

2024 No. 312

ARMS AND AMMUNITION, NORTHERN IRELAND

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Specification for Imitation Firearms) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

Made - - - - at 11:00 a.m. on 6th March 2024

Laid before Parliament at 4:55 p.m. on 6th March 2024

Coming into force - - 6th April 2024

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by paragraph 7(1)(a) and (8) of Schedule 2 to the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006(a).

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Specification for Imitation Firearms) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and come into force on 6th April 2024.

(2) These Regulations extend to Northern Ireland only.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

“the 2006 Act” means the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006;

“blank-firing imitation firearm” means an imitation firearm(b) capable of firing a blank cartridge;

“historical re-enactment” means any presentation or other event held for the purpose of re-enacting an event from the past or of illustrating conduct from a particular time or period in the past;

“inclusion” means part of an imitation firearm incorporated into the firearm during manufacture for the purpose of preventing an imitation firearm being modified for use as a firearm;

“museum or gallery” includes any institution which—

(a) has as its purpose, or one of its purposes, the preservation, display and interpretation of material of historical, artistic or scientific interest, and

(a) 2006 c. 38. Paragraph 7 of Schedule 2 was amended by S.I. 2010/976.

(b) For the definition of “imitation firearm” see article 2(2) of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 and paragraph 14(2) of Schedule 2 to the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

- (b) gives the public access to it;

“revolver” means a firearm that has a cylinder (containing multiple chambers) that revolves to align each chamber in turn with the firing mechanism and the barrel.

Specifications for certain imitation firearms brought into Northern Ireland

3.—(1) Blank-firing imitation firearms brought into Northern Ireland, other than those described in paragraph (2), must conform to the specifications set out in paragraph (3).

(2) The blank-firing imitation firearms described in this paragraph are—

- (a) imitation revolvers, and
- (b) imitation firearms where the blank cartridges are loaded vertically at 90 degrees to the dummy barrel and which fire, and vent the gases produced on discharge, in the same direction.

(3) The specifications referred to in paragraph (1) are that—

- (a) an imitation firearm must incorporate an inclusion,
- (b) the inclusion must be wholly made of a material which is at least as resistant to being cut, drilled, bored, ground (or any similar process) as sintered tungsten carbide in the range 1550-2000 HV 30(a),
- (c) the inclusion must wholly block the barrel and should be permanent and incapable of being knocked out without destroying the chamber or barrel,
- (d) part of the inclusion must be incorporated into the rear of the dummy barrel, and
- (e) the inclusion must be intended to prevent—
 - (i) the creation of a hole through the dummy barrel along its axis, and
 - (ii) the removal of a dummy barrel, unless the frame and chamber area of the firearm is rendered useless as a result or its integrity so compromised that it cannot be used to form the basis of a firearm without significant repair or addition.

Specifications for imitation revolvers brought into Northern Ireland

4.—(1) Blank-firing imitation revolvers brought into Northern Ireland must conform to the specifications set out in paragraph (2).

(2) The specifications referred to in paragraph (1) are that—

- (a) an imitation revolver must incorporate an inclusion cast into the dummy barrel and a separate inclusion cast into the cylinder which extends to fully obstruct all the dummy chambers,
- (b) the inclusions must be wholly made of a material which is at least as resistant to being cut, drilled, bored, ground (or any similar process) as sintered tungsten carbide in the range 1550-2000 HV 30,
- (c) the inclusions should be permanent and incapable of being knocked out without destroying the chamber or barrel,
- (d) the barrel inclusion must wholly block the dummy barrel and part of it must be incorporated into the rear of the dummy barrel,

(a) This refers to the “Vickers hardness test” which is a method used to measure the hardness of materials. The test can be used for all metals. The unit of hardness given by the test is known as the Vickers Pyramid Number (HV).

- (e) the barrel inclusion must be intended to prevent removal of the dummy barrel, unless the frame of the firearm is rendered useless as a result or its integrity so compromised that it cannot be used to form the basis of a firearm without significant repair or addition,
- (f) the inclusions must be intended to prevent the creation of a hole through the dummy barrel or chamber along their axis, and
- (g) the revolver must vent the gasses produced on discharge at not less than 80 degrees from the axis of the dummy barrel.

Exemptions

5.—(1) A person whose conduct in bringing an imitation firearm into Northern Ireland, or causing an imitation firearm to be brought into Northern Ireland, was to make the imitation firearm in question available for one or more of the purposes set out in paragraph (2) does not commit an offence under paragraph 7(2)(d) of Schedule 2 to the 2006 Act (bringing into Northern Ireland an imitation firearm which does not conform to the specifications required of it by these Regulations).

(2) The purposes described in this paragraph are—

- (a) the purposes of a museum or gallery;
- (b) the purposes of theatrical performances and of rehearsals for such performances;
- (c) the production of films (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988)(a);
- (d) the production of television programmes (within the meaning of the Communications Act 2003)(b);
- (e) the organisation and holding of historical re-enactments by a person or persons at least one of whom holds public liability insurance in relation to liabilities to third parties arising from or in connection with the organisation and holding of historical re-enactments;
- (f) the purposes of functions held by a person in their capacity as a person in the service of His Majesty.

6th March 2024

Steve Baker
Minister of State
Northern Ireland Office

(a) 1988 c. 48. See section 5B of that Act.
(b) 2003 c. 21. See section 405(1) of that Act.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations prescribe the specifications that imitation firearms must conform to for importation into Northern Ireland, pursuant to paragraph 7(1)(a) of Schedule 2 to the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (C. 38).

Under paragraph 7(2)(d) of Schedule 2 to the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 a person is guilty of an offence if they import into Northern Ireland an imitation firearm which does not conform to prescribed specifications.

Regulation 4 sets out the specifications for certain blank-firing imitation firearms. Regulation 6 sets out the specifications for blank-firing imitation revolvers.

Regulation 7 sets out an exemption, the effect of which is to exempt from criminal liability any person importing an imitation firearm which does not conform to the specifications, if their conduct is only for the purpose of making the imitation firearm available for specified purposes. These purposes include those of a museum or gallery, a theatrical performance, the production of films and television programmes, the organisation of historical reenactments, or the purposes of functions held by a person in their capacity as a person in the service of His Majesty.

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.

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