



Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997

1997 CHAPTER 5

PART I

PROHIBITION OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION AND CONTROL OF SMALL-CALIBRE PISTOLS

General prohibition of small firearms etc.

1 Extension of s.5 of the 1968 Act to prohibit certain small firearms etc.

- (1) Section 5 of the ^{M1}Firearms Act 1968 (referred to in this Act as “the 1968 Act”) shall have effect with the following amendments.
- (2) In subsection (1) (which describes weapons which are prohibited by section 5), after paragraph (ab) there shall be inserted the following paragraph—
 - “(aba) 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 weapon, a small-calibre pistol, a muzzle-loading gun or a firearm designed as signalling apparatus;”.
- (3) In paragraph (ab) (self-loading or pump-action rifles) of that subsection, for the word “rifle” there shall be substituted the words “rifled gun”.
- (4) In paragraph (ac) (self-loading and pump-action smooth-bore guns) after the word “not” there shall be inserted the words “an air weapon or”.
- (5) In paragraph (ad) (smooth-bore revolver guns), for the words from “loaded” to the end there shall be substituted the words “a muzzle-loading gun”.
- (6) After subsection (7) there shall be inserted the following subsections—
 - “(8) For the purposes of subsection (1)(aba) and (ac) above, any detachable, folding, retractable or other movable butt-stock shall be disregarded in measuring the length of any firearm.

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.
Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (9) Any reference in this section to a muzzle-loading gun is a reference to a gun which is designed to be loaded at the muzzle end of the barrel or chamber with a loose charge and a separate ball (or other missile).”
- (7) The general prohibition by section 5 of the 1968 Act of firearms falling within subsection (1)(aba) of that section is subject to the special exemptions in sections 2 to 8 below.
- [^{F1}(7A) In sections 2 to 7 below any reference to subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act shall include a reference to subsection (2A) of that section as it applies in relation to a firearm specified in subsection (1)(aba) of that section.
- (7B) In section 8 below the reference to subsection (1)(aba), (b) or (c) of section 5 of the 1968 Act shall include a reference to subsection (2A) of that section as it applies in relation to any weapon or ammunition specified in subsection (1)(aba), (b) or (c) of that section.]
- (8) In sections 2 to 8 below any reference to a firearm certificate shall include a reference to a visitor’s firearm permit.
- ^{F2}(9)

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 1(7A)(7B) inserted (14.7.2014) by *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (c. 12)*, **ss. 108(9)**, 185(1) (with **ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93**); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(a)
- F2** S. 1(9) repealed (1.2.1998) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), **Sch.**; S.I.1997/3114, arts. 4, 5, **Sch. Pt. II**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 1(3) excluded (10.6.1997) by S.I. 1997/1535, arts. 3(b), 5, **Sch. Pt. I**

Commencement Information

- II** S. 1 wholly in force at 1.7.1997; s. 1 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 53(3)(4); s. 1 in force at 1.7.1997 by S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), **Sch. Pt. I** (with effect as mentioned in arts. 4, 4A (as amended by S.I. 1997/1536, art. 2) of the commencing Act)

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1968 c. 27.

Special exemptions from prohibition of small firearms

2 Slaughtering instruments.

[^{F3}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act—

- (a) for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a slaughtering instrument if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the instrument in his possession, or to purchase or acquire it;
- (b) for a person to have a slaughtering instrument in his possession if he is entitled, under section 10 of the 1968 Act, to have it in his possession without a firearm certificate.

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.
Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in s. 2 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

3 Firearms used for humane killing of animals.

[^{F4}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a firearm if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the firearm in his possession, or to purchase or acquire it, subject to a condition that it is only for use in connection with the humane killing of animals.

Textual Amendments

- F4** Words in s. 3 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

4 Shot pistols used for shooting vermin.

- (1) [^{F5}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a shot pistol if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the shot pistol in his possession, or to purchase or acquire it, subject to a condition that it is only for use in connection with the shooting of vermin.
- (2) For the purposes of this section, “shot pistol” means a smooth-bored gun which is chambered for .410 cartridges or 9mm rim-fire cartridges.

