

A Guide to the obligations of museums possessing and displaying arms items

Firearms Resource Manual for Museums



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

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Background information and purpose

Who is this guidance for?

This guide has been produced to assist those working (paid or volunteering) in the museum sector where the role includes the possession and conservation of firearms and other arms items. This includes museum staff with roles such as:

- Directors
- Curators
- Assistant curators
- Collection managers
- Conservators.

Introduction

Museums in New Zealand play an important role in preserving and showcasing historical, cultural, and scientific artifacts, including firearms and other arms items. Proper management of these collections is important for both public safety and the preservation of our heritage.

In 2020 the New Zealand government introduced new legislation for the control of firearms.

The new legislation creates a regime requiring stricter control and handling of firearm collections and displays in Museums.

This document is a practical and user-friendly guide to help museums approach the management of firearms collections and displays to ensure that the museum is fully compliant with the legislation, including regulations. It uses examples from existing museums' collections and sets out resources and a contact network for assistance.

The Arms Act 1983 (the Act) and the Arms Regulations 1992 (the Regulations) outline the responsibilities and standards required for individuals and museums to possess, handle, store, and display firearms safely.

Purpose

This guide has been developed in collaboration with the NZ Museum sector. It is designed to help museum directors, curators and staff to navigate the Act and the Regulations. By clarifying legal obligations and outlining best practice for handling, storing, and displaying arms items and ammunition, this guide helps museums safely manage firearms, ammunition, and other arms items in their collections.

What this Manual does NOT do

This manual is not intended to replace legislative and regulatory provisions.

This manual does not exempt museums from complying with the legislation.

Legislation

Museums are subject to the requirements defined in trust deeds, constitutions and rules of incorporation (where applicable) as well as obligations set out in several pieces of legislation relating to the operation and purpose of the museum.

When a museum has arms items in its collection, it is subject to the obligations set out in:

- Arms Act 1983

- Arms Regulations 1992, and
- Various legislative orders in council made under the powers of the primary legislation.

Firearms legislation and implications for museums

To store or display firearms as part of their collections, museums in New Zealand must ensure that a director or curator (a senior manager if it is a body corporate), holds **both** a valid firearms licence and a dealer's licence¹. Additionally, if any firearms require specific endorsements for pistols, restricted weapons, and prohibited items, the director or curator must possess the appropriate endorsement(s) on their dealer's licence².

Employees who handle or access firearms as part of their work must hold a New Zealand firearms licence with relevant endorsements if required.

A key principle of the Act is personal responsibility. Museums may involve multiple people and cannot be held accountable in the same way as individuals. As a result, firearms are possessed by and registered to an individual rather than a group or organisation, reinforcing the need for individual accountability in managing these items.

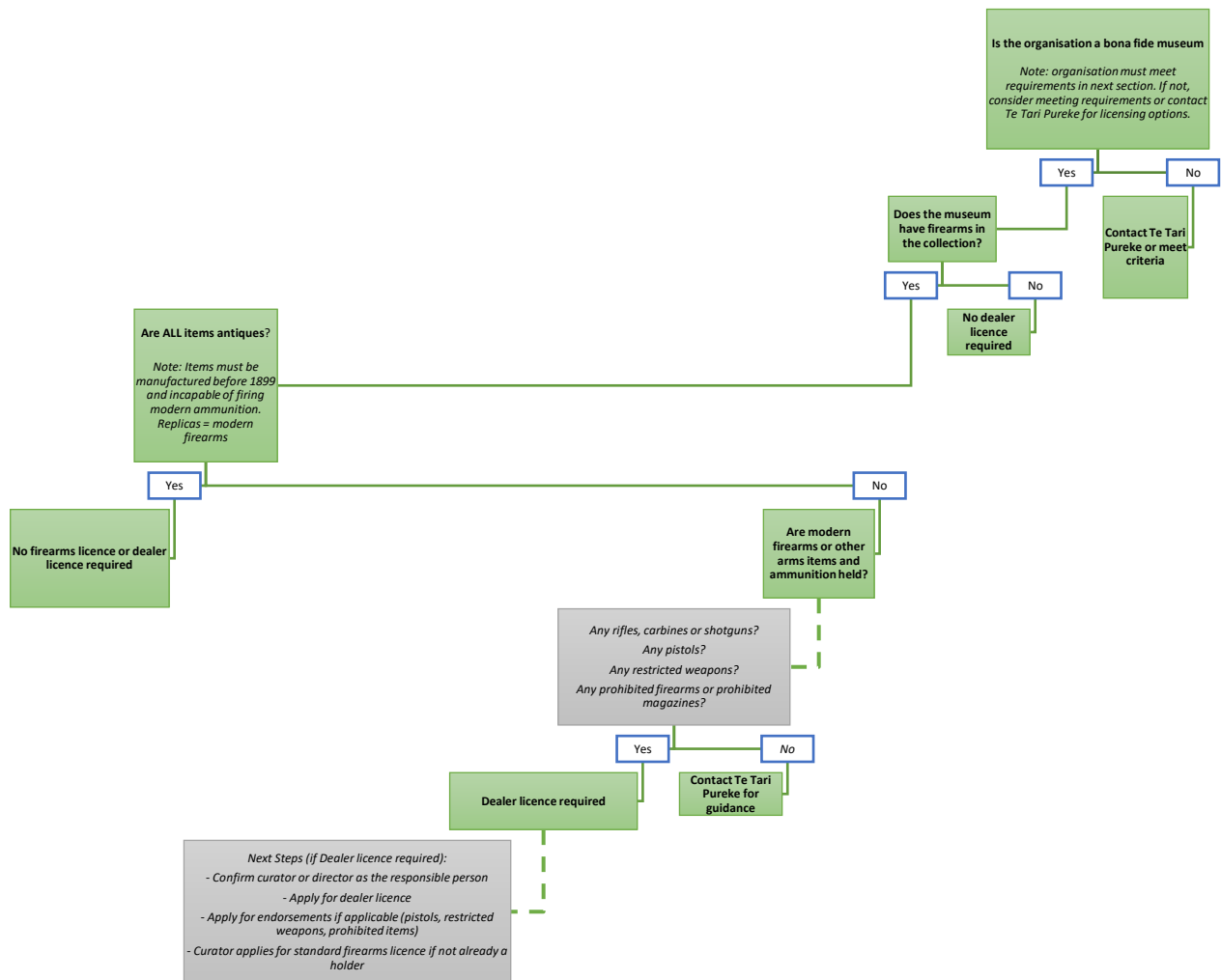
The director or curator is directly accountable for the legal possession, secure storage, and use of firearms and arms items.

Determining licence and endorsements requirements

Using the following diagram, the museum can identify if a curator or director (or a senior manager, if the museum is a body corporate) must hold a dealer's licence, and whether the dealer's licence holder must also have dealer's licence endorsements to allow the legal possession of certain classes of arms items.

¹ Refer to Arms Act s5B Issue of dealer's licence. S5 B (1)(a) states "A commissioned officer of Police may issue a dealer's licence to an applicant authorising the applicant to carry on 1 or more dealer activities in respect of 1 or more classes of arms items if— (a) the applicant holds a firearms licence ..."

² Arms Act s 4A(1)(d) and Arms Act s 29(2)(d) – excluding anti-personnel mine or a cluster munition



What it means for a museum to be ‘bona fide’

The term ‘*bona fide museum*’ is used in the Act to indicate that museums must meet additional criteria to be considered bona fide. While not defined in statute, a *bona fide museum* for the purposes of the Act may be described as having the following characteristics:

1. Public recognition or support

Museums that are recognised through legislation (e.g., MOTAT Act, Auckland War Memorial Museum Act, Otago Museum Trust Board Act, Canterbury Museum Trust Board Act, and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act), or are supported by local authorities, or funding bodies.

2. Established or supported by public entities

Museums set up under legislation, as part of a territorial authority, a government department, or by local historical societies and cultural centres, including those based on a marae

3. **Integration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi Principles**

Museums that incorporate the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) into their operations, demonstrating a commitment to biculturalism and the representation of Māori heritage and perspectives.

4. **Operational characteristics**

Regardless of how a museum is established, to be considered bona fide under the Act, it should be a **not-for-profit, permanent institution** dedicated to:

- Researching
 - Collecting
 - Conserving
 - Interpreting
 - exhibiting
- both tangible and intangible heritage. It must also be **open and accessible to the public**.

