

22 October 2025

IR-01-25-35183

s 9(2)(a) OIA

Tēnā koe **s 9(2)(a) OIA**

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 24 September 2025. You asked for:

1) Whilst Police/FSA have intelligence estimates as to how many firearms were not accounted for after the two rounds of buy backs, have Police/FSA commenced, or intended to commence a thorough audit of import permits for firearms to compare them with buyback data and firearm recovery data (post 2019)? If not, why not. If a review has been completed or is currently being conducted, please state this. If it has been completed, provide the report/results.

The Firearms Safety Authority (the Authority) has completed one audit of Import Permits issued against the estimated number of all firearms in New Zealand however this was not specific to buyback firearm items.

The uncertainty of the buyback estimates means that any comparison to firearms data post 2019 would not be reliable. However, I can advise that 15,037 Military-style Semi-Automatic firearms (MSSA) were collected in the 2019 buy-back. Please refer to the proactive release of papers relating to [Firearms Amnesty and Buy-back Performance data](#) for further information.

An additional issue with regards to comparing the two, is that the Authority can issue a permit, for example, for 100 firearms, however, unless the individual complies with their Regulation 13 obligations, the Authority cannot necessarily know if all 100 arrive in the country or less than 100. As the information in the Registry continues to grow, we have the ability to better understand missing information from importations. Previously it was noted that nearly 50 percent of issued permits expired. This meant that the item/s were never imported, or they were but the Authority were not notified.

2) Can you advise for how many years these permits will be retained for, if there has been any effort to consolidate and preserve them, and if the hard copies will be digitized prior to destruction?

Please provide any relevant reports, memos, meeting minutes, emails, phone call transcripts that would include the information above.

From 2020, all permit applications are digitised and if a Permit to Import (PTI) is issued, then that is also a digital version, which can be printed. It is important to note that PTIs are accepted in a hard copy form as per section 10(2)(a)¹ of the Arms Regulations 1992.

The retention and disposal of licensing information, including copies of permits, is managed in accordance with the [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). For firearms licensing information, including permits, copies are to be retained until at least 10 years has passed since the death of the licence holder. Once 10 years has elapsed, a process to progress to destruction of the documents can be undertaken. There is no requirement to digitise prior to destruction after the 10 years after death of a licence holder has elapsed. In terms of retaining copies beyond the 10 years, there is no requirement to, but typically the Authority will retain copies.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review this decision if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

For your information, Police has developed a process for proactive release of information, so the anonymised response to your request may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Nāku noa, nā



Matthew Boddy
Director - Service Delivery
Firearms Safety Authority

¹ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0346/latest/DLM169112.html>