



## Notice to Importers 2944 issued on 1 April 2021 by Import Controls policy and licencing team, Department for International Trade.

### IMPORTS OF FIREARMS & AMMUNITION IMPORT LICENSING ARRANGEMENTS 2020

This Notice sets out the licensing arrangements for imports of firearms and ammunition into the UK. It replaces all previous Notices to Importers on this issue. It has been updated to reflect the firearms import licensing regime when the UK leaves the EU whilst detailing the impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol for imports into Northern Ireland.

Further detail on the import prohibitions and licensing controls in relation to Firearms can be found in the Open General Import Licence (OGIL), including key terminology used. Please have regard to the OGIL and relevant legislation<sup>1</sup> which contains full definitions of terms used herein.

#### Import licensing controls

1. Imports of firearms (including deactivated firearms), component parts of firearms (barrel, frame, body or receiver (including upper and lower receivers), slide, chamber or cylinder, breech block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the pressure of discharge at the rear of the chamber), ammunition and any accessory to any such firearm or other weapon designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon manufactured on or after 1 January 1900 require an import licence. There are exemptions so please read this notice and the OGIL carefully.
2. Firearms manufactured on or before 31 December 1899 do not require an import licence. However, it is for the importer to establish that this carve-out applies. If the date of manufacture of a firearm is disputed and you cannot prove the date of manufacture to the satisfaction of the import authorities, then that firearm will be considered to be subject to import licensing controls. The date of first manufacture of a type of firearm is not proof of the date of manufacture of the actual firearm being imported.

#### Definition of a firearm or airsoft weapon

3. The term 'firearm' is defined in relevant legislation and includes "lethal barrelled weapon" of any description from which a shot, bullet or other missile, with a kinetic energy of more than 1 joule at the muzzle of the weapon can be discharged.
4. Airsoft guns are not considered to be firearms if they are:
  - Single shot barrelled weapons designed to discharge only small plastic or part-plastic spherical missiles of a maximum diameter of 8mm, firing with a maximum kinetic energy of 2.5 joules
  - Barrelled weapons capable of firing two or more missiles successively without repeated pressure on the trigger, designed to discharge only small plastic or part-plastic spherical missiles of a maximum diameter of 8mm, firing with a maximum kinetic energy of 1.3 joules.
5. Weapons designed or adapted to discharge other missiles including airsoft darts are not considered to be airsoft weapons. They are considered to be firearms.

#### Importing firearms subject to possession controls in the UK

6. The controls on firearms possession are administered by the Police and the Home Office in England and Wales; the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland, and by the Police Scotland and the Scottish Government in Scotland. Where firearms are subject to domestic possession controls, you can only import them if you have authority under the relevant firearms legislation to possess them and an import licence, where required.

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant legislation in respect of Great Britain includes the Firearms Act 1968, and in respect of Northern Ireland, the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 (as amended from time to time).

7. The authorities allowing possession and acquisition of firearms, component parts of firearms and ammunition are:
- A Home Office section 5 authority.
  - A Certificate of Registration as a Firearms Dealer issued by your local police constabulary.
  - A Firearm Certificate issued by your local police constabulary.
  - A Shotgun Certificate issued by your local police constabulary.
  - A valid Deactivated Firearm Certificate issued by the Birmingham or London Proof House.

### Importing firearms and ammunition into the UK

8. The importation of firearms and deactivated firearms manufactured on or after 1 January 1900 into the UK is controlled, subject to exclusions set out in entry 6 to the OGIL. However, firearms or ammunition may be imported into Great Britain by any person, or imported into Northern Ireland, by a person not resident in a European Union Member State, where such person is in possession of a visitor's firearm or shotgun permit or firearms certificate issued by the appropriate United Kingdom authority to possess the firearms or ammunition being imported. For information on imports of Firearms into Northern Ireland from a European Union Member State, please refer to Para. 12 below.
9. The items listed in the table below can only be imported if you have a Section 5 authority issued by the Home Office. In most cases, a Registered Firearms Dealer Certificate issued by the Police will also be required. If the Section 5 firearm is for use in animal welfare or starting races at athletic meetings your suitably conditioned Firearm Certificate can be used to apply for an import licence instead of a Section 5 authority. Please see 27 for guidance on importing expanding ammunition.