Criteria for bona fide museums:

For an institution to be considered a bona fide museum, it must demonstrate that it meets some or all the following criteria:

1. **Governance:** the museum should possess a written constitution outlining its charter, goals, and policies, or that it falls under broader governance (such as a council) that explicitly states its commitment to the Museums Aotearoa or ICOM code of Ethics and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. **Qualified staff:** the museum should employ at least one person qualified via relevant study and / or on the job experience, to manage the collection.
3. **Acquisition and deaccession strategy:** the museum should have a collection management policy for acquiring new items and deaccessioning (removing items from collections/inventories) items that no longer meet the policy. This includes procedures for acquiring and deaccessioning arms items to ensure they are transferred only to current firearms licence holders (and if applicable with the correct endorsements and permits to possess).
4. **Collection focus:** the museum should collect, preserve, and display items of scientific, historical, or cultural significance to support study, education, and public enjoyment.
5. **Financial stability:** the museum should have sufficient funding to support its operations and growth, defined by its capacity to meet ongoing operational needs.
6. **Facilities:** the museum must maintain secure storage and adequate facilities to perform its core functions. It should include collection management, research, preservation, education, and exhibition.
7. **Public accessibility:** the museum must provide ready access to exhibitions and the collection. Having regular public opening hours is a way of demonstrating accessibility to the public.

Note on smaller community and volunteer-based museums

Community-run and volunteer-based museums may operate differently from larger institutions but are still expected to demonstrate official recognition from local communities and councils. While they should aim to meet the criteria listed above, they may require additional professional support to manage specific collections – particularly those involving firearms.

For expert advice and support, these museums are encouraged to contact **National Services Te Paerangi (NSTP)**, at **Te Papa**, which provides specialist knowledge and facilitates professional exchanges.

Te Tari Pūreke will assess whether the above criteria have been met and may consider the institution to be a bona fide museum as envisaged in the legislation.

What if a museum doesn't meet the criteria?

If your museum does not currently meet the criteria for a bona fide museum necessary for obtaining a dealer's licence, consider exploring the following:

1. **Assessment:** understanding where your museum does not meet the criteria can be a helpful first step. This could involve areas like governance, staffing, financial stability, or facilities.
2. **Planning:** developing a plan to address these areas may be beneficial. Setting specific goals and timelines can make the process more manageable.
3. **Professional guidance:** consulting with museum professionals or organisations such as Museums Aotearoa and NSTP might provide valuable insights and resources.
4. **Governance and policies:** establishing clear governance documents, such as a written constitution and collection management policies,
5. **Qualified staff:** having skilled and proficient curation staff is an important aspect of compliance.
6. **Facility upgrades:** enhancing your storage and display facilities to meet security and safety standards could be another area to explore.
7. **Funding:** ensuring your museum has sufficient funding through grants, donations. A potential solution through [National Services Te Paerangi](#), is their **Helping Hands Grant programme**. The Helping Hands Grant can be up to \$2,000 including GST per financial year and can be applied for once each year. The grant can assist with practical and strategic expenses museums face, including operational expenses, the services of tradespeople and construction materials. Dealer's licence and upgrading storage and display costs fall into this category.

For more information including how to apply, visit Te Papa's website here: [Helping Hands Grant | Te Papa](#)

Important!

Please note that the application process for the Helping Hands Grant is independent of Te Tari Pūreke, and we do not facilitate or have any involvement in it.

8. **Public access:** increasing public accessibility through regular opening hours, and views by arrangement and educational programs can enhance your museums community engagement. Providing details of collections and exhibits online can enhance public access to a museum.

9. **Recognition and affiliation:** seeking recognition from organisations like Museums Aotearoa or affiliating with respected museum or historical organisations may help establish your museums credibility.
10. **Documentation:** keeping detailed records of your progress towards meeting the criteria can be useful for applications and reviews.

Additional support

Exploring additional support and resources might also be beneficial:

- **Museum networks:** engaging with other museums can offer shared experiences and best practices.
- **Local authorities:** they may provide guidance on meeting regulatory requirements.
- **Museums Aotearoa and National Services Te Paerangi:** they can offer professional advice and resources.

Status of volunteers

Museum volunteers who handle, or control arms items must hold a current New Zealand firearms licence. In some cases, a volunteer may be the experienced and qualified individual who holds the dealer's licence – for example, the museum's curator or director.

Volunteers who do not hold a firearms licence may only handle arms items under the **immediate supervision** of a person who holds a current firearms licence or a dealer's licence.

Volunteers are not considered employees under the Arms Act 1983 or the Employment Relations Act 2000. As such, they are not eligible to hold a dealer's employee endorsement. Museums must ensure that any volunteer involved in the handling of arms items is appropriately licensed and supervised in accordance with the law.

Museums with multiple business locations

If a museum operates from multiple premises and engages in activities involving the possession, display or management of arms items that are accessible to the public, the curator or director of the museum must have a dealer's licence. Additionally, a dealer's licence holder must be appointed to oversee operations at each location other than the one where the curator or director is based.

The applicant for a dealer's licence to carry on activities as a museum curator or director must provide details of the person responsible for managing each museum site. These details must include either:

- The full name and dealer's licence number of the curator or director for each location, or
- A **copy of the director or curators' application** for a dealer's licence, if they do not yet hold one if the location director or curator does not yet hold one.

This requirement ensures that every museum location is, or will be, properly overseen by a licensed individual in accordance with legal obligations for the possession and management of arms items.³

Note a further dealer's licence holder is not required if the secondary location only exists as a secure warehouse storage facility for the museum. However, the storage facility must be approved by Te Tari Pūreke and meet all secure storage requirements under the Arms Regulations 1992. Approval is

³ Arms Act 1983, Section 5 and Section 8; and Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 4 – Dealer's licence required for possession and display of arms items.

granted following inspection, and the facility must be suitable for the type and quantity of arms items stored.

Case Study 1: Does the museum need a curator or director to hold a dealer licence?

Background:

The Awa Museum is a small provincial museum showcasing regional history from 1870 to today.

The collection includes:

- A Colt Model 1860 Army revolver (manufactured in 1875)
- A Luger P08 pistol
- Several Lee Enfield bolt-action rifles

Step 1 – Identify firearms in the collection

The museum holds both antique (pre-1900) and modern firearms.

Because the collection includes World War-era firearms, a curator or director must hold a **dealer's licence**.

Note: A museum does not need a dealer licence if all firearms were manufactured before 31/12/1899 and cannot fire rimfire or centre-fire ammunition. Replicas count as modern firearms.

Step 2 – Confirm bona fide museum status

Determine if the museum meets the criteria, described in this document, to be considered by Te Tari Pūreke as a bona fide museum.

If not, discuss steps to qualify with Te Tari Pūreke staff; and with Museums Aotearoa and National Services Te Paerangi.

Alternatively, discuss with Te Tari Pūreke what other options exist to legally possess the organisation's arms items.

Step 3 – Determine the licence and endorsements required.

The museum holds pistols and rifles.

The designated person must apply for:

- A **dealer's licence** and
- A **pistol endorsement** (to possess pistols as a dealer's licence holder)

Step 4 – Identify staff who need to hold a firearms licence.

Any staff handling firearms must hold a **standard New Zealand firearms licence**.

If they handle pistols, they also need a **dealer's employee endorsement** to their standard firearms licence.

Step 5 – Apply for a dealer licence

The curator or director applies for a dealer's licence on the Te Tari Pūreke website.

If they do not already hold a New Zealand Firearms Licence, they must apply for that at the same time.

Licensing as a director or curator of a museum displaying firearms

Why museums need a dealer's licence

Under the Act, a director or curator of a museum must obtain a dealer's licence to authorise them to carry out the activity of displaying arms items on behalf of the museum⁴. The dealer's licence encompasses more than just buying and selling firearms – it also includes the management and exhibition of these items by a museum director or curator.

Do I need a dealer's licence if I am only storing firearms?

Yes, museums must have a dealer's licence to store or display firearms. To meet the criteria of a bona fide museum, the institution must be open to the public and dedicated to exhibiting its collection. If the firearms are only stored and not displayed, the museum may not meet the full criteria for a dealer's licence as a bona fide museum. In such cases, the organisation should consult Te Tari Pūreke to determine whether alternative licensing arrangements are more appropriate. To be issued a dealer's licence will require the museum to have all firearms securely stored in approved facilities and handled only by qualified and where necessary, appropriately licensed personnel reducing risks such as theft or mishandling.

