



Firearms Act 1968

1968 CHAPTER 27

PART I

PROVISIONS AS TO POSSESSION, HANDLING AND DISTRIBUTION OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION; PREVENTION OF CRIME AND MEASURES TO PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY

Special exemptions from sections 1 to 5

7 Police permit.

- (1) A person who has obtained from the chief officer of police for the area in which he resides a permit for the purpose in the prescribed form may, without holding a certificate under this Act, have in his possession a firearm and ammunition in accordance with the terms of the permit.
- (2) It is an offence for a person [^{F1}knowingly or recklessly to make a statement false in any material particular] for the purpose of procuring, whether for himself or for another person, the grant of a permit under this section.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 7(2) substituted (1.7.1997) by 1997 c. 5, s. 52(1), **Sch. 2 para. 2(2)**; S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), **Sch. Pt. I**

8 Authorised dealing with firearms.

- (1) A person carrying on the business of a firearms dealer and registered as such under this Act, or a servant of such a person may, without holding a certificate, have in his possession, or purchase or acquire, a firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of that business.

[^{F2}(1A) Subsection (1) above applies to the possession, purchase or acquisition of a firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of the business of a firearms dealer notwithstanding

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that the firearm or ammunition is in the possession of, or purchased or acquired by, the dealer or his servant at a place which is not a place of business of the dealer or which he has not registered as a place of business under section 33 or 37 of this Act.]

- (2) It is not an offence under section 3(2) of this Act for a person—
- (a) to part with the possession of any firearm or ammunition, otherwise than in pursuance of a contract of sale or hire or by way of gift or loan, to a person who shows that he is by virtue of this Act entitled to have possession of the firearm or ammunition without holding a certificate; or
 - (b) to return to another person a shot gun which he has lawfully undertaken to repair, test or prove for the other.

Textual Amendments

F2 S. 8(1A) inserted (1.7.1997) by 1997 c. 5, s. 42(1); S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), Sch. Pt. I

9 Carriers, auctioneers, etc.

- (1) A person carrying on the business of an auctioneer, carrier or warehouseman, or a servant of such a person, may, without holding a certificate, have in his possession a firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of that business.
- (2) It is not an offence under section 3(1) of this Act for an auctioneer to sell by auction, expose for sale by auction or have in his possession for sale by auction a firearm or ammunition without being registered as a firearms dealer, if he has obtained from the chief officer of police for the area in which the auction is held a permit for that purpose in the prescribed form and complies with the terms of the permit.
- (3) It is an offence for a person [^{F3}knowingly or recklessly to make a statement false in any material particular] for the purpose of procuring, either for himself or for another person, the grant of a permit under subsection (2) of this section.
- (4) It is not an offence under section 3(2) of this Act for a carrier or warehouseman, or a servant of a carrier or warehouseman, to deliver any firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of his business or employment as such.

Textual Amendments

F3 Words in s. 9(3) substituted (1.7.1997) by 1997 c. 5, s. 52(1), Sch. 2, para. 2(2); S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), Sch. Pt. I

10 Slaughter of animals.

- (1) [^{F4}[^{F5}A person holding a relevant licence may,] without holding a certificate under this Act,] have in his possession a slaughtering instrument and ammunition therefor in any slaughterhouse or knacker's yard in which he is employed.

[^{F6}(1A) ^{F7}.....].

- [^{F8}(1B) For the purposes of subsection (1), a person holds a relevant licence if that person—
- (a) holds a certificate of competence or licence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015,

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- (b) holds a certificate of competence or licence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014, or
 - (c) holds a certificate of competence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Scotland) Regulations 2012.]
- (2) The proprietor of a slaughterhouse or knacker’s yard or a person appointed by him to take charge of slaughtering instruments and ammunition therefor for the purpose of storing them in safe custody at that slaughterhouse or knacker’s yard may, without holding a certificate, have in his possession a slaughtering instrument or ammunition therefor for that purpose.
- [^{F9}(3) In subsection (1), a “relevant certificate of competence or licence” means—
- (a) a certificate of competence or licence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations 2014;
 - (b) a certificate of competence or licence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Wales) Regulations 2014; or
 - (c) a certificate of competence to kill animals under the Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (Scotland) Regulations 2012.]

