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

## Objective

To increase the knowledge of ferry staff and ferry operators in relationship to the controls on the importation of firearms into the UK. Information in this document is accurate at the time of writing – however it is not definitive and should be used with that in mind.

## 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 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 found in Annex A 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 will therefore be 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 – not photocopies.
- 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 entering the UK from other EU Member States will usually require the goods to be accompanied by a Transfer Licence or European Firearms Pass, both of which would be issued in the country of dispatch. However, **note that 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, Innovation & Skills (BIS) Import Licence.

This list is not definitive and any person considering importing a firearm or requesting issue of any of the above documents should be referred to BIS, the Home Office or Police as appropriate.

Further import licensing information can be found in Annex B.

## **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; and
- 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 (60 cms) 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 (e.g. reproduction black powder muskets, pistols and revolvers);
- air and compressed carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) 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 (60 cms); and
- 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) 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 (61 cms) or, excluding any detachable, folding, retractable or other moveable butt-stock, is less than 40 inches (102 cms) in length overall;
- assault rifles;
- sub-machine guns;
- machine guns;
- ammunition designed to explode or expand on impact; and
- 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 can only be imported for an authorised purpose or function such as participating at an historical re-enactment.

## Offensive weapons

- The following are examples of items that are banned in the UK under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (as amended): flick and gravity knives, butterfly knives, push daggers, belt-buckle knives, death stars, swordsticks, stealth (non-metallic) knives, knives disguised as everyday objects, knuckledusters, blowpipes, truncheons, and some martial arts equipment.

## ANNEX A Examples of firearms documentation

## ANNEX B Further Information



ANNEX A Examples of firearms documentation

Visitor's Shotgun Permit

Firearms Act 1968 (s. 120)

Firearms Form 001

## Visitor's Shotgun Permit

This permit is issued under section 12(2) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988. The permit allows a visitor to Great Britain to possess, purchase or acquire only those shotguns 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Chief signature of holder:

Stamp of issuing Police Force:



THAMES VALLEY  
POLICE

Tel: 01865 846712/3/4  
Fax: 01865 846018

Signature of Chief Officer of Police: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I Authority to possess the following shotguns**

Group or category	Maker's Name	Type (e.g. over and under, side-by-side, etc.) including identification number of barrels

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European Firearms Pass





Visitor's Firearm Permit

Firearms Act 1968 to 1997 Firearms (Home Use)

## Visitor's Firearm Permit

This permit is issued under section 17(3) 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 maintenance tools as 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 ammunition 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:

V O I D

Signature of Chief Officer of Police:  Date:

**Part I Authority to possess the following firearms**

Calibre	Maker's name	Type	Identification number

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Firearm Certificate

Firearms Act 1968 as 1997 Firearms Form 001

## Firearm Certificate

This certificate is granted for the purposes of section 6(1) of the Firearms Act 1968 to the holder named below and related to the firearms and ammunition specified.

Name and address of holder		Paragraph of holder	Stamp of issuing Police Force
Post Code	Date of Birth	Signature of holder	 Tel: 01895 846571/2/3/4 Fax: 01895 846008
Certificate number	Valid from to		
Hand 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 this 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 this certificate was granted of any change in his permanent address.
- 4 (a) The firearms and ammunition to which this certificate relates must at all times (except on the grounds set out in paragraph (b) below) be stored securely in an approved room, as far as is reasonably practicable, locked in the presence of ammunition by an authorised 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 connected with its use, transfer or sale, or the firearm is in transit or in a place in connection with its use or for any such purpose, reasonable precautions must be taken for the safety of the firearm or the ammunition.

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

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## ANNEX B Further Information

### Public Notices for importers

Detailed information on licensing arrangements for imports of firearms and ammunition is here under Notices to Importers:

<https://www.gov.uk/import-controls>

#### Notice 2864:



Notice-to-importers-  
2864-import-licensing

For further firearms advice visit the Home Office firearms website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/firearms>

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