When will a director or curator need endorsements on their dealer licence?

Endorsements on a dealer's licence are required if a museum's collection includes (or will include) any of the following arms items:

- Pistols
- Restricted weapons⁵
- Prohibited firearms
- Prohibited magazines.⁶

Applications for endorsements are made as part of the dealer's licence application under sections [29\(2A\)](#) and [30A\(2\)](#). Endorsements on the dealer's licence are granted under Sections [30](#) and [30B](#) of the Act. This ensures that those handling these items are specifically authorised to do so.

Can I transfer my endorsements from my standard licence to my dealer's licence?

No. Endorsements on a firearms licence are not transferable to a dealer's licence. Nor can they be used in conjunction with a dealer's licence. Endorsements that are required to carry on dealer activities must be made upon the dealer's licence.

Endorsements on museum curator or director dealer licences:

The curator or director of a bona fide museum must apply for an endorsement in their capacity as a dealer. The endorsement is made on the dealer's licence.

To obtain the required endorsement, the applicant must:

- Be 18 years or older (for prohibited items)
- Hold or be applying for a New Zealand firearms licence.

Applicants will be asked about:

- Personal attributes

⁴ Arms Act 1983, Section 5 – Dealers to Be Licensed

⁵ Arms Act 1983, Section 29 – Application for Endorsements in Respect of Pistol or Restricted Weapon

⁶ Arms Act 1983, Section 30A – Application for Endorsement in Respect of Prohibited Firearm or Prohibited Magazine

- Obligations under the Arms Act and Arms Regulations
- How they will meet these obligations.

Endorsements duration

The endorsements granted on a dealer's licence continue until one of the following occurs:

- The dealer's licence or their personal firearms licence expires or is suspended, surrendered, or revoked.
- The endorsement is suspended, surrendered, or revoked.⁷

Employees:

Endorsements on an employee's firearms licence (linked to a dealer) are valid for 1 year from the date of endorsement, unless:

- The employee's firearms licence expires, is suspended, surrendered, or revoked.
- The dealer's licence expires, is suspended, surrendered, or revoked.
- The endorsement on the dealer's licence is revoked.
- The employee ceases employment with the dealer.⁸

Important!

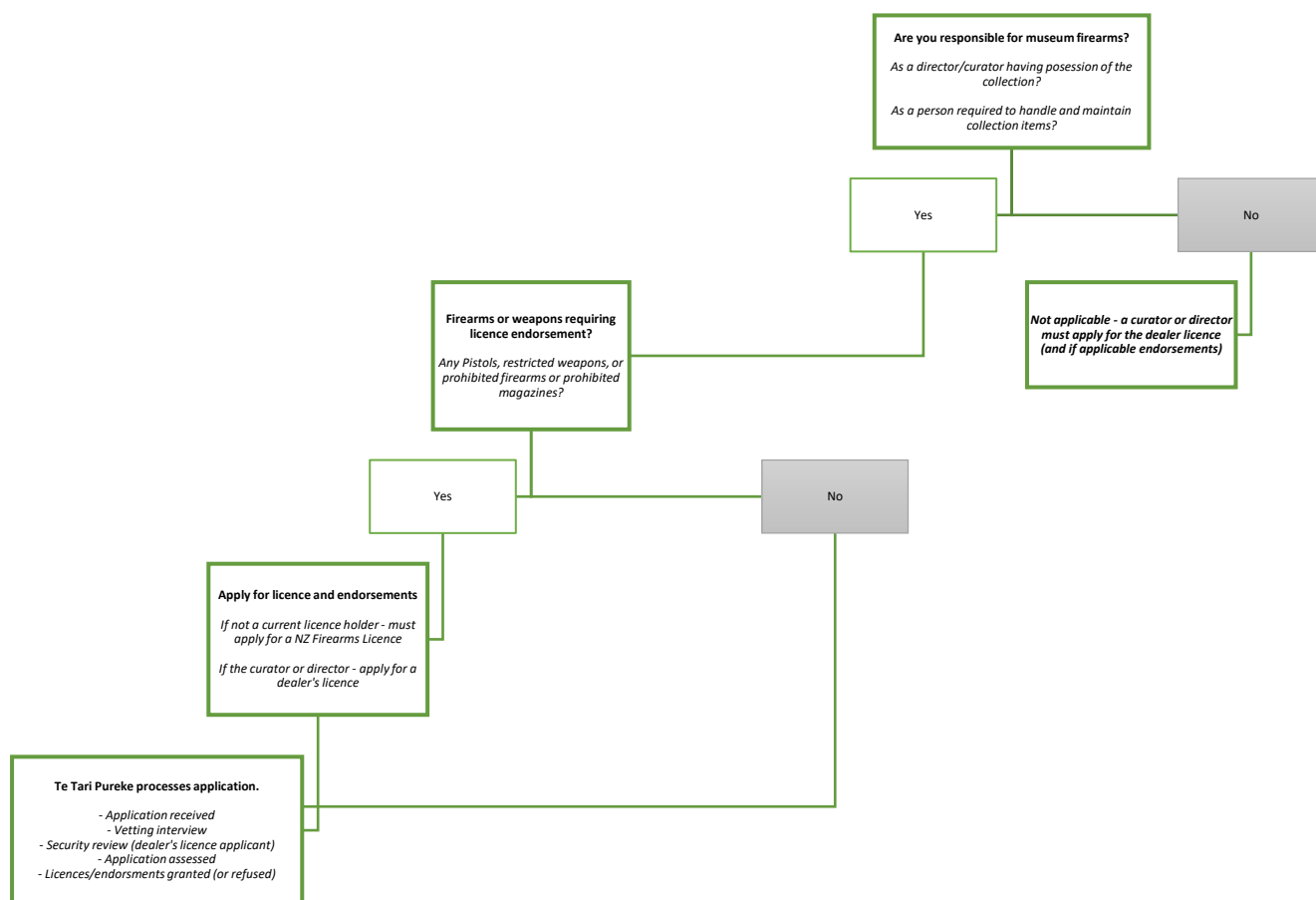
If any licence holder (dealer or employee) is no longer able to meet one or more conditions of their licence or any endorsements related to their licence, or they leave/resign, they need to notify Te Tari Pūreke as soon as reasonably practicable.

Determine licence and endorsement requirements

Use the following diagram to determine the licence and endorsements a person in the role of a museum director or curator, or other members of staff must hold, to allow them to have legal possession of the museum's arms collection or work with the items unsupervised.

⁷ Arms Act 1983, Section 33C – Duration of endorsements

⁸ Arms Act 1983, Section 33C – Duration of endorsements



Case Study 2: Dealer's licence application

Background

The Awa Museum has identified that it possesses both antique and modern-style firearms. The museum decides that Curator, Jan Smyth, will be the dealer's licence holder.

Step 1 – Determine the licence and endorsements requirement.

The collection includes a pistol, which is a class of arms item that requires an endorsement. Jan must apply for:

- A **dealer's licence** (as a curator of a bona fide museum)⁹
- A **dealer's licence endorsement** to possess pistols¹⁰

Step 2 – Determine who will work with the arms items.

Any other staff member engaged in the handling and care of the Awa Museum's firearms must:

- Hold a **standard New Zealand firearms licence**.

⁹ Arms Act 1983, Section 5 – Requirement for dealer's licence.

¹⁰ Arms Act 1983, Section 29 – Endorsements for pistols and restricted weapon

- If they work with the museum's pistol, they must also apply for and hold an **endorsement** as an **employee of a licensed dealer** on their standard firearms licence.

Step 3 – Apply for required licences and any endorsements

Applications are made via the Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority website using the MyFirearms portal¹¹.

- Jan applies for a **dealer's licence** as the curator of a bona fide museum. Jan also applies for a **dealer's endorsement** to possess pistols.
- The Arms Act requires that a dealer's licence holder must be **a current New Zealand Firearms Licence holder**¹²
- Staff members who do not currently hold the required licence or endorsement must apply for:
 - A standard firearms licence, and
 - An employee of a licensed dealer endorsement if they will handle pistols.

Step 4– Te Tari Pūreke assesses the applications

Te Tari Pūreke will assess each application to determine whether the applicant is **fit and proper** to hold the licence and/or endorsement. If approved, the licence and endorsements are granted.

How to apply for a dealer's licence

The responsible curator must apply for and be granted a dealer's licence, and appropriate endorsement/s to have legal possession of the museum arms items.

