
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2004 No. 702

The Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004

PART I INTRODUCTORY

Title and commencement

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004.

(2) This Part and Articles 79 to 81 shall come into operation on the expiration of one month from the day on which this Order is made.

(3) The remaining provisions of this Order shall come into operation on such day or days as the Secretary of State may by order appoint^{F1}.

F1 fully exercised by SR 2005/4
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Interpretation

2.—(1) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 (c. 33) applies to this Order as it applies to an Act of the Assembly.

(2) In this Order—

“acquire” means hire, accept as a gift or borrow;

“air gun” means a firearm powered by compressed air or compressed gas;

“ammunition” means ammunition for any firearm except blank cartridges which are not more than 25.4 millimetres in diameter measured immediately in front of the rim or cannellure of the base of the cartridge and includes—

- (a) grenades, bombs and other like missiles, whether capable of use with a firearm or not; and
- (b) prohibited ammunition;

^{F2}
...

“appropriate fee” shall be construed in accordance with Article 75(2);

“armed forces” means any of the naval, military or air forces of the Crown;

“Article 7 authority” has the meaning given by Article 22(1);

“component part”, in relation to a firearm, means—

- (a) any barrel, chamber or cylinder;
- (b) any frame, action, body or receiver;
- (c) any breech block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the pressure of discharge at the rear of the chamber;
- (d) any part of a firearm which directly bears the pressure caused by firing; and

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(e) any magazine;

“European firearms pass” has the meaning given by Article 19(2);

“European weapons directive” means the directive of the Council of the European Communities No.91/477/EEC (directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons);

“firearm” means a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged and includes—

- (a) any prohibited weapon, whether it is such a lethal weapon or not;
- (b) any component part of such a lethal or prohibited weapon; and
- (c) any accessory to any such weapon designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon;

“firearm certificate” means, subject to paragraph (5), a certificate granted under Article 5;

“firearms club” means a club established for the purpose of promoting and practising skill in the use of firearms (other than shotguns) and includes a cadet corps;

“firearms dealer” means a person who by way of trade or business manufactures, sells, transfers, repairs, tests or proves firearms or ammunition;

“firearms dealer's certificate” means a certificate granted under Article 26;

“handgun” means any firearm which either has a barrel less than 30 centimetres in length or is less than 60 centimetres in length overall, other than an air gun, a muzzle-loading firearm or a firearm designed as a signalling apparatus;

“holder of a firearms dealer's certificate” includes a person registered under section 33 of the Firearms Act 1968 (c. 27);

“imitation firearm” means anything which has the appearance of being a firearm, whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile;

“mental disorder” has the same meaning as in the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (NI 4);

[^{F3} “ the Minister of Justice ” means the Minister in charge of the Department of Justice;]

“prohibited weapon” and “prohibited ammunition” respectively mean a weapon and ammunition prohibited under Article 45 (including, [^{F4} in the case of weapons, any devices falling within paragraph (1)(fa) of that Article and,] in the case of ammunition, any missiles falling within paragraph (2)(g) of that Article);

“readable” means—

- (a) visible and legible; or
- (b) capable of being readily produced in a visible and legible form;

“relative”, in relation to a person, means—

- (a) the father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandson or granddaughter of that person or of that person's [^{F5} spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner] or
- (b) the brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece or nephew (whether of the full blood or of the half blood or by affinity) of that person or of that person's [^{F5} spouse, former spouse, civil partner or former civil partner],

and includes, in relation to a person who is living or has lived with another person as husband and wife [^{F5} or as if they were civil partners], any person who would fall within paragraph (a) or (b) if the parties were married to each other [^{F5} or were civil partners of each other];

“revolver” means a firearm containing a series of chambers which revolves when it is fired;
“self-loading” and “pump action”, in relation to any firearm, mean respectively that it is designed or adapted (otherwise than as mentioned in Article 45(1)(a)) so that it is automatically reloaded or that it is so designed or adapted that it is reloaded by the manual operation of the fore-end or forestock of the firearm;

“shotgun” means a smoothbore firearm with a barrel not less than 60.96 centimetres in length, not being an air gun;

“shotgun certificate” means a certificate granted in Great Britain under section 28 of the Firearms Act 1968 (c. 27) and authorising a person to possess shotguns;

[^{F6}“shotgun club” means a club established for the purpose of promoting and practising skill in the use of shotguns;]

[^{F7}“slaughtering instrument” means a firearm which is specially designed or adapted for the instantaneous slaughter or killing of animals or for the instantaneous stunning of animals with a view to slaughtering or killing them;]

“statutory provision” has the meaning given by section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 (c. 33);

“transfer” includes let on hire, give, lend and part with possession;

“visitor's firearm permit” means a permit granted under Article 15(2).

