

FIREARMS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2004

S.I. 2004 No. 702 (N.I. 3)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

NOTES ON ARTICLES

Article 3 - Firearm certificate required

Makes it an offence to possess, purchase or acquire any firearm or ammunition without holding an appropriate firearm certificate for them. Schedule 1 sets out the exemptions to this requirement. The separate provision for handguns takes account of the Government's decision to provide for a mandatory minimum sentence for the illegal possession of certain prohibited weapons. Handguns are not prohibited in Northern Ireland, as they are in the rest of the United Kingdom, and separate provision is therefore required to ensure that their criminal misuse attracts the 5-year mandatory minimum sentence. The maximum sentence for the handgun offence has also been raised to 10 years thereby bringing Northern Ireland into line with Great Britain.