<b>Firearms Act – Section 5 descriptions</b>	
5(1)(a)	Any firearm capable of burst- or fully automatic fire and component parts of these.
5(1)(ab)	Any semi-automatic, self-loading or pump action rifled gun and carbines but not pistols
5(1)(aba)	Any firearm with a barrel less than 30 cm long or which is less than 60 cm long overall – short firearms (pistols and revolvers) and component parts of these.
5(1)(ac)	Any pump-action or self-loading shotgun with a barrel less than 24 inches long or which is less than 40 inches long overall.
5(1)(ad)	Any smoothbore revolver gun except 9mm rim fire or muzzle loaded.
5(1)(ae)	Any rocket launcher or mortar which fires a stabilised missile other than for line throwing, pyrotechnics or signalling.
5(1)(af)	Any firearm using a self-contained gas cartridge system.
5(1)(ag)	Any rifle with a chamber from which empty cartridge cases are extracted using: (i) energy from propellant gas, or (ii) energy imparted to a spring or other energy storage device by propellant gas, other than a rifle which is chambered for .22 rim-fire cartridges.
5(1)(b)	Any weapon designed or adapted to discharge noxious liquid, gas or other thing.
5(1)(ba)	Any device (commonly known as a bump stock) which is designed or adapted so that: (i) it is capable of forming part of or being added to a self-loading lethal barrelled weapon (as defined in section 57(1B) and (2A)), and (ii) if it forms part of or is added to such a weapon, it increases the rate of fire of the weapon by using the recoil from the weapon to generate repeated pressure on the trigger.
5(1)(c)	Any cartridge with an explosive bullet or any ammo designed to discharge any noxious thing (as described above) and if capable of being used with a firearm of any description, any grenade, bomb or other like missile, rocket or shell designed to explode
5(1A)(a)	Disguised firearms and component parts of these.
5(1A)(b)	Explosive rockets or ammunition not covered in 5(1)(c)
5(1A)(c)	Any launcher or projector not covered in 5(1)(ae) designed to fire any rocket or ammunition covered by 5(1A)(b) or 5(1)(c).
5(1A)(d)	Incendiary ammunition.
5(1A)(e)	Armour-piercing ammunition.
5(1A)(f)	Expanding ammunition for use with pistols and revolvers.
5(1A)(g)	Expanding, explosive, armour-piercing or incendiary projectiles.

### Section 5 Handguns derogation – Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man

10. Although most handguns are prohibited weapons in mainland Britain, this is not the case in Northern Ireland or the Isle of Man. The personal import requirements apply to individuals who are based in Northern Ireland or the Isle of Man who want to import a handgun.

11. Commercial Imports of handguns consigned to Northern Ireland or the Isle of Man can be imported with a valid import licence. For the purposes of these arrangements the Isle of Man is regarded as part of the UK.

