

Home Office Consultation Paper

Consultation Questions

1. Should curved, single edged swords (sometimes known as “samurai swords”) be added to the Offensive Weapons Order?

Yes

2. Do you agree with the definitions as suggested and should there also be a minimum length of blade for the weapon?

The suggested Home Office definition of “a curved, single edged sword (sometimes known as a “samurai sword”)” should be expanded to include a form of words such as

“An item with a curved single edged metal blade made to resemble, appear like or similar to, or sometimes known as a samurai sword”.

We consider stipulating a minimum length to be inappropriate as this could lead to confusion as to what is legal or illegal. It is better to take a robust stance and ban any weapon that fit the definition.

3. Should there be any exemptions for genuine Japanese swords? On what grounds?

Some acknowledgement must be made in respect of official dealers who trade with people whose interest in such items are as an historical period artefact as opposed to a deadly weapon.

However, the imposition of specific conditions for storing such weapons may be appropriate in the same fashion as firearms. That is that they are stored in a securely lock cabinet or case. This would apply to the dealers and people who purchase and keep such items in this country.

4. Should there be an exemption for martial arts practitioners? How should this exemption be framed

We consider the actual use of samurai swords in marshal arts training, displays, ceremonies, etc, to be unnecessary, inappropriate and potentially dangerous taking into account individual and public safety implications. In addition the storage and security of such items in a public place is a concern.

We therefore believe that marshal artist should not be exempted from the proposed prohibition of possessing samurai swords.

5. Are there other weapons which have been used in violent crime that should be banned

We are aware that weapons such as machetes and other types of swords have been used in acts of violence.

These type of weapons should be added to the list of weapons in the Criminal Justice Act (Offensive Weapons) Order 1988

The method of enforcement would be the same as for other weapons defined under the act which is through intelligence led enforcement operations in weapons hotspots or by targeting individuals or groups.

6. If so, how are these weapons best described?

In respect of the type of weapons outlined in answer to question 5 above, viz., machetes and swords, we would describe both types of weapon as

“A weapon consisting typically of a long, straight or slightly curved, pointed blade having one or two cutting edges set into a hilt sometimes with a hand guard”

7. Are there any exceptions, exemptions or defences in respect of existing offensive weapons which should be added?

No