Applications can be submitted **online** via the [MyFirearms portal](#) or by **hardcopy** using the official application form.

More details about applying for a dealer's licence can be found on the [Firearms Dealers](#) page of the Te Tari Pūreke web site.

Note: A dealer's licence can only be granted to a person who has already been granted a New Zealand firearms licence¹³.

If the curator does **not currently hold a firearms licence**, they can apply for both licences at the same time.

Licensing decisions are made in the following sequence:

1. **Firearms licence**
2. **Dealer's licence**
3. **Dealer's licence endorsement(s)** (if required)

Dealer's licence application

- **Eligibility:** to apply for a dealer's licence, a person must hold a current firearms licence or be applying for a firearms licence.¹⁴

If also applying for an endorsement for prohibited firearms and/or prohibited magazines, the applicant must be aged 18 or over¹⁵.

¹¹ Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority: [MyFirearms Portal](#)

¹² Arms Act 1983, Section 5B – Issue of dealer's licence

¹³ Arms Act 1983, Section 5B – [Issue of dealer's licence](#)

¹⁴ Arms Act 1983, Section 5B – [Issue of dealer's licence](#)

¹⁵ Arms Act 1983, Section 5A – [Application for dealer's licence](#)

- **Dealer activity and classes of arms items:**

When applying for a dealer's licence, the applicant must clearly specify:

- the activity for which they are require the licence – in this instance, displaying arms items as the director or curator of a bona fide museum.¹⁶
- the class or classes of arms items they will display/possess (e.g., non-prohibited firearms, pistols, restricted weapons, magazines, ammunition, etc).

- **Place(s) of business:**

The applicant must provide details of the place(s) of business where the dealer activities will be carried out.¹⁷

- **Multiple places of business:** a dealer's licence is issued for a specific place of business. A place of business is place which, in the case of a museum, visitors can access during regular opening hours.

A museum can have a warehouse or secondary location used solely for secure storage of collection items that cannot be stored at the main premises and are not in use as exhibits. This warehouse must be declared in the application and meet secure storage requirements.

If the museum has more than one location *open to the public*, the museum must have a person with a dealer's licence for each place of business. The application must include:

- The name of the director, curator or manager for each location.
- The address of each location.
- Confirmation that secure storage facilities appropriate to the type and number of arms items and ammunition are in place at each site.¹⁸

- **Staff members:**

The applicant must provide details of employees who are allowed to handle arms items as part of their duties. These individuals must hold a standard firearms licence.¹⁹ Details are not required for staff who are not permitted to handle firearms as part of their duties.

- **Referees:**

The applicant must provide details of two unrelated individuals residing in New Zealand who can attest to the applicant's character and fitness to possess firearms in a licensed dealer (curator) licensed dealer capacity.²⁰

- **Record keeping:**

The applicant must provide details of how the museum maintains records of its arms items and any transactions involving arms items. ²¹

- **Secure storage:**

The applicant must demonstrate, on behalf of the museum:

- That there are adequate security measures for arms items when exhibited.
- That there are secure storage facilities appropriate to the scale of the collection.
- How firearms are securely stored and displayed.

¹⁶ Arms Act 1983, Section 5 – [Licensed dealers](#)

¹⁷ Arms Act 1983, Section 7 – [Place of business](#)

¹⁸ Arms Act 1983, Section 5A – Application for dealer's licence; Section 7 – Place of business

¹⁹ Arms Act 1983, Section 11 – [Employees of licensed dealer to hold firearms licence](#)

²⁰ Arms Act 1983, Section 6 – [Fit and proper person to hold dealer's licence](#) and Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 4 – [Application for dealer's licence: other requirements](#)

²¹ Arms Act 1983, Section 12 – [Record of dealings by licensed dealers](#)

- That these storage areas meet the requirements of Regulations 8 and 8A²².

Note: More detailed guidance is available in the [Storage and transportation guide for firearms and ammunition](#) on the Te Tari Pūreke website.

These storage arrangements will also be inspected as part of the licensing process.

- **Commencement of licence:**

A dealer's licence becomes effective from the date it is issued. This means the dealer may begin carrying out the authorised activities immediately upon issue.²³

- **Duration and renewal:**

Dealer licenses are valid for 12 months²⁴. Museums should apply for renewal four months before the current licence expires to ensure continuity of operations and compliance with the Act.

Museums may continue operating while the director or curator awaits a decision on their renewal application. The start date of the renewed licence is:

- The expiry date of the current licence, if the renewal is issued before expiry
- The date of issue, if the renewal is granted after the expiry.

The application process for a renewal follows the same requirements and evaluations as applying for a new licence²⁵.

Important!

Please note that if the director or curator does not apply before the expiry of the current dealer's licence then they would need to make other arrangements for the storage of the museum's arms items!

- **Cost of a dealer's licence:** please visit our [before you apply for a dealer's licence](#) web page for current information on how much a dealer's licence costs.

For further information on what you need to include and provide in your application, please refer to our [Firearms dealers webpage](#).

Obligations of the dealer's licence holder

Staff who handle firearms

The director or curator holding the dealer's licence in that capacity is required to provide the name and firearms licence number of each employee who will have unsupervised access to firearms, firearms parts or ammunition at the museum²⁶. This ensures that Te Tari Pūreke is aware of who within the business is authorised to work with arms items.

²² Arms Regulations 1992, Regulations 8 and 8A – [Security of place of business and firearms](#)

²³ (Arms Act 1983, Section 5B – [Issue of dealer's licence](#))

²⁴ Arms Act 1983, Sections 8 and 8A – [Duration and renewal of dealer's licence](#)

²⁵ Arms Act 1983, Section 8A – [Renewal of dealer's licence](#)

²⁶ Arms Act 1983, Section 11 – [Employees of licensed dealer to hold firearms licence](#)

If an employee who is endorsed to possess pistols, restricted weapons, prohibited firearms, or prohibited magazines resigns, the dealer must notify Te Tari Pūreke ²⁷.

When staff roles change, or staff start or leave employment involving arms items, the dealer must supply their details by emailing: firearms.NST@police.govt.nz

Conditions

Premises and firearms inspection

A dealer's licence is subject to the condition that the dealer holding the licence must, on demand, produce and permit inspection of the following **endorsed items** and the place where they are kept (e.g. display cabinets, storage areas, safes) by a member of Te Tari Pūreke or Police²⁸:

- Prohibited firearms
- Prohibited magazines
- Restricted weapons (excluding air pistols)
- Pistols
- Pistol carbine conversion kits

Te Tari Pūreke and Police may enter the premises at any reasonable time to conduct the inspection without prior notice, as provided under section 6A of the Arms Act 1983, in accordance with regulation 9B of the Arms Regulations 1992.

For the following **non-endorsed items**, the dealer must also permit Tari Pūreke or Police to inspect the items and the premises where they are kept²⁹.

- Non-prohibited firearms
- Airguns
- Non-prohibited magazines
- Prohibited parts
- Air pistol carbine conversion kits.

In these cases, at least 7 days' notice must be given before the inspection is carried out ³⁰.

Record keeping

The dealer's licence holder is required to maintain records at the museum that document

- All transactions involving arms items
- All arms items acquired or disposed of

Refer to:

- **Arms Act 1983, Section 12** – Record of dealings by licensed dealers³¹
- **Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 7** – General record-keeping requirements³²

²⁷ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9A – [Condition of dealer's licence: notifications](#)

²⁸ Arms Act 1983, Section 6A – [Conditions of dealer's licence](#)

²⁹ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9B – [Inspection of certain arms items](#)

³⁰ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9B – [Inspection of certain arms items](#)

³¹ Arms Act 1983, Section 12 – [Record of dealings by licensed dealers](#)

³² Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 7 – [Records kept by licensed dealers: general requirements](#)

- **Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 7A** – Specific requirements for museum directors and curators³³

More details are provided in the section [Record keeping requirements for museums: simplified guide](#).

Other dealer notification obligations

The dealer must notify Te Tari Pūreke as soon as reasonably practical if:

- They decide to stop operating as a licensed dealer³⁴.
- They are no longer able to meet one or more conditions of their licence, or any endorsements related to their licence³⁵.
- The museum plans to physically alter the museum premises in a way that impacts the security of the premises and the secure storage or display of arms items³⁶.

Changing the curator responsible for firearms collection

Can I transfer my dealer's licence to another curator?