**Shipments of live firearms, firearms component parts and ammunition to Northern Ireland from within the EU**

12. Under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol, Council Directive 91/477/EEC ('EU Firearms Directive') continues to apply in Northern Ireland, but not in Great Britain. This means that that all shipments of firearms from the EU to Northern Ireland require a transfer licence issued by the transferring Member State.
13. Subject to exclusions set out in Entry 6 of the OGIL, an import licence is required for imports of firearms and deactivated firearms, and their component parts or ammunition into the Northern Ireland. An import licence is also not required in specified circumstances, including:
- i. In relation to Northern Ireland, for firearms and ammunition consigned from the European Union whose transfer falls within the provisions of Directive 91/477/EEC and has been authorised by the competent authority of the exporting EU Member State where:
    - a. the transferee of the firearms or ammunition is authorised to hold them in Northern Ireland;
    - b. the transfer licence issued by the competent authority in the exporting Member State accompanies the firearms or ammunition to their destination in Northern Ireland; and
    - c. the prior consent of the appropriate United Kingdom authority is not required;
  - ii. As regards imports into Northern Ireland, firearms or ammunition consigned from an European Union Member State by a Northern Ireland resident who holds a firearms certificate issued by the appropriate United Kingdom authority to possess the firearms or ammunition being imported in Northern Ireland, provided that those goods are not being imported into the United Kingdom for the first time and, in the case of firearms, the Northern Ireland resident is in possession of a European Firearms Pass on which details of the firearms being imported appear.
  - iii. firearms or ammunition imported into Northern Ireland by a person who is resident in a European Union Member State and, in the case of firearms, is in possession of a European Firearms Pass on which details of the firearms being imported appear and a visitor's firearm permit or firearm certificate issued by the appropriate United Kingdom authority to possess in the Northern Ireland the firearms or ammunition being imported.
14. All other firearms may be transferred into Northern Ireland using your Firearm Certificates in lieu of an import licence plus the transfer licence.
15. An import licence will be issued if a transfer licence is not being issued by the exporting Member State. You must make this clear on any import licence request via the 'Firearms Licence for' 'Other' tick box.
16. A European Firearms Pass and a British Visitors Permit are required for temporary transfers by EU residents of firearms to Northern Ireland.

**Open Individual Import Licence**

17. An Open Individual Import Licence (OIIL) allows you to import unlimited quantities of Section 1 & 2 firearms, their component parts, and ammunition from any country other than where sanctions apply. You must be a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) to apply. OIILs are available for firearms falling to Chapters 93 or 97 of the tariff. You will need a Chapter 97 OIIL if you are importing firearms over 100 years old but manufactured after 1899. You must choose the correct commodity code group when applying for an OIIL. OIIL are given the same expiry date as your RFD Certificate.

<b>Firearms Act – Section 1 Descriptions</b>
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 2 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.
Expanding ammunition for firearms other than pistols and revolvers.

Ammunition for rifled firearms that is neither expanding, armour piercing nor incendiary

Firearms Act - Section 2 Descriptions
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 2 cartridges.

### Commercial imports of live firearms, firearms component parts and ammunition to the UK

18. All commercial shipments of firearms into the UK require an import licence.

### Non-commercial imports of firearms, their components and ammunition

19. For all imports into Great Britain, and for imports into Northern Ireland other than from a European Union Member State, an import licence is not required for the temporary or permanent import of your own firearms listed on a Firearm Certificate, Shotgun Certificate or a British Visitors Permit (BVP) as long as your domestic authority is presented and the firearm is freely declared to Customs at the UK Border. This includes weapons such as sporting shotguns, hunting rifles, certain air weapons, black powder pistols, their component parts and standard ammunition that is neither expanding (only applies to calibres which can only be used in pistols), incendiary or armour piercing. For imports from a European Union into Northern Ireland, please refer to Paragraphs 12- 16 above.

### Declaring your personal import

20. If you are travelling with your firearm, you should go to the Red Point or Red Point telephone at the Port or Airport on arrival to make your declaration. Pre-warning the Port or Airport of your arrival may speed up the time taken to check your authority.

21. If you are returning with a newly acquired firearm or shotgun you must check:

- Your airline or ferry company's policy on the transport of such items,
- That you are in full compliance with the laws in the country where you purchase the item concerning its possession, transport and export,
- You have your UK domestic possession authority to present to UK Customs.

22. If your item is being shipped or posted, it must have a declaration on the package that clearly identifies its contents. Your item will then be held by UK Border Force whilst the validity of your domestic possession authorities is confirmed with the issuing constabulary. Your item will only be released when UKBF are satisfied that the correct authorities are in place.

