
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1998 No. 1941

The Firearms Rules 1998

Citation and commencement

1. These Rules may be cited as the Firearms Rules 1998 and shall come into force on 1st September 1998.

Interpretation

2. In these Rules—

- (a) “the principal Act” means the Firearms Act 1968;
- (b) “the 1997 Act” means the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997;
- (c) references to firearms include references to imitation firearms to which the Firearms Act 1982(1) applies;
- (d) “muzzle-loading pistol”, “approved rifle club” and “approved muzzle-loading pistol club” have the same meaning as in section 15 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988(2);
- (e) “target shooting club” means any club at which shooting at targets is conducted with firearms to which section 1 of the principal Act applies, whether or not an approved rifle or muzzle-loading pistol club;
- (f) any reference to a form includes a reference to any form to the like effect; and
- (g) any reference to a Schedule, except in rule 10(5) below, is a reference to a Schedule to these Rules.

Firearm certificates

3.—(1) An application for the grant, renewal or variation of a firearm certificate shall be in the form set out in Part I of Schedule 1.

(2) The information given by an applicant for the grant or renewal of a firearm certificate in answer to the questions numbered 1 to 16 in the form of application referred to in paragraph (1) above shall be verified in the manner specified in rule 4(1) below.

(3) An application for the grant or renewal of a firearm certificate shall be accompanied by—

- (a) the names and addresses of two persons who have agreed to act as referees and who satisfy the requirements of rule 4(3) below, and
- (b) four photographs of the applicant as specified in rule 7 below.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5) below, a firearm certificate shall be granted or renewed subject to the following conditions (whether or not in addition to any other conditions), namely—

- (i) the holder must, on receipt of the certificate, sign it in ink with his usual signature;
- (ii) the holder of the certificate must inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted within seven days of the theft, loss or destruction in Great Britain of the certificate;

(1) 1982 c. 31.

(2) Section 15 was substituted by section 45 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997.

- (iii) the holder of the certificate must, without undue delay, inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted of any change in his permanent address;
 - (iv)
 - (a) the firearms and ammunition to which the certificate relates must at all times (except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (b) below) be stored securely so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, access to the firearms or ammunition by an unauthorised person;
 - (b) where a firearm or ammunition to which the certificate relates is in use or the holder of the certificate has the firearm with him for the purpose of cleaning, repairing or testing it or for some other purpose connected with its use, transfer or sale, or the firearm or ammunition is in transit to or from a place in connection with its use or any such purpose, reasonable precautions must be taken for the safe custody of the firearm or the ammunition.
- (5) Where a chief officer of police is satisfied on an application for the grant or renewal of a firearm certificate in relation to any firearm, weapon or ammunition that it is a firearm, weapon or ammunition to which section 5A(1) or (4) of the principal Act or section 3, 4, 5, 7 or 8 of the 1997 Act apply and that it is to be used only for the purpose or purposes specified in those sections, the certificate shall be subject to an additional condition restricting the use of that firearm, weapon or ammunition to use for that purpose or purposes.
- (6) A firearm certificate shall bear a photograph of the holder and, subject to paragraph (5) above, shall be in the form set out in Part II of Schedule 1.

Referees: firearm certificates

4.—(1) The information referred to in rule 3(2) above shall be verified by the signed statement of each of the persons nominated as a referee by the applicant pursuant to rule 3(3)(a) above that the information is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, correct.

(2) An application for a firearm certificate shall not be considered by a chief officer of police until he receives from each referee nominated by the applicant pursuant to rule 3(3)(a) above and who satisfy the requirements of paragraph (3) below a completed reference in the form set out in Part III of Schedule 1 containing a statement to the effect that he knows of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4) below, to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph a person must not be a member of the applicant's family, a serving police officer or police employee or a registered firearms dealer, and must—

- (a) be resident in Great Britain;
- (b) have known the applicant personally for at least two years; and
- (c) be of good character.

(4) Where the chief officer of police is satisfied pursuant to section 44 of the 1997 Act that the application is for renewal of a firearm certificate in relation to a rifle or muzzle-loading pistol for use only for target shooting, the requirements of paragraph (3) above shall be varied so that one of the referees must be an official of the approved rifle or muzzle-loading pistol club specified in the application who may be a registered firearms dealer and need not have known the applicant personally for at least two years. The other referee must satisfy the requirements of paragraph (3) above and must not be a member of any target shooting club.

Shot gun certificates

5.—(1) An application for the grant or renewal of a shot gun certificate shall be in the form set out in Part I of Schedule 2 and, in the case of an application for renewal, shall be accompanied by the certificate to be renewed if it is available.

(2) The information given by an applicant in answer to the questions numbered 1 to 16 in the form of application for the grant or renewal of a shot gun certificate shall be verified in the manner specified in rule 6(1) below.

(3) An application for the grant or renewal of a shot gun certificate shall be accompanied by—

- (a) a signed statement by the person referred to in rule 6(1) below to the effect that he knows of no reason why the applicant should not be permitted to possess a firearm; and
- (b) four photographs of the applicant as specified in rule 7 below.

