



Firearms Act 1920

1920 CHAPTER 43

1 Restriction on purchase, possession, and use of firearms

- (1) A person shall not purchase, have in his possession, use, or carry any firearm or ammunition unless he holds a certificate (in this Act called a firearm certificate) granted under this section, and in force at the time.
- (2) A firearm certificate shall be granted by the chief officer of police of the district in which the applicant for the certificate resides, if he is satisfied that the applicant is a person who has a good reason for requiring such a certificate and can be permitted to have in his possession, use, and carry a firearm or ammunition without danger to the public safety or to the peace, and on payment of the prescribed fee :

Provided that—

- (a) a firearm certificate shall not be granted to a person whom the chief officer of police has reason to believe to be a person who by this Act is prohibited from possessing, using, or carrying a firearm, or to be a person of intemperate habits or unsound mind, or to be for any reason unfitted to be entrusted with firearms; and
 - (b) a firearm certificate in respect of firearms or ammunition to be used solely for target practice or drill by the members of a rifle club or cadet corps approved for the purpose by a Secretary of State may be granted to any responsible officer of the club or corps without payment of any fee.
- (3) A firearm certificate shall be in the prescribed form and shall specify the nature and number of the firearms to which it relates, and, as respects ammunition, the quantities authorised to be purchased and to be held at any one time thereunder, and the certificate may on the application of the holder thereof be varied from time to time by the chief officer of police of the district in which the holder for the time resides.
 - (4) Any person aggrieved by a refusal of a chief officer of police to grant him a firearm certificate, or to vary such a certificate, may appeal in accordance with rules made by the Lord Chancellor to a court of summary jurisdiction acting for the petty sessional division in which the appellant resides.

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- (5) A firearm certificate shall, unless previously revoked or cancelled, continue in force for three years, but shall be renewable for a further period of three years by the chief officer of police of the district in which the holder of the certificate resides, and so from time to time; and the provisions of this Act with respect to the grant of a certificate and to appeals from a refusal to grant a certificate shall apply to the renewal of a certificate.
- (6) A firearm certificate may be revoked by the chief officer of police of the district in which the holder resides if he is satisfied that the holder thereof is a person who is prohibited by this Act from possessing, using, or carrying a firearm, or is a person of intemperate habits or unsound mind, or is otherwise unfitted to be entrusted with firearms, subject, however, to the like right of appeal as in the case of a refusal to grant a firearm certificate.
- (7) The fee to be paid on the grant or renewal of a firearm certificate shall be such as is specified in the First Schedule to this Act.
- (8) If any person purchases, has in- his possession, uses, or carries a firearm or ammunition without holding a firearm certificate or otherwise than as authorised by such a certificate or, in the case of 'ammunition, in quantities in excess of those so authorised, or fails to comply with any condition subject to which the certificate is granted, he shall be liable in respect of each offence on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds, or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for a term not exceeding three months, or to both such imprisonment and fine :

Provided that no offence under this section shall be deemed to be committed—

- (a) in the case of any person in the naval, military, or air service of His Majesty, or in a police force, by having in his possession a firearm or ammunition in his capacity as such, or by using or carrying a firearm or ammunition in the performance of his duty as such; or
- (b) in the case "of any person carrying on the business of gunsmith or dealer in firearms or of testing or proving firearms or ammunition or the servant of such a person, by purchasing or having in his possession, using, or carrying a firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of such business as aforesaid; or
- (c) in the case of any person carrying on the business of common carrier or warehouseman, by having in his possession or carrying a firearm or ammunition in the ordinary course of that business; or
- (d) in the case of any person, by having in his possession a firearm or ammunition on board ship as part of the equipment of the ship, so long as the firearm or ammunition is not brought on shore at any place in the United Kingdom or by bringing a firearm ashore for repair provided that he has obtained from an officer of police a permit in the prescribed form for that purpose; or
- (e) in the case of any member of a rifle club or miniature rifle club or cadet corps approved by a Secretary of State, by having in his possession, using, or carrying a firearm or ammunition when engaged as such member in, or in connection with, drill or target practice ; or
- (f) in the case of an officer of the Post Office by having in his possession, using, or carrying a firearm or ammunition when acting in the course of his duties; or
- (g) in the case of a person carrying a firearm or ammunition belonging to a person holding a certificate under this Act, by having in his possession such firearm or ammunition under instructions from and for the use of such certificated person for sporting purposes only; or

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- (h) in the case of any person carrying on the business of butcher, slaughterman, knacker, or other person engaged in the business of the humane slaughter of animals for food or other purposes, by purchasing or having in his possession or using any humane killer for the purpose of such business; or
 - (i) in the case of any person conducting or carrying on a miniature rifle range (whether for a rifle club or otherwise) or shooting gallery at which no firearms are used other than miniature rifles not exceeding 23 calibre, by purchasing, having in his possession, using, or carrying such miniature rifles or ammunition suitable therefor; or, in the case of any person, by using at such miniature rifle range or shooting gallery any such rifle or ammunition; or
 - (j) in the case of a person who has been refused the grant of a firearm certificate by a chief officer of police or whose firearm certificate has been revoked by having in his possession a firearm or ammunition pending disposal thereof by him, provided that he has obtained from the chief officer of police a permit, in the prescribed form for that purpose.
- (9) Nothing in this section shall relieve any person using or carrying a firearm from the obligation to take out a gun licence.