### Applying for an import licence

23. You can apply for an import licence at [www.ilb.trade.gov.uk](http://www.ilb.trade.gov.uk). You will need to register yourself and then make an importer access request. Once we have completed our checks your account will be opened and you can apply for an import licence. Screen shot guidance on registration and applying for import licences is available on the registration screen. Import licences are issued with a validity period of six months from the date of issue or up to the expiry date of any domestic authority if earlier. Longer validity period can be requested providing a valid reason is offered.

24. There are three types of import licence:

- Deactivated Firearms Licence;
- Open Individual Import Licence (OIIL);
- Specific Individual Import Licence – you can use this licence to apply for section 5 firearms and firearms exempt from control under section 58(2) of the Firearms Act (e.g. obsolete calibre).

### Antique firearms

25. Under [section 58\(2\) of the Firearms Act 1968](#), antique firearms which are sold, transferred, purchased, acquired or possessed as a curiosity or ornament are exempt from most of the controls in the 1968 Act, including the need for certification and being able to trade in them without being registered with the police as a firearm dealer. From 22 March 2021, the Antique Firearms Regulations 2021 define an antique firearm by reference to the type of cartridge it was designed to use, or by reference to its propulsion system. The regulations also specify the cut-off date of manufacture as 1 September 1939 after which a firearm cannot be considered as an antique.

26. A firearm can be regarded as an antique if:

- a) its propulsion system is of a type specified in Regulation 3 of the Antique Firearms Regulations 2021; **and**
  - b) it was manufactured before 1 September 1939; **and**
  - c) it is being sold, transferred, purchased, acquired or possessed as a curiosity or ornament.
27. A firearm can also be regarded as an antique if:
- a) its chamber (or each of its chambers, if it has more than one) is either the chamber it had when it was manufactured or it is a replacement for such a chamber that is identical to it in all material respects; **and**
  - b) its chamber (or chambers) is designed for use with a type of cartridge specified in Regulation 2 of the Antique Firearm Regulations 2021, whether or not it is also capable of being used with other cartridges; **and**
  - c) it was manufactured before 1 September 1939; **and**
  - d) it is being sold, transferred, purchased, acquired or possessed as a curiosity or ornament.
28. Please note that from 22 March 2021, the following cartridges are no longer defined as obsolete for the purposes of qualifying a firearm as antique: .320 British (also known as .320 Revolver CF, short or long), .41 Colt (short or long), .44 Smith and Wesson Russian, .442 Revolver (also known as .44 Webley), 9.4mm Dutch Revolver, 10.6mm German Ordnance Revolver, 11mm French Ordnance Revolver M1873 (Army). This means that from 22 March 2021, all firearms chambered for use with the above cartridges will cease to be regarded as exempt antiques and will become subject to the controls in the Firearms Act 1968, including certification and the need to be registered as a firearms dealer to trade in them. You must seek guidance from the firearms section of your local police force for advice on how this impacts upon any firearms chambered for these cartridges that you possess or wish to acquire.
29. Also from 22 March 2021, the following cartridges have been added to the list of obsolete cartridges specified in the Antique Firearms Regulations 2021: .26 BSA (.26 Rimless Belted Nitro Express), .33 BSA (.33 Rimless Belted Nitro Express), .360 No 2 Nitro Express, .40 BSA (.40 Rimless Belted Nitro Express), .400/360 2 ¾ in Nitro Express, .425 Westley Richards Magnum, .475 x 3 ¼ in Nitro Express, .475 No 2 Jeffery Nitro Express, .475 No 2 Nitro Express, .476 Nitro Express (.476 Westley Richards), .50-90 2 ½ inch, .50-110 2.4 inch, .577 – 3 in (Black Powder & Nitro Express), .577 – 3 ¼ in (Black Powder & Nitro Express), 6.5 x 53mm R Mannlicher (Dutch/Romanian), 8 x 56mm Mannlicher Schoenauer, 8 x 58 mm R Krag, 8 mm Murata, 9 x 56mm Mannlicher Schoenauer, 9 x 57mm R Mauser, 9 x 57mm Rimless Mauser, 9.5 x 57mm Mannlicher Schoenauer, 8mm Roth Steyr. This means that from 22 March 2021, firearms which are chambered for use with these cartridges and which meet the other statutory criteria for antique firearms, will be exempt from domestic licensing control and can therefore be possessed without a firearm certificate or, where relevant, a section 5 authority and/or the need to be registered as a firearms dealer.
30. An import licence is required if an antique firearm as defined by Section 58(2) of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) and the Antique Firearms Regulations 2021, was manufactured on or after 1 January 1900. You must check with the Police if you are unsure as to whether the firearm in meets the definitions, is exempt from control and whether or not you comply with the required conditions. Here is a link to [Home Office Circular 001/2021-antique-firearms](#).