Textual Amendments

- F5** Words in s. 4 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

5 Races at athletic meetings.

[^{F6}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act—

- (a) for a person to have a firearm in his possession at an athletic meeting for the purpose of starting races at that meeting; or
- (b) for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a firearm if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the firearm in his possession, or to purchase or acquire it, subject to a condition that it is only for use in connection with starting races at athletic meetings.

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.
Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

- F6** Words in s. 5 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

6 Trophies of war.

[^{F7}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession a firearm which was acquired as a trophy of war before 1st January 1946 if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have it in his possession.

Textual Amendments

- F7** Words in s. 6 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

7 Firearms of historic interest.

- (1) [^{F8}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a firearm which—
- (a) was manufactured before 1st January 1919; and
 - (b) is of a description specified under subsection (2) below,
- if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the firearm in his possession, or to purchase or acquire it, subject to a condition that he does so only for the purpose of its being kept or exhibited as part of a collection.
- (2) The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument specify a description of firearm for the purposes of subsection (1) above if it appears to him that—
- (a) firearms of that description were manufactured before 1st January 1919; and
 - (b) ammunition for firearms of that type is not readily available.
- (3) The authority of the Secretary of State [^{F9}or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, a firearm which—
- (a) is of particular rarity, aesthetic quality or technical interest, or
 - (b) is of historical importance,
- if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to have the firearm in his possession subject to a condition requiring it to be kept and used only at a place designated for the purposes of this subsection by the Secretary of State [^{F10}or the Scottish Ministers (by virtue of provision made under section 63 of the Scotland Act 1998)].
- (4) This section has effect without prejudice to section 58(2) of the 1968 Act (antique firearms).

Textual Amendments

- F8** Words in s. 7(1) substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), [ss. 109\(3\)\(a\)](#), 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- F9** Words in s. 7(3) substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), **ss. 109(3)(b)**, 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)
- F10** Words in s. 7(1)(3) inserted (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/1750, arts. 1(1), 6(1), **Sch. 5 para. 18(7)** (with art. 7); S.I. 1998/3178, **art. 3**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 7(3) restricted (*tempto* 1.7.1997) by S.I. 1997/1538, **reg. 2**
S. 7(3): Transfer of functions (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/1750, arts. 1(1), 2, **Sch. 1** (with art. 7); S.I. 1998/3178, **art. 3**

Weapons and ammunition used for treating animals

8 Weapons and ammunition used for treating animals.

[^{F11}The authority of the Secretary of State or the Scottish Ministers] is not required by virtue of subsection (1)(aba), (b) or (c) of section 5 of the 1968 Act for a person to have in his possession, or to purchase or acquire, or to sell or transfer, any firearm, weapon or ammunition designed or adapted for the purpose of tranquillising or otherwise treating any animal, if he is authorised by a firearm certificate to possess, or to purchase or acquire, the firearm, weapon or ammunition subject to a condition restricting its use to use in connection with the treatment of animals.

Textual Amendments

- F11** Words in s. 8 substituted (14.7.2014) by [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 \(c. 12\)](#), **ss. 109(3)(a)**, 185(1) (with [ss. 21, 33, 42, 58, 75, 93](#)); S.I. 2014/949, art. 6(b)

Prohibited ammunition: expanding ammunition and missiles for expanding ammunition

^{F129} General prohibition of expanding ammunition etc.

.....

