



Te Tari Pūreke
Firearms Safety Authority

Disposal of illegally held or unwanted firearms



Version 1.0

September 2023

Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority, a business unit of New Zealand Police



Disposal of illegally held or unwanted firearms

- 02 Unlicensed individual in possession of a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition
- 02 Firearms licence holder who does not want to possess a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition
- 03 Transferring a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition to a licensed firearms dealer
- 03 Licensed firearms dealers' obligations and protections
- 03 Voluntary delivery to Police
- 04 Compensation from Police
- 04 Handling a firearm
- 04 Transportation of firearms, other items, or ammunition

Appendix

- 05 Extracts from the Arms Act 1983
- 06 Extracts from the Arms Order 1984

Disposal of illegally held or unwanted firearms



This document informs firearms licence holders, dealer licence holders, and the public (i.e., unlicensed individuals) on how to properly dispose of illegally held or unwanted firearms, other arms items, or ammunition that they do not wish to keep, or that they cannot legally possess because they do not have a valid firearms licence that allows them to legally possess those items.

All individuals are required to have a current New Zealand firearms licence, to legally possess a firearm, other arms item (excluding an airgun for individuals aged 18 years or older), and ammunition in New Zealand.

Arms items include firearms, magazines, parts, airguns, pistols, restricted weapons, and pistol carbine conversion kits.

Individuals who want to possess a prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, pistol, restricted weapon, and pistol carbine conversion kit, for particular reasons such as target shooting, pest control, collecting, or theatre productions, must also have an endorsement on their licence, as well as a permit to possess or import each specific item.

Should an individual come into possession of a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition that they are not legally entitled to possess or do not wish to keep, they have the option to dispose of the item through one of the following channels:

- a current New Zealand firearms licence holder, or
- a licensed firearms dealer, or
- New Zealand Police.

Unlicensed individual in possession of a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition

If an individual does not have a firearms licence, it is illegal for them to be in possession of a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition.¹ In such cases they are required to deliver the item to a firearms licence holder, a licensed firearms dealer, or the Police.

If an individual inherits a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition and they wish to keep it, they may do so after obtaining a firearms licence and, if necessary, the relevant endorsement and permit to possess each specific item.

Until they have acquired a firearms licence, these items must be kept in secure storage by a firearms licence holder or licensed firearms dealer.

If an item is a prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, pistol, restricted weapon, or pistol carbine conversion kit, the licence holder storing them must possess

the appropriate endorsement to possess each of those items and must apply to Police for a permit to possess each item.

Firearms licence holder who does not want to possess a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition

If an individual holds a firearms licence and possesses a firearm, other arms items, or ammunition they no longer wish to keep, they have the option to transfer (sell or supply) the item to another individual who has a valid firearms licence or a licensed dealer (and, if required, the appropriate endorsement and permit to possess the item), or deliver it to Police.

Note: A firearms licence holder is prohibited from legally possessing a pistol, prohibited firearm, restricted weapon, pistol carbine conversion kit, prohibited magazine, or prohibited item unless they hold a specific endorsement on their firearms licence and a permit to possess the item.

¹ Unless it is an airgun that is not classified as a specially dangerous airgun, and the individual in possession of it is of the age of 18 years or older.

Transferring a firearm or other arms item, or ammunition to a licensed firearms dealer

If an individual needs to transfer a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition to a licensed firearms dealer, it is advisable to contact the licensed dealer in advance to schedule an appointment for the transfer. The dealer will then guide the individual through the necessary process and provide specific instructions.

Once the dealer receives the item, if it is a non-prohibited firearm then they may choose to on-sell the item, use it for parts, or destroy it, depending on its condition.

If the item is a firearm that requires an endorsement to possess, then the dealer must hand the item on to Police within five working days of receiving it. Police then decides how the item is dealt with or otherwise disposed of.

Note: Licensed firearms dealers are not obligated to receive an arms item. Where an individual is unable to find a licensed dealer or firearms licence holder willing to take the item, they should bring the item to their local Police station.

Licensed firearms dealer's obligations and protections

Acceptance and handling of surrendered items:

A licensed firearms dealer can accept a surrendered non-prohibited firearm or any ammunition, retaining these for sale or parts. However, they must record the details of the person surrendering the item.

Should the individual choose not to provide their details, the dealer must present the item to Police within five working days of receiving it.²

Handling prohibited and restricted items:

A licensed firearms dealer (and any dealer's employee) who receives a prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, pistol, restricted weapon, pistol carbine conversion kit or parts cannot possess such items for sale purposes unless they have the necessary endorsement and permit to possess.³

In cases where a dealer (or their employee) accepts prohibited or restricted items without the appropriate endorsements, they are required to deliver the item to the nearest Police station for inspection within five working days of receiving the item.