#### **Component parts of firearms**

31. The following require an import licence as they are the only parts that meet the definition of a component part of a firearm as per the Firearms Act 1968, as amended: a barrel, chamber or cylinder, a frame, body or receiver, a breech block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the pressure of discharge at the rear of the chamber. A Firearm or Shotgun Certificate is required to import component parts of all firearms except those falling to Section 5(1)(a), 5(1)(aba) and 5(1A)(a) firearms where a valid Section 5 authority is also required. All other parts including any items such as magazines, sights and other attachable accessories along with firearms furniture such as grips and stocks are not considered to be component parts and as a result do not require an import licence.

#### **Firearms accessories**

32. The only accessories that require an import licence are items designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon. No other firearm accessory, e.g. sights, tripods, bags, belts etc., requires an import licence.

### **Bump stocks**

33. Bump stocks are devices which, when fitted or added to a self-loading firearm, utilise the recoil forces to automate repeated pressure on the trigger, increasing the rate of fire of the firearm. They are controlled under section 5(1)(ba) of the Firearms Act 1968, as amended and under the OGIL.

### **Ammunition**

34. Ammunition that is neither expanding ammunition for pistols and revolvers, armour piercing nor incendiary falls to section 1 of the Firearms Act. A suitably conditioned Firearm Certificate (FAC) or Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) Certificate is required before an import licence can be issued.

### **Shotgun Ammunition**

35. You do not need an import licence for cartridges for smooth-bore guns containing five or more shot, none of which exceeds 0.36 inches (9mm) in diameter.

### **Expanding Ammunition**

36. Expanding ammunition for use only with a pistol or revolver falls to section 5(1A)(f) of the Firearms Act whilst expanding ammunition for rifles only falls to section 1. A suitably conditioned Firearm Certificate (FAC) or Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) Certificate is required before an import licence can be issued.

### **Deactivated firearms**

37. Deactivated firearms falling to Chapters 93 or 97 of the tariff require an import licence to enter the UK. An import licence will only be issued if the firearm conforms to the current deactivation standards. Your import licence and Deactivation Certificate must travel with you as these must be presented for checking at the UK border.
38. As proof of deactivation you will need to provide a copy of your deactivation Certificate conforming to current UK standards (e.g. a Certificate of deactivation issued on or after 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018). In practice, this means that your local Certificate of deactivation is unlikely to be acceptable and you will need to use a Registered Firearms Dealer to import your firearm for deactivation and reproofing by a UK Proof House. All previously issued UK Deactivation Certificates are no longer valid for import licensing purposes unless they are for mortars, launchers, artillery or fixed large calibre firearms on fighting vehicles where the 2010 UK standards and proof marking still apply. Further advice on deactivation standards is available from the Proof House Authority; their contact details are:

Birmingham Proof House  
Banbury Street  
Birmingham  
B5 5RH  
0121 643 3860

London Proof House  
48 Commercial Road  
London  
E1 1LP  
020 7481 2695

39. Deactivated firearms manufactured on or before 31 December 1899 do not require an import licence.
40. If you wish to import a firearm for deactivation to the current standard, you will need to get a Registered Firearms Dealer (RFD) to temporarily import the firearm for you. The RFD will arrange for the firearm to be deactivated to the current standard and obtain a UK Proof House Certificate of Deactivation. The RFD will then apply for a "deactivated firearm" import licence. Once issued, you will be able to possess the firearm.