Textual Amendments

- F12** S. 9 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. 129(4)**, 183(1)(5)(e); S.I. 2017/399, **reg. 4(e)**

10 Expanding ammunition etc.: exemptions from prohibition.

- (1) Section 5A of the 1968 Act (exemptions from requirement of authority under section 5) shall be amended as follows.
- (2) In subsection (4) (shooting of animals)—
- (a) after the word “acquire”, in the first place it appears, there shall be inserted the words “, or to sell or transfer,”; and
 - (b) for paragraphs (a) and (b) there shall be substituted the following paragraphs—

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.
Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- “(a) he is authorised by a firearm certificate or visitor’s firearm permit to possess, or purchase or acquire, any expanding ammunition; and
- (b) the certificate or permit is subject to a condition restricting the use of any expanding ammunition to use in connection with any one or more of the following, namely—
 - (i) the lawful shooting of deer;
 - (ii) the shooting of vermin or, in the course of carrying on activities in connection with the management of any estate, other wildlife;
 - (iii) the humane killing of animals;
 - (iv) the shooting of animals for the protection of other animals or humans.”.

(3) For subsection (7) (firearms dealers) there shall be substituted the following subsection—

“(7) The authority of the Secretary of State shall not be required by virtue of subsection (1A) of section 5 of this Act for a person carrying on the business of a firearms dealer, or any servant of his, to have in his possession, or to purchase, acquire, sell or transfer, any expanding ammunition or the missile for any such ammunition in the ordinary course of that business.”.

PROSPECTIVE

Provisions relating to the control of small-calibre pistols

F13 11

Textual Amendments

F13 S. 11 repealed (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), Sch.; S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

F14 12

Textual Amendments

F14 S. 12 repealed (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), Sch.; S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

F15 13

Textual Amendments

F15 S. 13 repealed (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), Sch.; S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

F16 14

Textual Amendments

F16 S. 14 repealed (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(7), Sch.; S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

Surrender of firearms, etc. and compensation

15 Surrender of prohibited small firearms and ammunition.

- (1) The Secretary of State may make such arrangements as he thinks fit to secure the orderly surrender at designated police stations of firearms or ammunition the possession of which will become or has become unlawful by virtue of section 1 or 9 above.
- (2) The chief officer of police for any area may designate any police station in his area as being suitable for the receipt of surrendered firearms or ammunition or surrendered firearms or ammunition of any description.
- [^{F17}(3) This section applies in relation to small-calibre pistols with the substitution for the reference in subsection (1) above to section 1 above of a reference to section 1 of the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1997 (prohibition of small-calibre pistols).]

Textual Amendments

F17 S. 15(3) inserted (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(2); S.I. 1997/3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

16 Payments in respect of prohibited small firearms and ammunition.

- (1) The Secretary of State shall, in accordance with a scheme made by him, make payments in respect of firearms and ammunition surrendered at designated police stations in accordance with the arrangements made by him under section 15 above.
- (2) A scheme under subsection (1) above shall provide only for the making of payments to persons making claims for such payments in respect of firearms or ammunition—
 - (a) which they had, and were entitled to have in their possession on or immediately before 16th October 1996 by virtue of firearm certificates held by them or by virtue of their being registered firearms dealers; or
 - (b) which on or before that date they had contracted to acquire and were entitled to have in their possession after that date by virtue of such certificates held by them or by virtue of their being registered firearms dealers,
 and their possession of which will become, or has become, unlawful by virtue of section 1(2) or 9 above.
- (3) A scheme under subsection (1) above may—
 - (a) restrict eligibility for receipt of payments to claims made in respect of firearms or ammunition surrendered within a period specified in the scheme;
 - (b) provide for the procedure to be followed (including any time within which claims must be made and the provision of information) in respect of claims under the scheme and for the determination of such claims;

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (c) make different provision for different descriptions of firearm or ammunition or for different descriptions of claimant.

[^{F18}(4) This section applies in relation to small-calibre pistols surrendered at designated police stations in accordance with the arrangements made under section 15 above with the substitution—

- (a) for the reference in paragraph (a) of subsection (2) above to 16th October 1996 of a reference to 14th May 1997; and
- (b) for the reference in that subsection to section 1(2) above of a reference to section 1 of the Firearms (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1997 (prohibition of small-calibre pistols).]