A dealer's licence is issued to an individual, not to the museum as an entity. Each dealer's licence is personal to whom it is issued and may not be transferred to any other person³⁷. The licence being non-transferable ensures only individuals who have been vetted and approved by Te Tari Pūreke possess and handle firearms on behalf of the museum.

What happens when the curator is no longer legally allowed to possess arms items?

The museum's arms collection must always be under the legal possession of a dealer.³⁸ Museums should have a succession plan in place to ensure continuity and compliance with the Arms Act and Arms Regulations.

The dealer's legal ability to possess arms items ceases if any of the following occur:

- The dealer (e.g. director or curator) surrenders their dealer's licence³⁹ – this may or may not coincide with leaving museum employment.
- The dealer resigns from or otherwise ceases work at the museum.
- The dealer's licence is suspended or revoked⁴⁰.
- The dealer allows the licence to expire without submitting a renewal application before the expiry date⁴¹.

If dealer can no longer legally possess the museum's arms items, both the museum and the dealer must take the following actions.

Dealer leaves their role or surrenders their licence

Actions the dealer must take:

- Notify Te Tari Pūreke of:
 - The last date in role before resignation from position, or

³³ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 7A – [Records kept by licensed dealers: directors and curators of museums](#)

³⁴ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9A – [Condition of dealer's licence: notifications](#)

³⁵ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9A – [Condition of dealer's licence: notifications](#)

³⁶ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9A – [Condition of dealer's licence: notifications](#)

³⁷ See Footnote 5

³⁸ Arms Act 1983, Section 5 – Requirement for dealer's licence to possess/display arms items on behalf of a museum

³⁹ Arms Act 1983, Section 8B – Surrender of dealer's licence

⁴⁰ Arms Act 1983, Sections 9 and 9B – Revocation of dealer's licence

⁴¹ Arms Act 1983, Section 8A – Renewal of dealer's licence

- The date of proposed surrender of their licence; and
- The address of the museum
- Whether the museum continues to possess arms items.
- If possible, also notify:
 - The name of the new director, curator, or senior manager who will be responsible for arms items
 - The date from which the new senior manager will take over
- Transfer possession of all arms items to the new licensed dealer responsible for the museum's arms items before surrendering their licence ⁴².
 - Where the museum holds endorsed items (e.g. pistols, restricted weapons, prohibited firearms), the outgoing dealer must ensure that permit-to-procure (P2P) applications are submitted and approved for each item being transferred to the incoming dealer.⁴³
 - Details of the incoming dealer must be provided to Te Tari Pūreke, including their full name, dealer's licence number, and the date they will assume legal possession of the museum's arms items.
- The curator must hand in their dealer's licence card on the effective date of resignation, surrender, suspension or revocation.

Note: if the dealer only holds a firearms licence for their role, they may choose to surrender it when ceasing to act as a dealer.

Impact on employees when a dealer's licence is revoked or ceases

When a museum's dealer's licence is no longer valid – whether due to surrender, expiry, suspension, or revocation – no employees may legally carry out any activities involving the museum's arms collection. This includes handling, displaying, transporting, or managing any arms items.

The museum must immediately cease all operations relating to arms items until a new dealer's licence is obtained and legal possession is transferred to a licensed dealer. This requirement applies regardless of whether the arms items are on public display or held in secure storage.

Under the Arms Act 1983, Section 15, it is an offence to carry on any dealer activities following the expiry, surrender, or revocation of a dealer's licence. This includes any possession or control of arms items by museum staff who are not licensed dealers. ⁴⁴

Dealer allows licence to expire (lapse)

To continue lawfully possessing and displaying arms items, the dealer must submit a renewal application before the expiry date⁴⁵ so that their dealer licence does not lapse.

If the dealer licence expires, the museum must follow the same steps as for surrender, including transferring possession of arms items to a current dealer. This applies even if no items are on public display and all firearms are in secure storage.⁴⁶

Recommendation to the museum board or chief executive

It is recommended that museum senior executives or the board have plans for when a dealer who possesses the museum's arms items, resigns, changes roles, surrenders their licence, or has their licence suspended or revoked.

⁴² Arms Act 1983, Section 8B – Surrender of dealer's licence

⁴³ Arms Act 1983, Section 35 – Requirement for permit to procure endorsed arms items.

⁴⁴ Arms Act 1983, Section 15 – Offence to carry on dealer activities following expiry, surrender, or revocation of dealer's licence.

⁴⁵ Arms Act 1983, Section 8A – Renewal of dealer's licence

⁴⁶ Arms Act 1983, Section 8C – Effect of expiry or surrender of dealer's licence

Te Tari Pūreke recommend that museum board and chief executive officer:

- Have a contingency plan
 - Appoint a replacement dealer who is an existing licence holder, or
 - Appoint a new dealer who can immediately apply for a dealer's licence as a person displaying firearms on behalf of a bona fide museum.

This person should be appointed in time to take legal possession of museum firearms before the current licence holder ceases their role.

- Have an alternate person who is:
 - A dealer's licence holder already on staff, or
 - A person with a dealer's licence who can join the museum staff on an acting basis to possess the museum's arms items while a new dealer is appointed.

Important!

When the dealer's licence is no longer valid, any employees or volunteers cannot legally carry out any activities concerning the museums arms collection while the arms items are not in the legal possession of a senior manager who holds a dealer's licence. The entire operation relating to firearms must cease until a valid dealer's licence is obtained again.⁴⁷

Staff

The role of staff:

everyone working with firearms in the museum has a part to play. It is not just about following rules; it is about making sure the museum is a safe place for the community to enjoy.

This means certain museum staff will be involved in things such as making sure firearms are displayed or stored safely and that all the paperwork for each firearm is correct and up to date.

Employees involved in dealing with firearms in museums must have a clear understanding of relevant legislation such as the Act, the Regulations, and museum operational procedures for possessing firearms. This includes knowledge of proper storage, display protocols, and transaction recording.

Staff handling firearms

Museum staff who have unsupervised access to or control over arms items must hold a valid firearms licence. This ensures that employees are properly licensed and authorised to handle firearms⁴⁸.

Museums must ensure all staff keep their licences current and ensure compliance with legal requirements. Unlicensed staff may only access or handle firearms under the immediate supervision of a licensed dealer or employee.

Employee endorsements:

Employees need to hold an endorsement as an employee of a licensed firearms dealer if their job requires them to handle:

- pistols, or
- restricted weapons, or

⁴⁷ (Arms Act 1983 No 44 (as at 24 June 2023), Public Act 8C Effect of Expiry or Surrender of Dealer's Licence – New Zealand Legislation, 2024)

⁴⁸ (Arms Act 1983 No 44 (as at 24 June 2023), Public Act 11 Employees of Licensed Dealer to Hold Firearms Licence Bearing Appropriate Endorsements – New Zealand Legislation, 2024)

- prohibited arms items.

An employee's endorsement must align with the endorsement(s) held by the dealer licence

To obtain endorsement as a dealer's employee a person must:

- Be at least 16 years old to assist with general dealer activities, including those involving standard firearms and ammunition.
- Be at least 18 years or old if their duties involve prohibited firearms, prohibited magazines, pistols, restricted weapons, or pistole carbine conversion kits.
- Be working for a curator who is the holder of a dealer's licence.
- Be applying for equivalent endorsement/s that the curator has associated to their dealer's licence.
- Hold or be applying for a New Zealand firearms licence.

Applicants will be asked about:

- Personal attributes.
- Obligations under the Arms Act and Arms Regulations.
- How they will meet these obligations.

Endorsements are valid until:

- The holder ceases to be employed to work for, the museum curator (dealers licence holder) to handle arms items in their job; OR
- the holder's firearms licence expires, is surrendered, or is suspended or revoked; OR
- the curator's dealer's licence or firearms licence expires or is suspended, surrendered, or revoked; OR
- the curator's dealers licence endorsement is suspended, surrendered, or revoked.

Important!

If any licence holder (dealer or employee) is no longer able to meet one or more conditions of their licence or any endorsements related to their licence, or they leave/resign, they need to notify Te Tari Pūreke as soon as reasonably practicable.

What happens when an employee with a dealer employee endorsement resigns?

When an employee holding a dealer employee endorsement ceases to be employed by the licensed dealer, the dealer employee endorsement is no longer valid. The employee must let Te Tari Pūreke know that they are no longer employed to work with firearms at the museum.

It is an offence to fail to disclose that you are no longer employed as a dealer's employee.

