



NSW Police Force
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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Introduction to Firearms and the Law

This FACT Sheet is a brief introduction to firearms and the law. If you would like to know more about your responsibilities as a firearm owner or user in NSW, you can get a copy of the NSW Police booklet, "Firearms (Longarms) Users Guide - Rights, Wrongs and Responsibilities" from your club, shooting range or the Firearms Registry website.

The NSW Government is committed to an agreed national approach to the control of firearms. Firearms ownership and use is a privilege, which is conditional on the overriding need for public safety and all firearms licence holders must be aware of their legislative responsibilities with respect to the possession, use and safe keeping of firearms.

All new applicants for a firearms licence must pass an approved firearms safety training course in the safe handling and responsible use of a firearm.

Why are there firearm laws?

NSW has firearm laws to improve public safety by imposing strict controls on the possession and use of firearms and to promote the safe and responsible storage and use of firearms.

The *Firearms Act 1996* and the *Firearms Regulation 2006* contain information on the obligations for lawful possession and use of a firearm in NSW.

What are my legal responsibilities?

As a licence holder and firearms owner in NSW, you are required to familiarise yourself with the *Firearms Act 1996* and the *Firearms Regulation 2006* and comply with all the legislative requirements and licence conditions prescribed within the legislation.

To assist licence and permit holders, the legislative requirements as they relate to a licence and permit are contained within a printable PDF document on the Home Page of the Firearms Registry Internet site.

- * You must ensure that public safety is paramount at all times when in possession of a firearm, and
- * Comply with the legislative requirements and your licence or permit conditions, and
- * Take all reasonable precautions to ensure your firearm is kept safely, is not lost or stolen, does not come into the possession of an unauthorised person, and
- * Ensure that your firearms is only used for activities connected with the genuine reason for obtaining your firearms licence.

What are my social responsibilities?

As a firearms owner in NSW you are bound to act in a safe and responsible manner whilst using a firearm and ensure that those around you do the same.

You must never mix shooting with alcohol or drugs and never act in a foolhardy way around firearms.

Why do I need a firearms licence?

To lawfully possess or use a firearm for personal or professional reasons in NSW, you must have a firearms licence or permit authorising possession and use of the firearm.

What should I do if I become aware of an illegal activity?

If you become aware that illegal activity is occurring, for example, if you know of an unlicensed person who owns a firearm you should contact either your local police or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

How do I apply for a firearms licence?

You can apply for a licence by completing the online form 'Request Firearms Licence Application Forms' or by calling the Firearms Registry Customer Service line on 1300 362 562. Permit application forms and legitimate reason forms are interactive and can be completed online from our website, printed, signed and posted to the Firearms Registry.

To apply for a firearms licence you must have a genuine reason for possessing and using a firearm.

Genuine Reasons include:

- * Sport/Target Shooting;
- * Recreational hunting/vermin control;
- * Primary production;
- * Vertebrate pest animal control;
- * Business or employment;
- * Occupational requirements relating to rural purposes;
- * Animal Welfare;
- * Firearms Collection.

How do I acquire a firearm?

You must hold a firearms licence for the type of firearm you wish to acquire and make application to the Firearms Registry for a Permit to Acquire (PTA) that firearm.

For initial PTA's, there is a mandatory 28 day waiting period from receipt of your application before your Permit to Acquire can be issued. For second and subsequent PTA's for the same type of firearm as one already registered to you, there is no waiting period. All transactions for the acquisition and disposal of firearms are conducted by a licensed Firearms Dealer.

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Do I need to register my firearm?

All firearms must be registered, except some antique and imitation firearms which may be exempt from the registration requirements. The firearms dealer conducting the sale will arrange registration of the firearm in your name.

A central registry of firearms is maintained by the Firearms Registry and includes information on the particulars of the firearm, the name and address of the registered owner of the firearm and the address where the firearm is kept in safe storage.

Safe storage of Firearms and Ammunition

Every licence and permit holder must comply with the safe storage requirements prescribed by the *Firearms Act 1996*.

There are different requirements for safe storage depending on the type of firearms you possess and the type of licence you hold.

FACT Sheets are available on the Safe Storage page on the Firearms Registry website.

- * Safe Storage Level 1 - Category A & B requirements,
- * Safe Storage Level 2 - Category C, D & H requirements,
- * Transportation of Firearms,
- * Ammunition Safe Storage, Purchase & Possession,
- * Dealers, Collectors, Prohibited Firearms, Prohibited Weapons and Security Firms.

Safe storage which is compliant with Part 4 of the Act and the Commissioners recommendations (contained within FACT Sheets on the Safe Storage page on the Internet) will ensure that you are taking all reasonable precautions to prevent the loss or theft of the firearm, and to prevent the firearm coming into the possession of an unauthorised person - section 39 of the Act.

BASIC FIREARM SAFETY

The first rule about firearms is that safety is your top priority.

There are four basic rules to ensure firearms safety:

1. Treat all firearms as if they are loaded;
2. Always point your firearm in a safe direction (never allow the muzzle of your firearm to point at another person);
3. Never load a live round into the chamber of a firearm until you are ready to shoot; and
4. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

Always follow these general principles:

- * When passing a firearm to someone or when picking a firearm up, check whether the firearm is loaded by opening the action and looking inside the chamber;
- * Your firearm is your responsibility;
- * Always ensure that the firing zone is clear and identify what is beyond your target;
- * When you have finished shooting remove the magazine (if fitted), unload it and check that the chamber is empty;
- * Make sure that all firearms are transported unloaded and according to the guidelines to prevent misuse or theft;
- * Never allow unauthorised access to your firearm or ammunition;
- * Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms;
- * Encourage safe and responsible handling of firearms in the field, on the range and within the community;
- * Understand the operation of your firearm, keep it in good repair and always use the correct ammunition;
- * Never store firearms and ammunition together. Ensure they are safely locked away when not in use;
- * Never mix shooting with alcohol or drugs;
- * Be familiar with the legal requirements for safe storage, firearms ownership and possession and use of firearms in NSW or in any State or Territory you may visit;
- * Dispose of unwanted firearms lawfully. Surrender them to police or sell them to or through a licensed firearms dealer.
- * Always inform the Firearms Registry if you have a change of residential or safe storage address, or if you move to another State or Territory. It is an offence to fail to do so.

Where can I find more information?

The information provided in the FACT Sheet is for general guidance only. Applicants and licensees should familiarise themselves with the *Firearms Act 1996* and the *Firearms Regulation 2006*, which are available on the NSW Legislation website - www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

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