Textual Amendments

F18 S. 16(4) inserted (1.2.1998) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(3); S.I. 1997/3114, arts. 3, 4, **Sch. Pt. II**

Commencement Information

I2 S. 16 wholly in force at 1.7.1997; s. 16 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 53(3)(4); s. 16 in force for certain purposes at 17.3.1997 by S.I. 1997/1076, **art. 2** and in force at 1.7.1997 insofar as not already in force by S.I. 1997/1535, **art. 3(b)**, **Sch. Pt. I**

17 Payments in respect of ancillary equipment.

- (1) The Secretary of State shall, in accordance with any scheme which may be made by him, make payments in respect of ancillary equipment of any description specified in the scheme.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above “ancillary equipment” means equipment, other than prohibited ammunition, which—
 - (a) is designed or adapted for use in connection with firearms prohibited by virtue of section 1(2) above; and
 - (b) has no practicable use in connection with any firearm which is not a prohibited weapon.
- (3) A scheme under subsection (1) above shall provide only for the making of payments to persons making claims for such payments in respect of ancillary equipment—
 - (a) which they had in their possession on 16th October 1996; or
 - (b) which they had in their possession after that date, having purchased it by virtue of a contract entered into before that date.
- (4) No payment shall be made under a scheme under subsection (1) above in relation to any ammunition unless its possession or, as the case may be, purchase by any person claiming a payment in respect of it was, at all material times, lawful by virtue of a firearm certificate held by him or by virtue of his being a registered firearms dealer.
- (5) A scheme under subsection (1) above may require, as a condition of eligibility for receipt of payments under the scheme in respect of any equipment—
 - (a) the surrender (whether to the police or any other person) of that equipment in accordance with the scheme within a period specified by the scheme; or
 - (b) the disposal of that equipment by way of sale within a period so specified; or
 - (c) either such surrender or such disposal of the equipment within a period so specified.

Status: This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) A scheme under subsection (1) above may—
- (a) provide for the procedure to be followed (including any time within which claims must be made and the provision of information) in respect of claims under the scheme and for the determination of such claims;
 - (b) make different provision for different descriptions of equipment or for different descriptions of claimant.

[^{F19}(7) This section applies in relation to equipment designed or adapted for use in connection with small-calibre pistols with the substitution—

- (a) for the reference in subsection (2)(a) above to firearms prohibited by virtue of section 1(2) above of a reference to small-calibre pistols; and
- (b) for the reference in subsection (3)(a) above to 16th October 1996 of a reference to 14th May 1997.]

Textual Amendments

F19 S. 17(7) inserted (1.2.1998) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(4); S.I. 1997/3114, arts. 3, 4, Sch. Pt. II

Commencement Information

I3 S. 17 wholly in force at 1.7.1997; s. 17 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 53(3)(4); s. 17 in force for certain purposes at 17.3.1997 by S.I. 1997/1076, art. 2 and in force at 1.7.1997 insofar as not already in force by S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), Sch. Pt. I

18 Parliamentary control of compensation schemes.

- (1) Before making a compensation scheme the Secretary of State shall lay a draft of it before Parliament.
- (2) The Secretary of State shall not make the scheme unless the draft has been approved by resolution of each House.

[^{F20}(3) Subsections (1) and (2) above apply to an alteration to a compensation scheme as they apply to a compensation scheme.]

- (4) In this section “compensation scheme” means a scheme under section 16 or 17 above.

Textual Amendments

F20 S. 18(3) substituted (17.12.1997) by 1997 c. 64, s. 2(5); S.I. 1997/ 3114, art. 3, Sch. Pt. I

Commencement Information

I4 S. 18 wholly in force at 1.7.1997; s. 18 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 53(3)(4); s. 18 in force for certain purposes at 17.3.1997 by S.I. 1997/1076, art. 2 and in force at 1.7.1997 insofar as not already in force by S.I. 1997/1535, art. 3(b), Sch. Pt. I

Status:

This version of this part contains provisions that are prospective.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997, Part I.