Textual Amendments

- F4** Words in s. 10(1) substituted (20.5.2014) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/1240\)](#), reg. 1(4), **Sch. 6 para. 1(2)(a)**
- F5** Words in s. 10(1) substituted (5.11.2015) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(England\) Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1782\)](#), reg. 1(4), **Sch. 6 para. 1(2)**
- F6** S. 10(1A) inserted (W.) (5.9.2014) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(Consequential Amendments\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/2124\)](#), regs. 1(c), **2(1)(b)**
- F7** S. 10(1A) omitted (5.11.2015) by virtue of [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(England\) Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1782\)](#), reg. 1(4), **Sch. 6 para. 1(3)**
- F8** S. 10(1B) inserted (5.11.2015) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing \(England\) Regulations 2015 \(S.I. 2015/1782\)](#), reg. 1(4), **Sch. 6 para. 1(4)**
- F9** S. 10(3) inserted (20.5.2014) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations 2014 \(S.I. 2014/1240\)](#), reg. 1(4), **Sch. 6 para. 1(2)(b)**

11 Sports, athletics and other approved activities.

- (1) A person carrying a firearm or ammunition belonging to another person holding a certificate under this Act may, without himself holding such a certificate, have in his possession that firearm or ammunition under instructions from, and for the use of, that other person for sporting purposes only [^{F10}; but where the person carrying the firearm or ammunition is under the age of eighteen, this subsection applies only if the other person is of or over the age of eighteen] .
- (2) A person [^{F11}of or over the age of eighteen] may, without holding a certificate, have a firearm in his possession at an athletic meeting for the purpose of starting races at that meeting.
- ^{F12}(3)
- (4) A person conducting or carrying on a miniature rifle range (whether for a rifle club or otherwise) or shooting gallery at which no firearms are used other than air weapons or miniature rifles not exceeding .23 inch calibre may, without holding a certificate, have in his possession, or purchase or acquire, such miniature rifles and ammunition

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suitable therefor; and any person may, without holding a certificate, use any such rifle and ammunition at such a range or gallery.

^{F13}(5)

- (6) A person may, without holding a shot gun certificate, use a shot gun at a time and place approved for shooting at artificial targets by the chief officer of police for the area in which that place is situated.

Textual Amendments

- F10** Words in s. 11(1) inserted (28.7.2010) by [Firearms \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/1759\)](#), regs. 1(2), **2(2)(a)**
- F11** Words in s. 11(2) inserted (28.7.2010) by [Firearms \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/1759\)](#), regs. 1(2), **2(2)(b)**
- F12** S. 11(3) repealed (1.4.1997) by [1996 c. 46, s. 35\(2\)](#), [Sch. 7 Pt. III](#); [S.I. 1997/304, art. 2](#), [Sch. 1](#)
- F13** S. 11(5) omitted (31.1.2017 for specified purposes, 2.5.2017 in so far as not already in force) by virtue of [Policing and Crime Act 2017 \(c. 3\)](#), [ss. 130\(2\)\(a\)](#), [183\(1\)\(5\)\(e\)](#); [S.I. 2017/399, reg. 4\(f\)](#)

[^{F14}11A Authorised lending and possession of firearms for hunting etc

- (1) A person (“the borrower”) may, without holding a certificate under this Act, borrow a rifle or shot gun from another person on private premises (“the lender”) and have the rifle or shot gun in his or her possession on those premises if—
- (a) the four conditions set out in subsections (2) to (5) are met, and
 - (b) in the case of a rifle, the borrower is aged 17 or over.
- (2) The first condition is that the borrowing and possession of the rifle or shot gun are for either or both of the following purposes—
- (a) hunting animals or shooting game or vermin;
 - (b) shooting at artificial targets.
- (3) The second condition is that the lender—
- (a) is aged 18 or over,
 - (b) holds a certificate under this Act in respect of the rifle or shot gun, and
 - (c) is either—
 - (i) a person who has a right to allow others to enter the premises for the purposes of hunting animals or shooting game or vermin, or
 - (ii) a person who is authorised in writing by a person mentioned in subparagraph (i) to lend the rifle or shot gun on the premises (whether generally or to persons specified in the authorisation who include the borrower).
- (4) The third condition is that the borrower's possession and use of the rifle or shot gun complies with any conditions as to those matters specified in the lender's certificate under this Act.
- (5) The fourth condition is that, during the period for which the rifle or shot gun is borrowed, the borrower is in the presence of the lender or—
- (a) where a rifle is borrowed, a person who, although not the lender, is aged 18 or over, holds a certificate under this Act in respect of that rifle and is a person described in subsection (3)(c)(i) or (ii);