(4) Subject to section 34 of the 1997 Act and paragraph (5) below, a shot gun certificate shall be granted or renewed subject to the following conditions, and no others, namely—

- (i) the holder must, on receipt of the certificate, sign it in ink with his usual signature;
- (ii) the holder of the certificate must inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted within seven days of the theft, loss or destruction in Great Britain of the certificate;
- (iii) the holder of the certificate must, without undue delay, inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted of any change in his permanent address;
- (iv)
 - (a) the shot guns to which the certificate relates must at all times (except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (b) below) be stored securely so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, access to the guns by an unauthorised person;
 - (b) where a shot gun to which the certificate relates is in use or the holder of the certificate has the shot gun with him for the purpose of cleaning, repairing or testing it or for some other purpose connected with its use, transfer or sale, or the gun is in transit to or from a place in connection with its use or any such purpose, reasonable precautions must be taken for the safe custody of the gun.

(5) Where a shot gun which is disguised as another object, is possessed, purchased or acquired by the holder of the certificate for the purpose only of its being kept or exhibited as part of a collection, the certificate shall be subject to an additional condition restricting the use of that shot gun to use for that purpose.

(6) A shot gun certificate shall bear a photograph of the holder and, subject to paragraph (5) above, shall be in the form set out in Part II of Schedule 2.

Verification of application: shotgun certificates

6.—(1) The information referred to in rule 5(2) above shall be verified by the signed statement of a person who satisfies the requirements of paragraph (2) below that the information is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, correct.

(2) To satisfy the requirements of this paragraph a person must not be a member of the applicant's family, and must—

- (a) be resident in Great Britain,
- (b) have known the applicant personally for at least two years, and
- (c) be a member of Parliament, justice of the peace, minister of religion, doctor, lawyer, established civil servant, bank officer or person of similar standing.

Photographs to accompany application

7. The photographs referred to in rules 3(3)(b) and 5(3)(b) above shall, in the case of each application, be four identical unmounted photographs showing the current true likeness of the applicant and measuring 45mm by 35mm, of which—

- (a) one shall be signed in ink, on the back of the photograph, with the applicant's usual signature; and

- (b) one for each of the persons referred to in rule 4(1) or 6(1) above as appropriate shall have set out, on the back of the photograph—
 - (i) a signed statement in ink by that person to the effect that the photograph is a current true likeness of the applicant, and
 - (ii) the date when the likeness was compared.

Visitors' firearm and shot gun permits

- 8.**—(1) An application for the grant of a visitor's firearm permit, a visitor's shot gun permit or a group application for the grant of not more than twenty visitors' firearm permits or not more than twenty visitors' shot gun permits shall be in the form set out in Part I of Schedule 3.
- (2) A visitor's firearm permit shall be in the form set out in Part II of Schedule 3.
 - (3) A visitor's shot gun permit shall be in the form set out in Part III of Schedule 3.

Other permits

- 9.**—(1) A permit issued under section 7(1) of the principal Act (police permit) shall—
- (a) in the case of a permit relating to firearms and ammunition to which section 1 of the principal Act applies, be in the form set out in Part I of Schedule 4, or
 - (b) in the case of a permit relating to shot guns only, be in the form set out in Part II of Schedule 4.
- (2) A permit issued under section 9(2) of the principal Act (permit for auctioneers) shall—
- (a) in the case of a permit relating to firearms and ammunition to which section 1 of the principal Act applies, be in the form set out in Part III of Schedule 4, or
 - (b) in the case of a permit relating to shot guns only, be in the form set out in Part IV of Schedule 4.
- (3) A permit issued under section 13(1) of the principal Act (permit to remove firearm from or to a ship or to remove signalling apparatus from or to an aircraft or aerodrome) shall be in the form set out in Part V of Schedule 4.

Firearms dealers

- 10.**—(1) An application under section 33 of the principal Act for registration as a firearms dealer, or for a new certificate of registration as a firearms dealer, shall be in the form set out in Part I of Schedule 5.
- (2) A notification under section 37 of the principal Act (notification that a person registered as a firearms dealer proposes to carry on business as such at a place of business not yet entered in the register) shall be in the form set out in Part II of Schedule 5.
- (3) The register to be kept by a chief officer of police under section 33 of the principal Act shall be in the form set out in Part III of Schedule 5.
- (4) The provisions of Part IV to Schedule 5 shall have effect in relation to the manner in which a register kept under section 40(1) of the principal Act by a person who by way of trade or business manufactures, sells or transfers firearms or ammunition (being firearms or ammunition within the meaning of that subsection) should be kept.
- (5) Schedule 4 to the principal Act (particulars to be entered by firearms dealer in register of transactions) shall continue to have effect with the substitution for paragraph 4 of the Schedule of the following paragraph:

“4. The quantities and description of firearms and ammunition sold or transferred with the names and addresses of the purchasers or transferees and (except in cases where the purchaser or transferee is a registered dealer) the areas in which the firearm certificates were issued, and the dates of the several transactions.”.

Discharge of chief officer’s functions

11. Any of the functions of a chief officer of police under the principal Act may in the event of his illness or absence, or of a vacancy in the office of the chief officer of police, be discharged—

- (a) in the City of London, by an Assistant Commissioner of City of London Police; and
- (b) in the metropolitan police district, by an Assistant Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Revocations

12. The Rules set out in Schedule 6 are hereby revoked.

Home Office
5th August 1998

Alun Michael
Minister of State