NOTE: The dealer licence holder is also required to advise Te Tari Pūreke when an employee with a dealer employee endorsement leaves their role / employment.

Record keeping for museums: simplified guide

While museums may choose to retain general collection records indefinitely for curatorial or historical purposes, the Arms Regulations 1992 require that records relating to arms items and arms transactions be retained for a minimum of 10 years.⁴⁹

The purpose of this section is to provide information about the minimum legal requirements for records of arms items and arms transactions as set out in the Arms Act 1983 and the Arms Regulations 1992.

Dealer record book / collection management system basics

What is a dealer record book? The licenced dealer who is the director or curator of a Museums is required to keep a dealer record book. The museum can meet their obligation by creating a suitable report within their collection management system.

This book or system is the detailed log of all firearms transactions, including when the museum acquires firearms permanently, receives a firearm on loan, or disposes of firearms. It includes arms items in the museum's collection, whether on display **or** in storage.

Many museums use a report from an electronic collection management system as their dealer book. The integrity of the records must be maintained, ensuring the information is complete and cannot be altered. The director or curator must have systems in place to access and provide the information to the Police, upon request, for at least 10 years as required by section 12(1B) of the Act.

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The director or curator must ensure that decisions to acquire and accession firearms are documented in line with the museum's instructions for accessioning items to collections. NOTE: a copy of this information may be required by Te Tari Pūreke when processing any related permit to possess or permit to import.

What to record?

For each **firearm** in the museum's collection, record:

- **Make:** the manufacturer or brand of the firearm.
- **Model:** the specific model designation of the firearm.
- **Action type:** the type of mechanism (e.g., bolt-action, semi-automatic, etc.).
- **Calibre/gauge:** the calibre or gauge of the firearms ammunition.
- **Identification number:** any unique identifying markings, or serial number (if any) on the firearm.
- **Magazine capacity:** For firearms with a non-detachable magazine, the director or curator must record how many rounds the magazine holds.⁵¹

For **magazines** in the museum's collection, record:

- **Type:** the kind of magazine (e.g., detachable, non-detachable, drum magazine, etc.).
- **Capacity:** the number of rounds the magazine can hold

⁴⁹ Arms Regulations 1992, Clause 7B – Records kept by licensed dealers: directors and curators of museums.

⁵⁰ (Arms Regulations 1992 (SR 1992/346) (as at 28 June 2024) 7F Records to Be Kept in Book – New Zealand Legislation, 2024)

⁵¹ See Footnote 4

- **Identification marking:** If it's a **prohibited magazine**, the [identification marking](#) must also be recorded⁵²

For **major firearm parts**⁵³ in the museum's collection, record:

- **Type:** the type of **major firearm parts** (e.g., pistol frame, receiver) and
- **Identification marking:** the [identification marking](#).⁵⁴

For **pistol carbine conversion kits** in the museum's collection, record:

- **Make:** the manufacturer or brand of the arms item.
- **Model:** the specific model designation of the arms item.
- **Identification marking:** any unique identifying markings, or serial number (if any) ([identification marking](#)) must also be recorded

This recording requirement applies to arms items that are held currently and any that are acquired in the future. Most of the information required for the dealer book or collection management system will likely be held in the museum's own acquisition register. This book or collection management system should contain detailed records of all firearm transactions.

Each entry in the dealer book or collection management system must be made at, or immediately following, the time of the transaction (e.g., when an item is received by the museum or delivered to the museum).⁵⁵

Retention period for records

The Arms Act and Arms Regulations set minimum requirements for the retention of records by dealer's licence holders, including museum curators and directors. These requirements are designed to reflect the operational needs of most licensed dealers, such as commercial businesses.

However, many museums maintain broader internal policies that require records to be retained indefinitely due to the long-term nature of museum collections and their role in preserving cultural and historical material. This practice supports continuity of provenance, research, and public accountability, even beyond the minimum legal retention period of 10 years for arms records.⁵⁶

The following requirements apply to museum dealer's licence holders and are outlined below:

1. A licensed dealer must keep a book at their place of business that records the particulars required by regulation of:
 - a. Transactions conducted in the course of carrying on the dealer activity.
 - b. The arms items and ammunition received, sold, supplied or manufactured.
2. If the records are kept in a hard copy book, that book must be kept for at least 10 years after the date of the last entry in the book.
3. If the records are kept electronically each record must be kept for at least 10 years after the date the record was created.

⁵² See Footnote 4

⁵³ **major firearm** part means—

(a) the action (frame, receiver, or upper receiver and lower receiver) of a firearm:

(b) the frame of a pistol:

(c) a calibre conversion component or kit of a pistol.

⁵⁴ See Footnote 4

⁵⁵ See Footnote 35

⁵⁶ Arms Regulations 1992, Clause 7B – Records kept by licensed dealers: directors and curators of museums.

How to update your information

Updating your information can be done by contacting Te Tari Pūreke on:

- **Freephone:** [0800 844 431](tel:0800844431)
- **Email:** MyFirearms.support@police.govt.nz

Security provisions

Security of place of business premises

[Regulation 8](#) outlines the security requirements for a dealer's place of business (the museum) as a condition of holding a dealer's licence. The building where the dealer conducts business must be in a structurally sound condition and well-maintained. This ensures that the premises provide a solid foundation for secure storage and operation.

- **Structural integrity**
All doors that provide access to the museum must be strong and secure, including their locks, bolts, hinges, and other fastenings. These must also be kept in good condition, minimising unauthorised entry.
- **Doors and entry points**
Similar to the doors, all windows, skylights, or other openings (including their locks and fastenings) must be kept in good working order to prevent any vulnerabilities. These measures protect against potential break-ins through non-door openings.
- **Windows and other openings**
All, doors, windows, skylights, and other openings must be capable of being securely locked or fastened to prevent unlawful entry. The method of securing these entry points must be approved by a member of the Police, either generally or for the specific case.
- **Preventing unlawful access during open hours**
When the museum is attended and visitors and staff are present, the dealer licence holder must be vigilant to ensure no unauthorised personnel or visitors can access the secure firearms collection store.
- **Securing against unlawful entry of unattended or unoccupied premises**
When the museum is unattended or unoccupied, the dealer is required to take all reasonable steps to secure the building. This means that the business must be properly locked up and protected against break-ins whenever it is left unattended.

Important!

If the museum plans to alter their business premises in a way that impacts security, even temporarily, the dealer must notify Te Tari Pūreke as soon as reasonably practicable.

Secure display of firearms in museums – *for firearms that part of public exhibitions*

Regulations [8](#) and [8A\(2\)](#) set out conditions on a dealer licence for the safe and secure storage of firearms. These regulations are essential to prevent unauthorised access and ensure public safety in settings like museums.

For bona fide museums, it is expected that:

- **Firearms on display:** must be rendered inoperable by removing the bolt or a vital part, ensuring they cannot be fired. This minimises the risk should unauthorised access be gained to the firearm. You may wish to indicate in the display information plaque that the firearm has been deactivated.⁵⁷ Te Tari Pūreke recommend that the removed bolt or vital part be stored in a separate locked container to maintain security. For prohibited firearms, section 10 of the Arms Act 1983⁵⁸ requires that the vital part be stored at a separate address, with Police-approved security measures. Regulation 19B of the Arms Regulations 1992⁵⁹ also outlines secure storage requirements for vital parts during transport, reflecting broader principles of separation and security.
- **Secure display:** firearms on display should be secured, for example, in a locked display cabinet, custom mount, and/or an alarmed case to prevent unauthorised handling or theft. Museums may hold airguns as part of their collections, provided they meet the legal requirements under the Arms Regulations 1992. Specifically, Regulation 8A(d) requires that firearms (including airguns) at a licensed dealer's premises – such as a museum – must be stored securely to prevent theft or misuse.⁶⁰ This includes rendering firearms inoperable and ensuring they are not accessible to the public.
- **Public handling of firearms:** members of the public must not have access to or be able to touch or handle firearms. For those displayed, the director or curator must ensure that the public cannot handle these display items.
- **Live ammunition:** is not allowed to be stored or displayed with, or used in, the firearms.

These requirements apply to:

- Non-prohibited firearms
- Pistols
- Prohibited firearms
- Prohibited magazines
- Restricted weapons

All items on display must be **dismantled, rendered inoperable, or immobilised**, and stored in a manner that prevents unlawful removal or handling, as required under Regulation 8A(2).⁶¹

Secure storage of firearms in museums – for firearms held in collections or not currently on display.