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- (b) where a shot gun is borrowed, a person who, although not the lender, is aged 18 or over, holds a certificate under this Act in respect of that shot gun or another shot gun and is a person described in subsection (3)(c)(i) or (ii).
- (6) Where a rifle is borrowed on any premises in reliance on subsection (1), the borrower may, without holding a firearm certificate, purchase or acquire ammunition on the premises, and have the ammunition in his or her possession on those premises for the period for which the firearm is borrowed, if—
- (a) the ammunition is for use with the firearm,
 - (b) the lender's firearm certificate authorises the lender to have in his or her possession during that period ammunition of a quantity not less than that purchased or acquired by, and in the possession of, the borrower, and
 - (c) the borrower's possession and use of the ammunition complies with any conditions as to those matters specified in the certificate.]

Textual Amendments

- F14** S. 11A inserted (31.1.2017 for specified purposes, 2.5.2017 in so far as not already in force) by Policing and Crime Act 2017 (c. 3), ss. **130(1)**, 183(1)(5)(e); S.I. 2017/399, reg. 4(f)

12 Theatre and cinema.

- (1) A person taking part in a theatrical performance or a rehearsal thereof, or in the production of a cinematograph film, may, without holding a certificate, have a firearm in his possession during and for the purpose of the performance, rehearsal or production.
- (2) Where the Defence Council is satisfied, on the application of a person in charge of a theatrical performance, a rehearsal of such a performance or the production of a cinematograph film, that [^{F15}a prohibited weapon] is required for the purpose of the performance, rehearsal or production, [he] may under section 5 of this Act, if [he thinks] fit, not only authorise that person to have possession of [^{F15}the weapon] but also authorise such other persons as he may select to have possession of it while taking part in the performance, rehearsal or production.

Textual Amendments

- F15** Words substituted by Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 (c. 45, SIF 51:1), s. **23(2)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 12(2): transfer of certain functions (S.) (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/1750, art. 2, **Sch. 1**; S.I. 1998/3178, **art. 3**
- C2** S. 12(2): transfer of functions by S.I. 1968/1200, **art. 2**

13 Equipment for ships and aircraft.

- (1) A person may, without holding a certificate,—
- (a) have in his possession a firearm or ammunition on board a ship, or a signalling apparatus or ammunition therefor on board an aircraft or at an aerodrome, as part of the equipment of the ship, aircraft or aerodrome;

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- (b) remove a signalling apparatus or ammunition therefor, being part of the equipment of an aircraft, from one aircraft to another at an aerodrome, or from or to an aircraft at an aerodrome to or from a place appointed for the storage thereof in safe custody at that aerodrome, and keep any such apparatus or ammunition at such a place; and
- (c) if he has obtained from [^{F16}a constable] a permit for the purpose in the prescribed form, remove a firearm from or to a ship, or a signalling apparatus from or to an aircraft or aerodrome, to or from such place and for such purpose as may be specified in the permit.

(2) It is an offence for a person [^{F17}knowingly or recklessly to make a statement false in any material particular] for the purpose of procuring, either for himself or for another person, the grant of a permit under subsection (1)(c) of this section.

Textual Amendments

F16 Words substituted by [Firearms \(Amendment\) Act 1988 \(c. 45, SIF 51:1\), s. 23\(3\)](#)

F17 Words in s. 13(2) substituted (1.7.1997) by [1997 c. 5, s. 52\(1\), Sch. 2\(2\)](#); [S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3\(b\), Sch. Pt. I](#)

14 ^{F18}

Textual Amendments

F18 S. 14 repealed by [Firearms \(Amendment\) Act 1988 \(c. 45, SIF 51:1\), s. 23\(7\)](#)

15 Holder of Northern Irish certificate.

Section 2(1) of this Act does not apply to a person holding a firearm certificate issued in Northern Ireland authorising him to possess a shot gun.

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

- Act amended by [1997 c. 5 s. 12\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. S. 12 was repealed (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), Sch.; S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I)
- Blanket amendment words substituted by [S.I. 2011/1043 art. 34](#)

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 3A inserted by [2023 c. 49 s. 2](#)
- s. 11(3A)-(4A) substituted for s. 11(4) by [2023 c. 49 s. 1\(2\)](#)
- s. 51(2A) added by [1997 c. 48 s. 62\(1\)Sch. 1 para. 3](#)