

Gun Purchases and Restricted Items

On this website you will find various products that are restricted by law. The level of restriction, ID or certification/licencing required will vary depending on the product. Sub 12 FT/LB Air Rifles and knives for example, require the user to be over 18 years of age and for a valid form of photographic ID to be provided (Drivers Licence/Passport etc). Guns cannot be sent to residential addresses, these can only be collected from our stores or another Registered Firearms Dealer.

Below you will find details on the licences required for guns sold in the UK and some of the legislation that surrounds them.

Airguns Sub 12 FT/LB

What we call an airgun in everyday language is known in law as a 'low powered air weapon'. That basically means an air rifle capable of less than 12ft lbs in energy, or an air pistol of less than 6ft lbs in energy. An airgun may be powered by a spring and piston, a reservoir of compressed air or compressed CO2.

You can buy, own and use an airgun without needing a certificate. Except Scotland where you are required to have a valid Air Weapon Certificate. Air Weapon Certificates can be obtained through an application to your local police force. More details can be found at www.scotland.police.uk.

If you have ever been sentenced to more than three months' imprisonment, you are automatically banned from owning an airgun for five years; a sentence over three years means a lifetime ban.

There are age restrictions on who can buy an airgun, you must be over the age of 18 and be able to prove this at the point of purchase.

Below the age of 14, you can only use an airgun under the supervision of someone over 21 and only on private land. You cannot own or receive an airgun as a gift until you are 18.

Over the age of 14 you can use an airgun with permissions on private land and without supervision. Pellets and ammunition must never travel past the boundary of the private property on which you are shooting.

The law requires you to take 'reasonable precautions' to keep your airgun out of the hands of anyone under 18. If there are under-18s living in the house, or if children come to visit, you will need to make sure your airgun is locked away.

You can only shoot an airgun (or any other gun) on private land, and when you have permission (from the landowner, farmer etc) to do so. If you have an airgun in a public place you must have a 'reasonable excuse', such as travelling to or from a shoot, and it should be in a gun cover, unloaded and uncocked.

Section 2 Shotgun Licence

The legal definition of a sporting shotgun for UK use is: A smooth-bored gun with barrel(s) not shorter than 24". Any normal sporting shotgun will fall into this category and come under 'Section 2' of the firearms acts. This includes pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns, as well as side-by-sides and over-and-unders. A standard shotgun must fit within the parameters of the above and have a capacity for no more than 3 shots.

If a shotgun has a greater capacity than 3 shots it then falls into the FAC Shotgun Category. FAC Shotguns require the owner/user to have a Section 1 Firearms Certificate.

In order to own and use a Section 2 shotgun legally, you will need to apply for a Shotgun Certificate from your local police. You can collect the form from a police station or download one online. Fill in the form, truthfully answering all the questions, and send it together with the required fee and photos, countersigned by a suitable person.

The notes on the form explain who is, and is not, suitable to countersign your application. It needs to be someone of 'good standing' who has known you for at least two years but is not an immediate family member, typically a lawyer, doctor, accountant or similar.

A police Firearms Enquiry Officer will want to visit you at home to check the details. He (or she) will inspect the security arrangements you have made for storing your shotgun(s) – so before the visit you need to buy a suitable steel cabinet and fix it to a solid wall in the approved manner. Before installing cabinets it is worth checking with the police that your intentions will meet their criteria. The Police will also quiz you about why you want a gun and the intended uses for such guns.

Provided all goes well and you receive your Shotgun Certificate, you can purchase the shotgun of your choice as long as it fits within the parameters of your licence. To purchase a shotgun you must be over the age of 18 and

the police need to be notified of each and every gun you buy or sell, and your certificate must be updated and signed by the seller.

If purchasing a gun over the phone or via the internet for dispatch to a third party gun dealer, you will need to send your certificate to GGR. We can then complete the legal process before sending the gun. Legally your certificate must be filled in by the selling party before the gun can be handed over.

For every shotgun you buy you must be able to store it safely in your cabinet, so don't allow your collection to exceed the cabinet's capacity.

There are no special requirements for owning or storing regular clay and game cartridges, but you will need to produce your Shotgun Certificate in order to buy cartridges.

Where and how you use any legally owned shotgun is subject to a stringent set of rules not covered in this article. It is important that you seek advice and do your research when buying and/or using any firearms.

Section 1 Firearms Licence

Section 1 firearms are Rifles, FAC Shotguns and FAC Air Rifles. FAC Air Rifles are Airguns with a muzzle energy greater than 12 FT/LB (typically these guns are post fixed with the letters FAC).

This category of licence covers a full range of sporting calibres from .177 FAC Air rifle up to the largest centrefire calibres for target shooting.

To own a 'Section 1' firearm, you will need a Firearms Certificate. This is issued by your local police in much the same way as a Shotgun Certificate, but you use a different form and the questions are more probing. For a Firearms Certificate you need to specify each of the guns you want to acquire, and explain why you want them. For every gun you wish to purchase and own you must have an empty slot on your licence, also referred to as a variation.

When buying an FAC gun it's the user's responsibility to ensure they have the correct variation on their licence, this will include the type of gun and the designated calibre.

The police use specific criteria when they decide whether the calibre you've requested is suitable for your intended use. So if they deem your choice excessive or not suitable for the terrain, expect it to be refused. Usually it is a good idea to discuss your plans with the local Firearms Enquiry Officer, this avoids wasting time and money pursuing a route the police will not sanction.

With a Firearms Certificate it's up to you to provide 'good reason' for wanting each gun, and show that you have somewhere suitable where you have permission to shoot. The police will check out the land you specify to ensure you really do have permission to shoot there and if it's appropriate for the type of gun you are requesting.

With your Firearms Certificate application, you will need to provide details of two people willing to act as 'referees'. As with a Shotgun Certificate, they must have known you for at least two years and be people of 'good standing' in the community. The police have some discretion in how they interpret 'good standing', so if you have difficulty finding someone suitable who knows you well, do ask for their advice. The referees will be asked to fill in a fairly detailed form about you, so make sure they are willing to do so before putting their names down. You will also have to provide details of your doctor and authorise the police to ask questions about your medical history.

Like a Shotgun Certificate application, you will receive a visit from the Firearms Enquiry Officer who will check the details of your application and inspect your security arrangements, which must include a lockable metal gun cabinet secured to a solid wall (not a partition stud wall) or floor. Remember that unlike shotgun ammo, rifle ammo must be stored securely and separately from the gun, so you will need a separate, lockable box big enough to accommodate the ammo you plan to buy. Before installing cabinets it is worth checking with the police that your intentions will meet their criteria.

It's rare for a Shotgun Certificate to contain any special conditions about how and where you use your shotguns, but with a Firearms Certificate there will normally be conditions that specify what and where you may shoot for each gun listed on the certificate. These conditions normally follow a prescribed form of words, to be found in Appendix 3 of the Home Office guidance document referred to previously.

Increasingly, certain police forces are taking it upon themselves to add further conditions which may, for instance, specify that a rifle is only to be used from a high seat, or that you are accompanied by an experienced shooter until you have gained more experience yourself. You may be happy to comply, but to some shooters this seems a step too far. If you have any concerns about conditions applied to your certificate, then BASC's firearms department should be able to advise you.

As with shotguns, you are responsible for keeping your rifles and ammunition secure at all times, so you need to take sensible precautions when travelling to and from your shoot, as well as during the shooting day. There is a Home Office publication, Firearms security: a brief guide, which you can download from the Home Office website.