### **Overseas re-enactment events using deactivated firearms**

41. Re-enactors will be able to apply for a three year import licence provided you have a current UK Certificate of deactivation and are a member of a re-enactment society when you attend the overseas re-enactment event.

### **Air weapons**

42. Air weapons (air guns, air rifles or air pistols excluding air weapons designed for use only when submerged in water and including, in the case of Great Britain, air weapons powered by compressed carbon dioxide) require an import licence if:
- they have been disguised as another object; or
  - are self-loading or pump action; or

- have been designed or adapted for use with a self-contained gas cartridge system; or
  - are air pistols that discharge a missile so that missile has, on being discharged from the muzzle of the weapon, kinetic energy in excess of 6ft lb (8.14 joules); or
  - are air weapons other than air pistols that discharge a missile so that missile has, on being discharged from the muzzle of the weapon, kinetic energy in excess, of 12ft lb (16.27 joules).
43. Air pistols are subject to import licensing control as section 5 firearms if:
- they use or are designed or adapted for use with a self-contained gas cartridge system, or
  - are capable of discharging a missile so that the missile has, on being discharged from the muzzle of the weapon, kinetic energy in excess of 6ft lb (8.14 joules), or
  - Are self-loading.
44. Air weapons other than air pistols are subject to import licensing control as section 1 firearms if they discharge a missile so that missile has, on being discharged from the muzzle of the weapon, kinetic energy in excess, of 12ft lb (16.27 joules). Air weapons other than air pistols are subject to import licensing controls as section 5 firearms if they are self-loading or pump action.
45. You will not need to apply for an import licence for an air rifle or an air pistol as long as they:
- Have not been disguised as another object,
  - Have not been designed or adapted for use with a self-contained gas cartridge system,
  - Are Single shot barrelled weapons designed to discharge only plastic or part-plastic spherical missiles of a maximum diameter of 8mm, firing with a maximum kinetic energy of 2.5 joules,
  - Are Barrelled weapons capable of firing two or more missiles successively without repeated pressure on the trigger, designed to discharge only plastic or part-plastic spherical missiles of a maximum diameter of 8mm, firing with a maximum kinetic energy of 1.3 joules.
  - are not self-loading or pump action
  - Are for use only when submerged in water.

#### **Replica firearms**

46. An import licence is not required to import replica firearms into the UK as long as they are not readily convertible to fire live ammunition. A firearm is considered to be “Readily convertible” if it can be converted without any special skill or using articles in general use.

#### **Realistic imitation firearms (RIF)**

47. A realistic imitation firearm is defined in section 38 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (VCRA) as an imitation firearm which has *“an appearance that is so realistic as to make it indistinguishable, for all practical purposes, from a real firearm and is neither a deactivated firearm nor itself an antique.”*
48. Section 36 of the VCRA made it an offence to manufacture, import or sell a realistic imitation firearm or to modify an imitation firearm so that it becomes a realistic imitation firearm. A realistic imitation firearm brought into the UK is liable to forfeiture.
49. However, it was recognised that there are a number of legitimate activities where a realistic imitation firearm is necessary such as display in a museum. To accommodate these, section 37(2) of the VCRA provides for a number of defences and a person charged with an offence under section 36 would need to show that the imitation firearm in question was intended for one of the following purposes: a museum or gallery, theatrical performances or rehearsals, the production of films or television programmes the organisation or holding of historical re-enactments and air soft skirmishing.
50. Ultimately, it is a matter for the courts to test any defence offered by anyone charged with an offence under the Act but for example attendance at a commemoration event by historical re-enactors would seem to be a valid defence under the RIF legislation. When taking a RIF overseas you must also ensure that you are also compliant with any RIF legislation in the country you are visiting.
51. Section 38(8) explains that in subsection (7) “modern firearm” means any firearm other than one the appearance of which would tend to identify it as having a design and mechanism of a sort first dating from before the year 1870. Any which conformed to this definition would not be regarded as a RIF but the converse also applies and if you intend taking any reproductions of a modern design to commemoration events in Belgium or France would need to ensure that you met the valid defence requirements under the RIF legislation.