Firearms can be stored in a steel box, cabinet, or safe that is secured to the building, or in a strongroom of steel and concrete construction. The construction must meet the standards required to receive Police approval.

1. Approved secure storage:

- Firearms must be stored in one of the following:
 - A steel or concrete strong room,
 - A room of stout and secure construction,
 - A steel safe, box, or cabinet.
- These storage solutions must:
 - Be of sound construction, using materials resistant to tampering or break-ins.

⁵⁷ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 8A(2)(a) – Firearms and restricted weapons on display must be dismantled, rendered inoperable, or immobilised so they cannot be fired.

⁵⁸ Arms Act 1983, s10 – Restriction on possession of prohibited firearms

⁵⁹ Arms Regulations 1992, r19B – Conditions relating to storage of firearms in vehicles during transportation

⁶⁰ Arms Regulations 1992, r8A(d) – Conditions of dealer's licence: security of firearms at licensed dealer's place of business

⁶¹ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 8A(2) – Conditions of dealer's licence: security of firearms, etc., at licensed dealer's place of business.

- Be securely fixed to the building.
 - Be approved in writing by a member of the Police.
- 2. Firearms rendered inoperable:**
- **All firearms**, including non-prohibited types, must be rendered inoperable by removing a vital part (e.g. bolt or firing pin).
 - The **removed vital part must** be stored securely and separately from the firearm either in a different locked container, box, cabinet, safe or strongroom within the premises or in a secure location at another address (as required for prohibited firearms under section 10 of the Arms Act 1983).

Additional security measures:

To enhance security and deter unauthorised access, museums are encouraged to implement additional measures, such as:

- **High-quality, tamper-resistant locks** that meet Te Tari Pūreke – approved standards should be fitted to all doors of firearms storage and display cabinets.
- **Integrated alarm systems and CCTV monitoring should** be installed to detect and deter unauthorised access.
- **Visible staff or security personnel** should be present in areas where firearms are displayed to provide oversight and immediate response if needed.

Ammunition

Ammunition in storage

Acquisition plans for live ammunition and prohibited live ammunition⁶² must be approved by a member of Police. Museums should avoid being in possession of live ammunition or prohibited ammunition. As a matter of policy, museums should produce dummy ammunition for display purposes.

In the rare case, where necessary to maintain the integrity of the nationally significant historic record and, with specific approval by the curator, stable live small arms ammunition⁶³ – including prohibited ammunition where applicable – may be accessioned into the collection without being made inert. It must be stored in a Te Tari Pūreke-approved lockable, stout container, affixed firmly to the building's structural elements. Preferably, the container should also be fire-resistant and anti-static and comply with nationally recognised fire and safety codes.

No firearm in the museum's collection or on its premises may be loaded with live ammunition at any time. This includes the breach, magazine, or any feeding device such as magazine chargers, feed plates or belts.

Live ammunition must not be displayed, associated with, or stored together with any firearm. It must always be kept separate.

Secure ammunition storage may include:

⁶² Prohibited ammunition is defined under section 2D of the Arms Act 1983 as ammunition declared prohibited by Order in Council. [Section 2D – Meaning of prohibited ammunition](#)

⁶³ Small arms ammunition is defined in Regulation 9J of the Arms Regulations 1992 as ammunition manufactured for rifles or pistols of a calibre up to 20 millimetres. [Regulation 9J – Certain persons may possess prohibited ammunition](#)

- **Secure cabinets:** live ammunition must be kept in a steel cabinet or container that is strongly built and securely fixed to stop it from being removed. The ammunition storage area must not be accessible to the public.
- **Locked storeroom or strongroom:** alternatively, live ammunition can be stored in its own container (secured to the premises) within a locked, robust room, such as a stout storeroom or strongroom, provided it is not accessible to the public.

Ammunition on display:

Museums should avoid displaying live ammunition, including prohibited ammunition⁶⁴. As a matter of policy, dummy or inert ammunition should be used for exhibition purposes.

In rare cases, where displaying small arms ammunition⁶⁵ is necessary to preserve the integrity of a nationally significant historic record, it may be permitted – but only:

- With specific approval from Te Tari Pūreke following inspection,
- In a locked, stout display case that is well-constructed and securely fixed to the building
- Using bullet-resistant glass or similar performance material.

Outside of opening hours, any premises containing live or prohibited ammunition in locked display premises must be secured against public access.

Understanding ammunition components:

Ammunition, regardless of type, consists of essential components that allow it to function in firearms. The components include:

1. **Cartridge case:** The outer container that holds all components together, usually made from brass, steel, or copper.
2. **Projectile (bullet):** the object that is expelled from the firearm barrel when fired.
3. **Primer:** a small, sensitive compound that ignites the propellant when struck by the firing pin.
4. **Propellant (gunpowder):** a chemical mixture that burns rapidly upon ignition, creating expanding gases that force the projectile through the barrel. Common types include smokeless powder and black powder.

Inert ammunition: classification and security considerations

Inert ammunition, also known as drill rounds or snap caps, lacks an active primer and propellant, rendering it incapable of being fired. Under the Arms Act 1983, “ammunition” refers to cartridges or components capable of discharge. Because inert ammunition does not meet this definition, it is not treated as ammunition for legal purposes. It is often used for training, handling practice, and display purposes.⁶⁶

Guidelines for handling and display of inert ammunition

1. Treat as live for display and security: although inert ammunition carries no explosive risk, it should be stored and displayed as if it were live. This includes securing it in locked or restricted-access displays, especially in public settings. Treating inert rounds like live

⁶⁴ Prohibited ammunition is defined under section 2D of the Arms Act 1983 as ammunition declared prohibited by Order in Council.

[Arms Act 1983, s2D – Meaning of prohibited ammunition](#)

⁶⁵ Arms Regulations 1992, r9J – Certain persons may possess prohibited ammunition manufactured for small arms (≤20mm calibre)

⁶⁶ Arms Act 1983, Section 2 – Interpretation (definition of ammunition)

ammunition avoids confusion and sets a clear standard for anyone interacting or viewing the items.

2. Clear identification: label inert rounds visibly to differentiate them from live ammunition. Colour-coded tips, distinct markings, or clear labels such as “inert” can help prevent accidental misuse or misunderstanding.

Important!

Arms items and ammunition must remain at the museum unless specific conditions apply e.g., delivering to another licensed person with endorsements and permit to possess if applicable), authorised transport to another place of business, or written authorisation from Police).⁶⁷ This means that a dealer cannot transport firearms, ammunition, or other arms items freely without proper authorisation or circumstance outlined in Regulation 9C

Controlled access and strategic location

Only staff members who have the necessary firearms licence, security clearance and training should have permission and controlled access to areas where firearms are stored. Unlicensed staff must be under the direct supervision of a licensed member of staff while in the firearms storage areas. This is an important aspect of firearm security within museums. This minimises the risk of unauthorised handling and ensures that firearms are managed by qualified personnel.

Te Tari Pūreke recommends that firearm storage areas be located strategically within the museum. Ideally, these areas should be situated away from public spaces to minimise risks associated with unauthorised access or theft. The location of firearm storage should be chosen with security as a primary consideration. This might include factors like reduced visibility to the public, reinforced security measures, and ease of monitoring.

Firearms definitions

Antique firearms

An antique firearm is defined as any firearm made in or before the year 1899, and is not designed for firing, and is not capable of firing rimfire or centrefire cartridge ammunition.⁶⁸

Items made after 1899 might be considered, colloquially, to be an antique if they are kept primarily as a collector’s item, an heirloom, or for special historical significance. The key point is that these firearms are valued more for their historical and cultural significance than for any functional use.

If there is any doubt about the age and status of a firearm as an antique for legal purposes, it should be assessed by an antique firearms specialist, licensed dealer, gunsmith to confirm its status as a genuine antique.

What are the museum registration requirements for displaying antique firearms?

Museums possessing **only** antique firearms, as defined in [Section 2](#) of the Act, are exempt from registering or obtaining a firearms licence for those antique firearms and, therefore, these can be

⁶⁷ Arms Regulations 1992, 9C Condition of Dealer’s Licence: Transport of Certain Arms Items or Ammunition

⁶⁸ Arms Act 1983, Section 2 – Interpretation (definition of antique firearm)

displayed – the same secure storage requirements outlined in [regulation 8](#) and [8A](#) are recommended.