Voluntary delivery to Police

If an individual wishes to dispose of a firearm, other arms item, or ammunition, they can do so by taking them to their local Police station. Before transporting any items to the station, it is crucial that they inform the Police of their intentions. Contacting the station beforehand ensures a safe and proper transfer. Alternatively, individuals can seek assistance by calling Te Tari Pūreke on **0800 844 431** (or **04 499 2870** if outside New Zealand).

When transporting firearms or arms item to the designated location, it's essential to prioritise safety and security.

² Section 59A(2) of the Arms Act 1983 states: A licensed dealer does not contravene section 12 if the licensed dealer does not record the particulars of any of the following items that is received by that dealer and, within 5 working days, surrenders the item to the nearest Police station for inspection and inquiries:

- (a) a firearm;
- (b) an airgun;
- (c) a pistol;
- (d) a pistol carbine conversion kit;
- (e) a prohibited item;
- (f) a restricted weapon.

³ Section 10 of the Arms Act states: (1) A licensed dealer may not take an arms item that is a prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, pistol, restricted weapon, or pistol carbine conversion kit into their possession for the purpose of carrying on a dealer activity unless the licensed dealer—

- (a) is the holder of a dealer's licence that—
 - (i) specifies that the dealer may carry on that activity in respect of a prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, pistol, restricted weapon, or pistol carbine conversion kit; and
 - (ii) bears an appropriate endorsement made under section 30 or 30B; and
- (b) either—
 - (i) obtains the arms item under—
 - (A) a permit to import issued under section 18 or 18AA; or
 - (B) a permit to possess issued under section 35, 35A, or 35AAA; or
 - (ii) manufactures it with the written approval of the Commissioner under section 6B(2).

Individuals must ensure that firearms are unloaded and transported safely using a gun case or similar bag. Please ensure you comply with the laws relating to secure storage and transportation of firearms and ammunition. Check our website for the details of requirements: firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz/storage-transportation. Using a chamber safety flag to indicate that the firearm is not loaded is good practice. Remove any detachable magazine.

Individuals have the option to deliver the items anonymously or provide their name and contact information.

It's important to note that under section 59B of the Arms Act, the Police retain discretion regarding the prosecution of unlicensed individuals who deliver firearms or other arms items⁴. Additionally, individuals may be asked to provide details about how they acquired the items and specifics about the item.

The Police will verify that firearms are neither stolen nor involved in any criminal activity. In almost all instances, items delivered to the Police will be destroyed.

Compensation from Police

Police will not pay for any firearms or other arms items, or ammunition that are surrendered.⁵

Handling a firearm

When handling a firearm, it's crucial to always treat it as loaded and follow safe handling practices. If you're unfamiliar with firearms and uncertain about ensuring their unloaded and secure state for transport, we strongly advise seeking advice from a firearms licence holder, a licensed dealer, Police, or Te Tari Pūreke. You can reach Te Tari Pūreke on **0800 844 431** (or **04 499 2870** if outside New Zealand).

Transportation of firearms, or other items, or ammunition

Transporting a firearm must be carried out safely and securely. The firearm should be unloaded, with the bolt removed (if applicable), the magazine removed if it is detachable, and ammunition should be transported separately from the firearm. [Section 3 of our Secure storage and transportation guide for firearms and ammunition](#) outlines how individuals can fulfil safety requirements during firearm and ammunition transportation. Alternatively, individuals can contact Te Tari Pūreke on **0800 844 431** (or **04 499 2870** if outside New Zealand) for assistance.

⁴ Section 59B of the arms Act 1983, Voluntary delivery to Police of firearms, etc

(1) If any arms item or ammunition is delivered to the Police by a person who is not authorised to be in possession of the item or ammunition, it is affirmed that the Police have the discretion not to prosecute in any case where—

(a) the offence is considered to be one of possession only; and
(b) there is no public interest in proceeding with the prosecution.

⁵ The Arms Act 1983 schedule 1, clause 6, indicates that nothing in the Arms Act or the amendment Act otherwise confers any right to compensations or is to be relied on in any proceedings as a basis for claim to compensation, except and to the extent authorised by regulations made under clause 7.