#### **Paintball weapons and ammunition**

52. An import licence is not required provided that the paintball gun is designed specifically for that purpose and cannot be readily converted or capable of firing a paintball with sufficient kinetic energy to either penetrate the skin or cause internal injuries by the sheer force of the impact. An import licence is not

required for non-toxic and non-irritant paintball ammunition. Certain paintball weapons are classed as RIF because of their design, i.e. size, shape and colour, and are controlled by the VCRA.

### **Museums**

53. Museums importing firearms are not exempt from import licensing controls even if the firearm is exempt from domestic possession controls. Museums are also not exempt from the requirement to have a deactivated firearm certificate meeting the current standard when importing firearms.

### **Firearms collectors**

54. Firearms being imported by Collectors are not exempt from import licensing controls even if the firearm in question is exempt from domestic possession controls.

### **Imports by the Police**

55. Police forces are exempt from the domestic authority requirement for firearms and ammunition. They are not exempt from the import licence requirement.

### **Firearms marking requirements**

56. The UK's Open General Import Licence (OGIL) sets out the UK's firearms marking requirements. They apply to commercial and non-commercial imports.
57. Firearms, including any relevant (essential) component parts (whether part of a firearm or not), imported into the UK must have markings which are clear, permanent and visible. Firearms and relevant component parts (barrel, frame, receiver (including upper and lower receivers), slide, cylinder, bolt or breech block manufactured on or after 1 January 1900 must be marked with:
- Name of manufacturer or brand;
  - Country or place of manufacture;
  - Serial number;
  - Year of manufacture (if not part of the serial number); and
  - Model, where feasible.
58. Ammunition packaging (not each bullet) must be marked with:
- name of manufacturer,
  - batch number,
  - calibre,
  - type of ammunition.
59. The font size to be used in the marking should be at least 1,6 mm. Where required, a smaller font size may be used for the marking of relevant component parts that are too small to be marked in compliance with the requirements set out in the OGIL.
60. For frames or receivers made from a non-metallic material, the marking should be applied to a metal plate that is permanently embedded in the material of the frame or receiver in such a way that the plate cannot be easily or readily removed; and removing the plate would destroy a portion of the frame or receiver. Other techniques for marking such frames or receivers are permitted, provided that importers can demonstrate that those techniques ensure an equivalent level of clarity and permanence for the marking.
61. The alphabet used on marked imported firearms or relevant component parts shall be Latin, Cyrillic or Greek and the numeral system used in the marking shall be Arabic or Roman.
62. If a firearm is not marked as above, importers will have 28 days after import to comply with the marking requirement. If the item is being imported for deactivation, you have three months to either comply or have the item deactivated. Only the Latin alphabet and the Arabic numeral system can be used when marking in the UK. Failure to comply with the marking requirements is a customs offence. In the meantime, you are advised to mark using methods currently accepted by the UK Proof Houses.
63. The following are exempt from the additional marking requirements set out in the OGIL:
- Firearms imported for the use of the UK military or police.
  - Firearms of "historical" importance which in the UK will be all firearms manufactured before 1 September 1939 regardless of where imported from.



- Air weapons (that is to say, air guns, air rifles or air pistols including air weapons designed for use only when submerged in water and, in the case of Great Britain, air weapons powered by compressed carbon dioxide) and ammunition for air weapons.