This exemption of obtaining and registering does not apply to other types of firearms or arms items that are not antiques, which are subject to licensing requirements and must still be registered.

Please note, if a museum is importing genuine antique firearms, a [permit to import](#) is still needed.

Replica antique firearms

A replica antique firearm is a modern working reproduction of an original firearm and is capable of firing ammunition. Replicas are treated as functional firearms under the Act and must comply with all relevant licensing, storage, and security requirements. Museums displaying replica firearms must ensure they apply the same regulatory standards as they would for other firearms, including secure storage and appropriate licensing.

Firearms rendered inoperable, dismantled, or immobilised

Firearms that have been dismantled, immobilised, or rendered inoperable by the removal of a vital part and maintained in an inoperable condition are still considered firearms despite their condition (refer to Act [s2 Interpretation – Firearm](#) definition). They are subject to the same safe possession, display, storage, licensing, and registration requirements as operable firearms.⁶⁹

Transactions involving arms items

The dealer has specific obligations when conducting transactions involving firearms. This includes any buying, accepting donations, selling, or loaning of firearms and other parts that are or will form part of the museum's collection.

When receiving firearms, curators must ensure that any person delivering a firearm in person demonstrates that the firearm is unloaded and safe before physically taking the firearm from that person. Also, always ensure a firearm is pointed in a safe direction (that is, not toward another person, and the barrel is always pointed in a direction that minimises risk in event of an accidental discharge).

Record keeping

Every transaction involving arms items must be recorded in accordance with the Arms Act requirements. This includes:

- Details of the firearm (make, model, serial number).
- Date and nature of the transaction (purchase, donation, loan, sale).
- Details of the person from whom the firearm was received or to whom it was transferred (including firearms licence number where applicable).
- Any endorsements relevant to the transaction.

⁶⁹ Arms Regulations 1992 – 8A Conditions of Dealer's Licence: Security of Firearms, Etc, at Licensed Dealer's Place of Business

These records must be kept securely and be available for inspection by Te Tari Pūreke or Police when requested.⁷⁰

Transfer firearms to another dealer's licence holder

The dealer must record in their dealer book all dealer-to-dealer transfers of arms items and ammunition.

Firearms on loan to a museum or stored on behalf of the Crown

Firearms accessioned by the museum must be for display or educational activities like public exhibitions or making informative publications that enhance community understanding of its historical or cultural significance.

All loaned or gifted firearms must be officially recorded in the museum's collection management system or firearms dealer's book. There should be a written record, namely, a receipt and deed of gift or incoming loan agreement to support each acquisition or de-accession. The decision to acquire an item should meet the reasons for acquisition outlined in the museum's collection management policy.

When acquiring any endorsed firearm or arms item, the dealer's licence holder must obtain a permit to possess or a permit to import (as appropriate) by Te Tari Pūreke before taking possession of the item. This includes endorsed items acquired on loan.

An endorsed item cannot be moved from the place where it is stored (Police approved secure storage) unless Te Tari Pūreke has issued a permit to possess to another person, or a "permit" to carry the weapon to the licence holder.⁷¹

Conditions of carry for endorsed firearms (in lieu of obtaining a "permit to carry" on each occasion) are usually endorsed upon the licence holder's relevant endorsement, or sometimes their dealer's or firearms licence to cater for a recurring need to carry items beyond the licence holder's premises.

A dealer's licence is usually endorsed to permit the dealer to deliver an endorsed firearm to any appropriately licensed and endorsed person who has a permit to possess that item. Otherwise, every time an endorsed firearm needs to be taken from the museum's secure storage and away from the museum premises, the museum dealer must first obtain from Police, permission to carry the item. Subject to the dealer having been issued with permission to carry an item, a dealer's licensed employees can carry items on behalf of their employer when on the dealer's business.

An employee cannot be issued with a permit to possess their employer's endorsed firearms and weapons.

Obligations to accept firearms being surrendered

Museums have no obligation to accept any or every firearm offered to them, whether as a gift or donation to the collection or the surrender of an item, or similar. Any firearm acquired by the museum must have true meaning and value to the collection, no matter how sourced. Only firearms, restricted weapons and other arms items that sustain and enhance the collection can be accepted. The dealer's licence and endorsements conditions for museum curators require that any firearm added to the collection meets the museum's stated collection policy.

⁷⁰ Arms Act 1983, Section 12 – Record keeping by dealers

⁷¹ Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9C – Permit to carry endorsed firearms

Donation process

Pre-donation checks:

Before accepting a firearm donation, museums should:

- **Arrange a meeting with the donor** to discuss the firearms origin (e.g., gift from a living person or from a deceased estate) and check the compatibility of the firearm with the museums acquisition policy. Does this fit your collection?
- **Verify the donor's licensing status** through the [Firearms Licence Check tool](#). If the donor's licence is no longer valid (e.g. deceased estate) call the Registry team on **0800 844 431** to advise them know the museum would like to acquire the arms item as part of their collection.
- **Registry engagement:**
The curator or director (as the dealer licence holder) **must** record the transfer of a registered firearm using the Dealer Transaction Form, if the item is purchased from or sold to an individual firearms licence holder or deceased estate. If you cannot use the online form (e.g., deceased estate), call the Registry to confirm you have received the arms item as soon as practicable, but within 30 days, on **0800 844 431** (8.30am–5pm, Monday to Friday).⁷² Dealer to dealer transactions and imports do not need to be recorded using the dealer transaction form and you must instead record all required information in your dealer book.

If unsure about any aspect of the firearms status or the process, the museum should consult with Te Tari Pūreke.

Acceptance protocol:

If you are satisfied with the pre-donation checks and would like to accept the firearm or other arms item for donation, you'll then need to:

- Ensure that the decision to acquire and accession the firearm is documented in line with the museum's instructions for accessioning items to collections. *Note: a copy of this information may be required by Te Tari Pūreke when processing any related permit to possess or permit to import.*
- Ensure that any required permits to possess the firearm are obtained **before** formally accepting the item.
- **For pistols, restricted, or prohibited items:** The curator or director cannot take possession of prohibited firearms, prohibited magazines, pistols, restricted weapons, or pistol carbine conversion kits unless they meet the following conditions:
 - **Licence authorisation:** the dealer must hold a **dealer's licence** that explicitly allows them to carry on activities as a director or curator of a museum.
 - The dealer's licence must have an appropriate **endorsement to possess the type of arms item**.
- **Record the donation:**
 - You may record the received item online using the [Dealer Transaction Form](#)
 - Regardless of whether you use the online form, you must continue to record all required information in your dealer book.

⁷² Arms Act 1983, Section 95 – Obligation to provide information to Registry; Arms Regulations 1992, Regulation 9A – Dealer notifications

- If for any reason you are unable to use the online dealer transaction form (e.g deceased estate), call the Registry to confirm you have received the arms item **as soon as is practicable, but within 30 days**, on 0800 844 431 between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- Always record the transaction the information in your dealer book.
- **We'll need to know:**
 - the details of the arms item.
 - the date when the arms item came into your possession.
 - the name and firearms licence number of the person from whom the item was received.

For more information on when a firearm changes hands you can check [when a firearm changes hands](#).

Surrender Process

Individuals (whether licensed or not) may surrender firearms or other arms items to a person who a holds a dealer's licence. [Section 59A](#) of the Act sets out the requirements where a dealer accepts a surrendered firearm. Otherwise, the dealer's licence holder must comply with the legislation in [Section 10](#) and [Section 12](#) of the Act.

As a licenced dealer the curator of a museum may legally accept a firearm being surrendered by a licence holder or a non-licence holder. However, we strongly encourage museums to direct individuals to **licensed firearms retailers** or the **Police** to surrender firearms where the item does not fit the museum collections policy. More information can be found here: [disposal of firearms and arms items](#).

For more information on the disposal or illegally held or unwanted firearms you can visit:

- Our website page for [disposal of illegally held or unwanted firearms](#) and
- Section 59A of the Act – surrender by licensed dealer of firearms etc [here](#)

Important!

Licensed dealers must maintain a record book or collection management system at the museum where they record the details of:

- **Transactions** conducted as part of their dealer activities
- **Arms items and ammunition** received, sold, supplied, or manufactured.

This includes anything donated and accepted by the museum⁷³

⁷³ See Footnote 3

Who has produced this guidance document

Who can be contacted for more information –

Partnerships and Communities

Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority

Email: Firearmspartnerships@police.govt.nz

Date of last review for this manual. – November 2025