall
- assault rifles
- sub-machine guns
- machine guns
- ammunition designed to explode or expand on impact
- rocket launchers and mortars

Blank firing or replica firearms

Blank firing or replica firearms that can be converted to fire bullets are also banned but in certain cases may be brought into the UK if the traveller has obtained the relevant licence or permit.

Realistic imitation firearms

Realistic Imitation Firearms (RIF), which are imitation firearms that appear so realistic that you cannot readily tell that are not real firearms, can only be imported into the UK in certain circumstances for example participating at an historical re-enactment.

Example of a Visitor's Shotgun Permit

Permits (Act 2002 to 2007) Weapons Form 228

Visitor's Shotgun Permit

This permit is issued under section 15(2) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1998. The permit allows a holder to Great Britain to possess, purchase or acquire only those shot guns to which it relates for the period of its validity.

Additional conditions may be added here by the chief officer of police.

Name and address of holder

Post Code Date of Issue (DDMMYY)

Permit number Valid from to

Dated signature of holder

Stamp of Issuing Police Force:

Tel: 01865 848571/2/3/4
Fax: 01865 848038

VOID

Signature of Chief Officer of Police Date

Part I Authority to possess the following shot guns

Gauge or calibre:	Maker's Name:	Type (e.g. over-and-under, side-by-side, etc.) including identification number if known.
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Example of European Firearms Pass



Example of a Visitor's Firearm Permit

Firearms Act 1968 to 1987 Firearms Form 100

Visitor's Firearm Permit

This permit is issued under section 17(2) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988. The permit allows a visitor to Great Britain to possess only those firearms to which it relates, and to possess, purchase or acquire such accessories as is specified, during the period of its validity.

The holder of this permit is hereby permitted to have in his possession, but not to purchase or acquire, the firearms specified below, and to have in his possession, purchase or acquire the accessories specified below, subject to the following conditions:

Name and address of holder:

Post Code: Date of birth (DD/MM/YY):

Permit number: Valid from: to:

Usual signature of holder:

Stamp of issuing Police Force:

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Signature of Chief Officer of Police: Date:

Part 1 Authority to possess the following firearms

Calibre	Maker's name	Type	Identification number

Example of a Firearm Certificate

Firearms Act 1968 to 1997 Firearms Form 202

Firearm Certificate

This certificate is granted for the purpose of section 9(1) of the Firearms Act 1968 to the holder named below, and relates to the firearms and ammunition specified.

Name and address of holder		Photograph of holder	Stamp of issuing Police Force  Tel: 01895 844571/2/3/4 Fax: 01895 846034
Post Code	Date of Birth		
Certificate number	Valid from	to	
Usual signature of holder		Signature of Chief Officer of Police	Date

Conditions
This certificate is issued subject to the following conditions. It is an offence to fail to comply with any of the conditions below. Maximum penalty for non-compliance: six months imprisonment and/or a fine.

- 1 The holder must, on receipt of the certificate, sign it in ink with his usual signature.
- 2 The holder of the certificate must, within seven days, inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted of the theft, loss or destruction in Great Britain of this certificate and/or the theft, loss, destruction or destruction of any firearms or ammunition to which it relates.
- 3 The holder of the certificate must, within seven days, inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted of any change in his permanent address.
- 4 (a) The firearms and ammunition to which the certificate relates must at all times (except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (b) below) be stored securely so far as is practicable, so far as is reasonably practicable, access to the firearms or ammunition by an unauthorised person.
- 4 (b) Where a firearm or ammunition to which the certificate relates is in use or the holder of the certificate has the firearm with him for the purpose of cleaning, repairing or testing it or for some other purpose consistent with its use, transfer or sale, or the firearm is in transit to or from a place or connection with its use or for any such purpose, reasonable precautions must be taken for the safe custody of the firearm or the ammunition.

Additional conditions may be added here by the chief officer of police.