### End Use Certificates

64. End Use Certificates (EUC) are issued by the exporting country to give an indication of the end use of the items in the country of destination. This information can cover the purpose of the shipment and also include a statement advising that the re-exportation of the listed items is not permitted.
65. There is no dependency between DIT import licensing controls for firearms, its firearms import licences and the EUC. The EUC does not support the firearms import licences that ILB issue and is not required at the UK border to permit the import of firearms into the UK.
66. The Import Licensing Branch of the Department for International Trade works with Police Constabularies to implement licensing controls on firearms based on the legislation set by the Home office.
67. The UK Government does not stamp, seal or sign end use documents required by exporting authorities in other countries for the transfer of firearms from the EU into Northern Ireland or the import of firearms into the UK.

### Help

68. The simplified guide below explains when firearms, component parts and ammunition require import licences to enter the UK. Please start at question 1 and follow the instructions until you get a specific Yes/No answer to whether you require an import licence or not. If you are in any doubt or require further clarification on the need for an import licence, please email us at [enquiries.ilb@trade.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.ilb@trade.gov.uk).

*This notice is for information purposes only and has no force in law. Please note that where legal advice is required, you should make your own arrangements.*

### Definitions

“It” means Firearms, their component parts and ammunition.

BVP means British Visitors Permit

EFP means European Firearms Pass

Questions and Answers on whether an import licence is required or not			
	Question	Answer	Import Licence required
1	Does it fall to Chapter 93 or 97 of the UK tariff?	<b>No</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Does it fall to Chapter 93 or 97 of the UK tariff?	Yes	Go to question 2
2	Was it manufactured after 31 December 1899?	<b>No</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Was it manufactured after 31 December 1899?	Yes	Go to question 3
3	Does it fall within the Firearms Act?	<b>No</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Does it fall within the Firearms Act?	<b>Yes</b>	Go to question 4
4	Is it being imported by UK Police?	<b>Yes</b>	Go to question 5
	Is it being imported by UK Police?	<b>No</b>	Go to question 6
5	Is it covered by the Open Individual Import Licence (Police)?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Is it covered by the Open Individual Import Licence (Police)?	<b>No</b>	<b>Licence required</b>
6	Is it being imported by a UK Proof House?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence required</b>
	Is it being imported by a UK Proof House?	No	Go to question 7
7	Is it being imported by the MOD?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Is it being imported by the MOD?	No	Go to question 8
8	Is it being imported by a Museum?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence required</b>
	Is it being imported by a Museum?	No	Go to question 9
9	Is it a personal importation?	Yes	Go to question 10
	Is it a personal importation?	No	Go to question 12
10	Are you a UK resident?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required. UK Domestic Authority to possess certificate required.</b>

<b>Questions and Answers on whether an import licence is required or not</b>			
	<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Import Licence required</b>
11	Are you an EU resident?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required.</b> A valid BVP required if importing into GB. A valid BVP and EFP if importing into Northern Ireland
	Are you an EU resident?	<b>No</b>	<b>Licence not required.</b> A valid BVP required
12	Is it a commercial importation?	Yes	Go to question 13
	Is it a commercial importation?	No	Go to question 10
13	Is it a component part of ammunition?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Is it a component part of ammunition?	No	Go to question 14
14	Is it cartridges for smooth-bore guns containing five or more shot, none of which exceeds 0.36 inches (9mm) in diameter?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Is it cartridges for smooth-bore guns containing five or more shot, none of which exceeds 0.36 inches (9mm) in diameter?	No	Go to question 15
15	Is it blank cartridges not exceeding 1 inch (25mm) in diameter?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence not required</b>
	Is it blank cartridges not exceeding 1 inch (25mm) in diameter?	No	Go to question 16
16	Is it prohibited under Section 5 of the Firearms Act?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Licence required</b>
	Is it prohibited under Section 5 of the Firearms Act?	No	<b>Licence required.</b> Go to question 17
17	Is it a deactivated firearm?	Yes	<b>Licence required.</b> Current UK deactivation certificate required.
	Is it a deactivated firearm?	No	<b>Go to question 1</b>