

How to obtain a Firearms Certificate

The advice given here is general, but is believed to be correct as of December 2003, it will be updated as required by changes to the law.

A Firearms Certificate (FAC) is required before you can purchase, or possess any firearm, ammunition, or certain parts of a firearm, e.g. a spare barrel. It is important that any prospective applicant reads fully the section on Gun Law before attempting to apply.

These fall under the five sections of the Fire-arms Act.

Section 1 - covers all legal fire-arms for sporting purposes other than those defined as Shotguns (sect 2). To obtain a section 1 license it is necessary to prove you have a reason for the firearm and a suitable place to use it.

There are two main ways that civilians can obtain an FAC in the UK:

a) if they can demonstrate that they have ***shooting rights over suitable land***.

Hunting,

For purposes such as vermin control the authority will wish to confirm the firearm to be licensed is suitable for the purpose. They will also want to see an authority to shoot over designated suitable land, and may wish to confirm this or visit the land.

b) if they can demonstrate membership of a ***target shooting club***

Target shooting clubs,

Contact NSRA, NRA, Muzzleloaders, for local club information

After membership of a club has been confirmed an FAC can be applied for. The Police will not entertain any application that is not confirmed by the club secretary, so it is a waste of time trying before full membership is granted.

Section 2 - covers those defined as shotguns. You need to be medically fit to possess and have suitable security, but you do not need to have a declared reason for owning a shotgun. Having good reason and being able to prove it through insurance membership to a shooting organisation will assist. CPSA or BASC being the usual providers. Application forms are available on-line from most Police authorities. The forms are general, and any download can be used, but only send the applications to your relevant authority. If in doubt, check your postcode with your immediate authority to check where you should send your application.

THE PROCESS

After application, you will be subject to a Fire-arms Enquiry Officer's visit. (FEO).

They will discuss security and agree it (you don't usually need to fix a security cabinet before they visit.) When security is agreed, and medical and further enquiries are complete and approved you will be issued a Shotgun Certificate and can acquire and keep shotguns and ammunition. What you acquire and dispose of is recorded on your license.

When the FAC application is received by the police (you get the form from them) along with the necessary fee, they will make an appointment with you to come and inspect your home and security arrangements for storing the firearms and ammunition.

When applying for the FAC it is worth while specifying more guns than you need, this is to allow the purchase of a new gun, before the sale of an old gun has gone through. There is no limit as to the number of guns or quantity of ammunition you can ask for, but the more you want, the more security the police may insist on before granting the FAC.

The FEO will expect a steel cabinet of at least 16 swg bolted to a solid floor and / or wall and secured with 5 lever lock(s). You should not be able to see the cabinet position from any window. Connection to an alarm would be a bonus and in some locations may be a requirement. If your premises has shared access, for example if it is in a block of flats, the requirements may be more stringent.

It is worth remembering that unless anyone else living at your address has an FAC listing your guns, then that person cannot legally handle them, even in the home.

If than one person shares a storage facility, all guns they have access to need to be listed on their certificate. i.e., husband and wife sharing a shotgun cabinet with a gun each, will have both guns on each of their certificates.

If you are intending to reload centrefire ammunition, rather surprisingly you do not need an FAC to buy any of the components. An FAC is only needed to make and keep assembled ammunition. You must specify on your application how many rounds you intend to have at any one time. It is not necessary to enter any details of your home reloaded ammunition, or how many times you reload. The only requirement is that you do not exceed your maximum holding in your specified calibres at any one time.

A part of the application form is to specify the names and addresses of two referees that are willing to support your application for an FAC. There are restrictions as to who can act as a referee, family members being barred as is anyone with a criminal record. It is not possible to have your application supported by two members of your club, you must find independent referees who are willing to complete a questionnaire about you and return it directly to the police (so that you cannot see what they have written).

The best advice to any new FAC applicant is to ask existing club members for advice before filling out the application form.

Sections 3-5 - cover other fire-arms such as starting signals, flare-guns, and other types and usages not covered in Sections 1 & 2.

Co-Terminus

Shotguns and Section one guns are held on separate certificates. For ease of renewal at the same date the issue of two certificates that expire on the same date is available. This is known as Co-Terminus certificates.

IMPORTANT!

You must be aged 17 or over to order any air rifle or air pistol, you may be asked to confirm age and proof of identity

This information is provided for guidance. Always check with Police and Licensing authorities to confirm any information relevant to your situation.