**UK VISITORS FIREARMS AND SHOTGUN PERMITS**

**NOTES FOR APPLICANTS**

**Please allow a minimum of 3 months for your permit to be processed and sent back to you.**

If you wish to bring firearms to the UK as a visitor, or to possess firearms while visiting the UK other than in some restricted circumstances, you must have a Visitor’s Firearm Permit or Visitor’s Shotgun Permit.

These documents are issued by the Police in the part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland you wish to visit, though your permit is not necessarily restricted to the area covered by the issuing Police Force. A Permit can be valid for up to a year, and for temporary residence of a year or less avoids the need for an import licence and subsequent export licence when returning home. A Permit is also valid for multiple visits within the period of validity; if you intend that, please explain in the application. Note that there are differences in the law and the procedure between Great Britain (England Scotland & Wales) and Northern Ireland. Also the Republic of Ireland is an independent nation and part of the European Union and has its own procedures. The NRA can only process applications for permits valid in Great Britain.

**You must obtain your permit in advance** – it is not possible to apply for one at point of entry. Please allow a minimum of three months. If you bring firearms as part of your personal baggage, you must have the permit with you in order to clear UK Customs. If your firearms are shipped separately, you will need the permit to collect them from the importer.

All the firearms and ammunition you import must appear on the permit, as must any firearms you intend to borrow or hire once in the UK. However, if you will be shooting with a government Approved club in GB (the NRA is an Approved club), your permit authorises the club to make you a temporary member, which in turn allows you to borrow a firearm within certain limits under exemptions granted to members of Approved clubs. This, for example, may allow members of a team shooting in an NRA competition at Bisley to use each other’s rifles, without having the other’s firearm entered on their own permit. The exemption does not extend to the act of importing or exporting the firearm.

A Visitor’s Shotgun Permit can be issued with permission to buy shotguns in the UK and export them. This privilege is not available for a Visitor’s Firearm Permit.

Permits will only be issued for the types of firearm and ammunition that are legal in the UK.

Firearms illegal for personal possession in Great Britain include:

* All automatic firearms (machine guns / assault rifles and similar firearms)
* All semi-automatic and pump-action firearms except:
  + Shotguns with a barrel at least 24” (610 mm) long and an overall length of at least 40” (1016 mm)
  + Rifled guns in .22” rimfire calibre
* All pistols except:
  + Muzzle loading pistols, which includes cap & ball revolvers
  + “Pistols” which are over 24” long overall and have a barrel over 12” long
* Realistic imitation firearms, which includes airsoft and bb guns constructed to resemble a real firearm
* Gas cartridge revolvers

The prohibitions are slightly different in Northern Ireland.

Permits are not needed for airguns with muzzle energy of less than 12 ft-lbs (rifles) or 6 ft-lbs (pistols), except in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Expanding ammunition for pistols is separately controlled, and if you need it, must be requested as a separate item on your permit. No separate permission is required for expanding ammunition for rifles.

Some components of firearms (eg spare barrels, sound moderators) must also be listed as separate items on a permit.

A Shotgun Permit only covers sporting shotguns. The limiting condition is that the shotgun must have barrel(s) at least 24 inches / 610 mm long and a maximum capacity of three cartridges. So, for example, a semi-automatic shotgun may be held on a shotgun permit provided the magazine only holds two cartridges. The possible one cartridge in the chamber makes three. Shotguns not meeting this condition must be held on a Firearm Permit.

Shotgun ammunition containing more than 5 projectiles may be held without restriction on production of a Shotgun Permit. Shotgun ammunition with fewer than 5 projectiles (eg slug) is controlled and must be held within quantities authorised on a Firearm Permit.

You must have a sponsor in the UK to get a permit. The NRA will sponsor applications from visitors who wish to shoot at Bisley, at Wedgenock or at the ranges where the UK F-class league events are held, and from NRA members overseas wishing to bring firearms to GB.

The NRA will also consider sponsoring other applications from non-members – please contact the NRA Firearms Department before you apply.

The NRA charges a fee for acting as sponsor. This fee includes the underlying fee charged by the Police. The current fees are £40 for an individual application and £170 for a group application (see below), plus the cost of getting the permit to you. Delivery options are detailed on the NRA application form.

If your application incurs other costs such as for meeting you with the permits at the point of entry to the UK, these will be charged in addition. Note that collecting the permit at point of entry requires us to attend in person so we will generally only do this for entry points local to Bisley such as Heathrow airport. We cannot do it for cross-Channel travelers clearing Customs on the departure side. Also there is no obligation on Customs to accept the permit from us to pass to you. Please ensure you apply in time to avoid the necessity, expense and uncertainty of delivery to point of arrival.

For all applications:

* Please allow at least 12 weeks for your application to be processed and returned to you – longer in the busy period from January to March.
* An address of where you will be staying during your visit MUST be provided and must be the full street address including post code.
* For any permit, you must provide a copy of your national authorisation to possess the firearms. If no such document exists eg if you are a citizen of the USA, or resident in France and wishing to bring a muzzle loading firearm, please provide a copy of the photo page of your passport and a note explaining the situation.
* You may send all documents, including copies of your national licence or permit, electronically. Please ensure that documents are in a readily readable format eg .pdf and that they can be printed to form a coherent physical document without having to manipulate the images. Please leave the NRA application form in Word, so that we can make minor changes if necessary.

There are eight different types of application.

1. An Individual Visitor’s Firearm Permit application from a person resident outside the European Union is the simplest. Apply by post to the NRA or electronically by email to firearmsliaison@nra.org.uk attaching the completed application form downloadable at https://nra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Visitor-Permit-BLANK-2022-Version.docx. The authorising signature for the application comes from the sponsor (the NRA) so all you have to do is provide the information and the payment.
2. An individual Visitor’s Shotgun Permit application from a person resident outside the European Union can be made as for the equivalent Firearm Permit (above).

3 and 4. An Individual Visitor’s Firearm Permit or Visitor’s Shotgun Permit application from a EU citizen can be made as above but must be accompanied by the same documentation required from anyone outside the EU, i.e. proof that you are legally allowed to hold the firearms in your country of origin by way of a licence or permit. European Firearms Passes are no longer required or accepted as they are a transit document, not a licence or permit in their own right.

5 to 8. The same four types of application are available for groups of visitors. A group is defined as between five and twenty people all travelling to the same locations on the same dates. Thus, a group application must state the same locations and arrival dates for every member of the group. However, a group application will lead to a set of individual permits being issued, so once you have the permits, members of the group can visit as they wish within the limits of location and date authorised.

A letter from your country’s National Governing Body or your Club may be requested to confirm your experience and background as a fullbore shooter or shotgun shooter.

The validity dates you request for a permit do not have to align with your planned arrival and departure dates. It is sensible to have the permit valid from a few days before your planned arrival and for perhaps a month after your planned departure, to allow for unforeseen changes or enforced delay.

Further advice on Visitor’s Permits can be obtained from the NRA Firearms department. Email iain.robertson@nra.org.uk or telephone +44 (0)1483 797777 ext 154.