

26 February 2026

IR-01-26-2316

s 9(2)(a) OIA Privacy

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a) OIA

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 22 January 2026. I have answered each of your questions below:

The total number of firearms licence applications refused, by month, from October 2023 to the most recent available date

When a licence application is refused, a firearms event is completed where the status is 'refused'. Between 1 October 2023 and 31 December 2025, there have been a total of 770 'refused' Individual and Dealer firearms events (Table One).

This is not indicative of the individual status of this number of licences at time of reporting. For example, licences may have been initially refused and subsequently approved, and they would still appear in Table One. This could happen in instances where the reason for the initial refusal is no longer a factor, for example, the safety course has been completed, missing documentation or an eligible referee has since been applied, or compliant security has since been installed.

The figures below do not include refused endorsement or Visitor licence applications.

Figures in the table are based on the distinct count of the refusal event identification number. Individuals may have more than one refusal event during the requested date range and may therefore be counted more than once in the below table.

Table One: Number of refused firearms licence applications per month by financial year.

	2023/2024 1 October 2023 – 30 June 2024	2024/2025 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025	2025/2026 1 July 2025 – 31 December 2025
July	0	31	25
August	0	24	24
September	0	28	24
October	40	31	27
November	42	25	14

December	32	33	31
January	43	41	0
February	31	25	0
March	13	30	0
April	33	19	0
May	30	25	0
June	24	25	0
National	288	337	145

Source: National Intelligence Application (NIA), retrieved 23 January 2026

A breakdown of the reasons for refusal (e.g. family harm history, protection orders, alcohol/drug concerns, criminal history, non-compliance, failure to complete safety course, etc.)

When a firearms licence application has been submitted, Te Tari Pūreke must find that the applicant is a fit and proper person to possess and use firearms. The Arms Act 1983 gives some circumstances in which Te Tari Pūreke may find an applicant not fit and proper to have and use firearms. If an application is refused, the licence holder is notified of the reason for the refusal and provided an opportunity to refute or comment on it.

The ability to capture the reason for the licence refusal has only been in place since 30 October 2023, prior to this we are unable to identify the reason why a licence refusal has occurred. Due to this, the volumes of refusals are only captured between 30 October 2023 and 31 December 2025.

The table below (Table Two) only counts those refused licence applications with a refusal reason specified. Some refusals do not have a reason applied or have multiple reasons on one licence. The volumes identified in table two will not total table one because of this.

Included in the table are the following counts:

- a) Total – The main count in the table is based on the distinct count of the refusal event identification number.
- b) Sum of refusal reasons – This refers to the total number of refusal reasons applied. A singular licence refusal can be given multiple reasons if it meets more than one criterion under different legislative acts. A sum of these means that each refusal reason is counted even if there are multiple reasons for the refusal.
- c) Total distinct events – This refers to the number of refusal events with a reason associated to them. A distinct count of these means that each refusal event is counted once, even if there are multiple reasons for the refusal.

Table Two: Number of refused firearms licence applications by reason between 30 October 2023 and 31 December 2025

Category	Section of Act	Definition	Total
Protection Orders	22H(b)	Disqualified due to Protection order/s	45
	24A(1)(d)(i)	If a person has, or has had at any time, a temporary protection order made against them under section 79 of the Family Violence Act 2018.	14
	24A(1)(d)(ii)	If a person has, or has had at any time, a temporary protection order made against them under section 14 of the Domestic Violence Act 1995, they may be deemed to be not a fit and proper person.	1
	24A(1)(e)	If a person has inflicted, or is inflicting, family violence against another person and that other person has grounds under the Family Violence Act 2018 to apply for a protection order in respect of that violence.	36
Access	24(2)	Access is reasonably likely to be obtained by a person whose firearms licence has been revoked, is not fit and proper or is disqualified from holding for a firearms licence.	3
	60A(1)(c)	Access is reasonably likely to be obtained by a person whose application for a firearms licence has been refused, revoked, not fit and proper and temporarily suspended.	3
Administrative	24(1)(a)(ii)	Police have not received sufficient information and therefore, are unable to be satisfied the applicant is fit and proper.	7
	Reg 15(1)	Every application for a firearms licence must state all information required by Regulation 15(1).	31
Age	23(1)(a)	if a person is not over the age of 16 years	5
Alcohol/Drug abuse	24A(1)(i)	If a person abuses alcohol, or is dependent on alcohol, to an extent that affects detrimentally their judgement or behaviour.	32
	24A(1)(j)	If a person uses drugs (illegal or legal) in a way that affects detrimentally their judgement or behaviour.	14
Commissioned Officer	27(2)(a)	Commissioned Officers revocation; Commissioned Officers revocation – Access.	2

