

Firearms licences

Overview

Introduction

This chapter covers the firearms licence requirements and application process, including:

- Requirements to apply for a firearms licence
- Considerations before issuing a firearms licence
- Firearms licence holder obligations
- Surrendering, expiring and revoked firearms licences
- Immediate supervision requirements for non-licence holders
- Other miscellaneous information about the possession and use of firearms and arms items

Licence types

There are two types of licenses issued under the [Arms Act 1983](#):

- Firearms licence
- [Dealer's licence](#)

A short-term firearms licence may be issued to a visitor who intends to be in New Zealand for a period of less than one year and is referred to as a 'visitor firearms licence' (section [25\(2\)](#) and [\(3\)](#) and definition of "visitor" in section [2](#)). For more information about visitor firearms licences, see the [Visitor Firearms Licence arms](#) chapter.

The following people require a firearms licence

- Persons in possession of firearms
- Persons in possession of firearms parts
- Persons in possession of ammunition
- Firearms dealers and their employees
- Ammunition sellers
- Persons aged 16 or 17 in possession of airguns.

To possess pistols, restricted weapons, pistol carbine conversion kits or prohibited items, the relevant [endorsement](#) is required on the firearms licence. A person may apply for a firearms licence and endorsement(s) concurrently. Each application is to be considered on its merits and the approval for one does not automatically allow for the approval of the other application.

A person cannot apply for a first-time firearms licence and a first-time dealer's licence concurrently.

Firearms licence

A firearms licence:

- permits the holder to possess non-prohibited firearms, non-prohibited magazines and other non-

prohibited parts and ammunition (section [20](#), [22A](#), and [22B](#))

- is required by persons aged 16 and 17 years who wish to possess an airgun (section [21](#))
- cannot be issued to persons under 16 years of age (sections [23](#) and [24](#))
- is required by persons who wish to possess or use:
 - Reproduction or replica firearms which are more modern copies of antique firearms - even if these are virtually identical to a true antique firearm, they are not an antique firearm due to being manufactured after 1899 (the definition of antique firearm refers). Accordingly, a licence is still required to possess them (and if that replica is a pistol, prohibited firearm or restricted weapon, the appropriate endorsement and permit is required also).
 - Specially dangerous airguns. See clauses [1A](#) and [3](#) of the [Arms \(Restricted Weapons and Specially Dangerous Airguns\) Order 1984](#), which currently provides that the following are specially dangerous airguns and therefore come within the definition of “firearms” under section [2](#) of the Arms Act:
 - airguns known as the [Larc International Model 19A](#) and the Larc International Model M19-AMP
 - specified pre-charge pneumatic air rifles other than airguns that are designed for use in airsoft or paintball sports and are in the same configuration as when they were manufactured.

There is no limit on the number of non-prohibited firearms or airguns a person with a firearms licence may hold. The licence holder must, however, have [approved secure storage](#) sufficient for all firearms in their possession, and firearms must at all times be possessed only for a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose (section [45](#)). Also refer to the [Exemptions](#) section below.

Application for a firearms licence

A person may apply to a member of the Police for a firearms licence if the person:

- is of or over the age of 16 years; and
- has not had a firearms licence revoked in the previous 5 years (or, if they have, the revocation was reversed by the District Court); and
- is not disqualified under section [22H](#) from holding a firearms licence (see [Appendix One](#) for full details on disqualifiable offences).

A person who is the holder of a firearms licence may, before the expiration of that firearms licence, apply for a new firearms licence. These types of application are colloquially known as “renewals”.

Exemptions

Licence not required for specific items

Section [22](#) of the Act and Regulation [20](#) of the Arms Regulations 1992 does not require a licence for possession of certain non-prohibited firearms that, because of the way they work, are defined as firearms, but have specific functions. These specific firearms are:

- a bolt gun or a stud gun
- a humane killer
- a tranquilliser gun
- a stock marking pistol
- an underwater spear gun (which uses an explosive to propel the spear; or may be of a type which fires a projectile by force of an explosive).
- a flare pistol
- a deer net gun
- a pistol that is part of rocket or line throwing equipment
- a miniature cannon
- an antique firearm*
- a dog training dummy launcher
- an improvised explosive device disrupter.

The restrictions on the sale of ammunition under section [22D](#) of the Arms Act 1983, that ammunition can only be sold by a firearms licence holder to someone who is also a firearms licence holder, do not apply to any ammunition for those firearms listed above.

The items above are not required to be entered into the Registry.

A permit to import any exempt item above is still required as the exemption relates to possession only.

General Carrying or Possessing Firearms s45

Offence to carry or possess a firearm except for some lawful, proper and sufficient purpose.

Applies to: Firearms, airguns, pistols, prohibited magazine, restricted weapon or explosives.

Use by an Unlicensed Person

An unlicensed person (who is not a revoked licence holder) may use or be in possession of a **firearm** only if under immediate supervision of a:

- Firearms licence holder.

An unlicensed person may use or be in possession of an **airgun** if under immediate supervision of a:

- Person of or over 18 years of age
- Firearms licence holder.

Even under direct supervision, an unlicensed person must never use:

- A restricted weapon
- A prohibited firearm

See Arms Act

s20-22, s49A