Extracts from the Arms Act 1983

airgun includes—

- (a) any air rifle; and
- (b) any air pistol; and
- (c) any weapon from which, by the use of gas or compressed air (and not by force of explosive), any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile can be discharged

arms item means an item of any of the following classes:

- (a) firearms (including prohibited firearms):
- (b) magazines (including prohibited magazines):
- (c) parts (including prohibited parts):
- (d) airguns:
- (e) pistols:
- (f) restricted weapons:
- (g) pistol carbine conversion kits

firearm—

(1) means anything from which any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile can be discharged by force of explosive; and

(2) includes—

- (i) anything that has been adapted so that it can be used to discharge a shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile by force of explosive; and
- (ii) anything which is not for the time being capable of discharging any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile but which, by its completion or the replacement of any component part or parts or the correction or repair of any defect or defects, would be a firearm within the meaning of paragraph (a) or subparagraph (i); and
- (iii) anything (being a firearm within the meaning of paragraph (a) or subparagraph (i)) which is for the time being dismantled or partially dismantled; and
- (iv) any specially dangerous airgun

firearms licence means a firearms licence issued under [section 24](#):

licensed dealer means a holder of a dealer's licence issued under this Act

part, in relation to any firearm or restricted weapon,—

(a) means—

- (i) any component that, of itself, is essential to the discharge of any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile from the firearm or restricted weapon; and
- (ii) any component that is exclusively designed to be, or is intended to be, an integral part of the firearm or restricted weapon (for example, a butt, stock, magazine, or other component that feeds or contributes to feeding ammunition to the firearm or restricted weapon); and

(b) includes the following components or accessories that can be fitted to, or adapted to fit, a firearm or restricted weapon:

- (i) grips:
- (ii) frames:
- (iii) chassis systems:
- (iv) magazine adapters:
- (v) magazine couplers:
- (vi) magazine loaders:
- (vii) flash suppressors:
- (viii) silencers:
- (ix) folding or telescoping stocks; but

(c) does not include the following:

- (i) pistol carbine conversion kits:
- (ii) air pistol carbine conversion kits

prohibited firearm

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, **prohibited firearm**—

(a) means any of the following firearms:

- (i) a semi-automatic firearm, other than—
 - (A) a specified semi-automatic firearm:
 - (B) a semi-automatic shotgun with a non-detachable tubular magazine or magazines that are capable of holding no more than 5 cartridges commensurate with that firearm's chamber size:
 - (C) a small semi-automatic pistol:
 - (D) a semi-automatic pistol (not being a small semi-automatic pistol) in the possession or under the control of a person referred to in subsection (3):
- (ii) a pump-action shotgun that is capable of being used with a detachable magazine:
- (iii) a pump-action shotgun that has a non-detachable tubular magazine or magazines that are capable of holding more than 5 cartridges commensurate with that firearm's chamber size:
- (iv) a centrefire pump-action rifle that is capable of being used with a detachable magazine:
- (v) a centrefire pump-action rifle that has 1 or more non-detachable magazines (tubular or otherwise) that are capable of holding more than 10 cartridges commensurate with that firearm's chamber size; and

includes any other firearm declared by Order in Council made under [section 74A](#) to be a prohibited firearm for the purposes of this Act.

prohibited item means a prohibited firearm, a prohibited magazine, a prohibited part, or any or all of those things, as the case requires.

restricted weapon means any weapon, whether a firearm or not, declared by the Governor-General, by Order in Council made under [section 4](#), to be a restricted weapon.

specially dangerous airgun means any airgun declared by the Governor-General, by [Order in Council](#) made under section 4 of the Arms Act 1983, to be a specially dangerous airgun

Extracts from the Arms Order 1984

Weapons declared restricted weapons

- (1) Anti-tank projectors, and ammunition therefor.
- (2) Grenade dischargers, grenade launchers, and grenades containing explosives.
- (3) Incendiary grenades; including the type commonly known as a Molotov cocktail and consisting of—
 - a) a container or containers, the only or principal contents of which is an inflammable liquid or mixture; and
 - b) a means of ignition of the inflammable substance or mixture, whether that means is a wick, an explosive or other device, a fuse, or a chemical.
- (4) Machine carbines or guns, submachine carbines or guns, and machine pistols of any kind, including those operated by gas or compressed air.
- (4A) Firearms and airguns that are capable of full automatic fire, excluding airguns that are designed for use in airsoft or paintball sports and are in the same configuration as when they were manufactured.
- (5) Mines of an explosive nature, of any kind whatsoever.
- (6) Mortars of military kinds, and ammunition therefor.
- (7) Rocket launchers and ammunition therefor.
- (8) Every firearm, weapon, and device designed for the purpose of discharging any lachrymatory, deleterious, or toxic gas, smoke, or other stupefying or overpowering thing capable of rendering any person either wholly or partially incapable of resistance (other than any device designed and intended solely for any medical, surgical, veterinary, scientific, agricultural, industrial, or other similar lawful purpose).
- (9) Any gas, substance, material, or thing specially intended or adapted for use in conjunction with any firearm, weapon, or device specified in clause 8.