(3) For the purposes of this Order the length of the barrel of a firearm shall be measured from the muzzle to the point at which the charge is exploded on firing.

(4) For the purposes of this Order a shotgun or an air gun shall be deemed to be loaded if there is ammunition in the chamber or barrel or in any magazine or other device which is in such a position that the ammunition can be fed into the chamber or barrel by the manual or automatic operation of some part of the firearm.

(5) In this Order—

- (a) any reference to a firearm certificate includes a reference to a firearm certificate and a shotgun certificate granted under the law in Great Britain and having effect in Northern Ireland by virtue of Article 17; and
- (b) any reference to a condition subject to which a firearm certificate is held includes a reference to a condition subject to which a firearm certificate or shotgun certificate is held under the law in Great Britain as that condition has effect in Northern Ireland by virtue of Article 17.

(6) For the purpose of any reference in this Order to the use of any firearm or ammunition for a purpose not authorised by the European weapons directive, the directive shall be taken to authorise the use of a firearm or ammunition as or with a slaughtering instrument and the use of a firearm or ammunition—

- (a) for sporting purposes;
- (b) for the shooting of pests, or, in the course of carrying on activities in connection with the management of any estate, of other wildlife; and
- (c) for competition purposes and target shooting (whether or not for competition purposes).

(7) For the purposes of this Order it shall be presumed, unless the contrary is shown, that a firearm has been rendered incapable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile, and has consequently ceased to be a firearm within the meaning of this Order, if either—

- (a) it bears a mark which—
 - (i) has been approved by the [^{F8}Department of Justice] for denoting that fact, and

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- (ii) has been made by a person approved by the [^{F8}Department of Justice] for the purposes of this paragraph; and
- (b) that person has certified in writing that work has been carried out in a manner approved by the [^{F8}Department of Justice] for rendering it incapable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile,
- or it satisfies the requirements of section 8 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 (c. 45) (corresponding provision for Great Britain) by virtue of work carried out on or after 1st October 1995.

- F2** Words in [art. 2\(2\)](#) omitted (31.12.2020 immediately before IP completion day) by virtue of [The Law Enforcement and Security \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020 \(S.I. 2020/1371\)](#), regs. 1, **5(2)**
- F3** Art. 2(2): definition of "the Minister of Justice" inserted (12.4.2010) by [Northern Ireland Act 1998 \(Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/976\)](#), arts. 1(2), 9, **Sch. 11 para. 2** (with arts. 28-31); S.I. 2010/977, **art. 1(2)**
- F4** Words in [art. 2\(2\)](#) inserted (14.7.2021) by [Offensive Weapons Act 2019 \(c. 17\)](#), **ss. 55(4)**, 70(1); S.I. 2021/819, reg. 2(g)
- F5** 2004 c. 33
- F6** Words in [art. 2\(2\)](#) inserted (13.5.2016) by [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016 \(c. 21\)](#), s. 61(1), **Sch. 5 para. 1(1)**
- F7** Words in [art. 2\(2\)](#) substituted (21.5.2014) by [The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2014 \(S.R. 2014/107\)](#), reg. 1, **Sch. 6 para. 1(2)**
- F8** Words in [art. 2\(7\)](#) substituted (12.4.2010) by [Northern Ireland Act 1998 \(Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/976\)](#), arts. 1(2), 9, **Sch. 11 para. 3(a)** (with arts. 28-31); S.I. 2010/977, **art. 1(2)**

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

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

- art. 6(3A) inserted by [2019 c. 17 s. 62\(2\)](#)
- art. 6A inserted by [2019 c. 17 s. 62\(3\)](#)
- art. 11(1A) inserted by [2019 c. 17 s. 62\(4\)](#)