Gang affiliations	24A(1)(k)	If a person is a member of, or has close affiliations with, a gang or an organised criminal group.	22
Non-compliance	24(1)(b)	If a person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence under the Arms Act 1983.	9
	24A(1)(g)	If a person has engaged in any conduct involving non-compliance with any requirements of (i) this Act; or (ii) any regulations made under this Act; or (iii) any conditions to which a permit, licence, or endorsement previously issued.	320
	24A(1)(g) – Registry	Registry: if a person has engaged in any conduct involving non-compliance with any requirements of (i) this Act; or (ii) any regulations made under this Act; or (iii) any conditions to which a permit, licence, or endorsement previously issued.	10
Offences	22H(a)	If a person is charged with or has been convicted of a disqualifying offence.	46
	24A(1)(a)	If a person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence in New Zealand or overseas that is punishable by a term of imprisonment.	113
	24A(1)(b)	If a person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence under the Arms Act 1983.	17
	24A(1)(c)	If a person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence against (i) section 231A of the Crimes Act 1961; or (ii) the Game Animal Council Act 2013; or (iii) the Wildlife Act 1953; or (iv) the Wild Animal Control Act 1977.	11
Other	24A(1)(n)	If a person satisfies any criteria prescribed in regulations made under Section 74(1)(bb).	6
	24A(2)(c)	In determining whether a person is a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or an airgun, the member of the Police may consider any other relevant matters the member of the Police considers appropriate.	280
Physical/mental illness	24A(1)(h)	if a person shows, or has recently shown, symptoms of a mental or physical illness or injury that may adversely affect their ability to safely possess firearms.	46
Failure to complete Firearms Safety Course	Reg 14	Every applicant for a firearms licence shall undergo a course of training which is designed to teach the applicant to handle firearms safely; and pass such tests as may be required to determine the applicant's ability to handle firearms safely.	203
Sum of refusal reasons			1,276
Total distinct events			693

Source: National Intelligence Application, retrieved 23 January 2026

Any regional breakdowns (by Police district or region) if available

New Zealand Police is divided into 12 districts, nine in the North Island and three in the South Island. The table below (Table Three) captures the total number of refusals between 1 October and 31 December 2025 broken down by the licence address district.

This is the district where the individual resides as of 23 January 2026 and is not reflective of the district they resided at the time of the refusal. There are some instances where the address is not directly geocoded to a District, and these are shown as 'Non-Geocoded'. Police still have the address of each individual, but the geographic coordinates do not map directly to a District. The 'Overseas' number includes any individuals who have an overseas address recorded.

Table Three: Number of refused firearms licence applications by Region/District.

Region	District	Total
Northern Region	Northland	60
	Waitematā	51
	Auckland City	30
	Counties Manukau	55
	Waikato	66
Central Region	Bay of Plenty	103
	Eastern	64
	Central	66
	Wellington	49
Southern Region	Tasman	53
	Canterbury	84
	Southern	79
Overseas/Non-Geocoded		10
National		770

Source: National Intelligence Application (NIA), retrieved 23 January 2026

Any explanatory notes or definitions used internally when categorising reasons for refusal

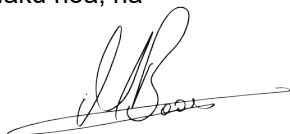
Definitions used internally when categorising refusal reasons are set out in sections 22H, 23, 24, 24A, 27 and 60A of the Arms Act 1983¹, and in regulations 14 of 15 of the Arms Regulations 1992².

Please see the attached document titled "Refusal explanatory notes".

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
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¹

https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1983/0044/latest/LMS440359.html?search=ts_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_arms+act_rese1_25_a&p=1

²

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0346/latest/whole.html#DLM16911>

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Refusals

Where a licence applicant has not satisfied Police that they should be issued with a firearms licence, they should be considered for refusal.

The reasons for considering refusal will be varied and specific to each application.

A firearms licence must not be issued to an applicant if, in the opinion of a commissioned officer of Police, access to any firearm or an airgun in possession of the applicant is reasonably likely to be obtained by any person who:

- is disqualified from holding a firearms licence; or
- has had their firearms licence revoked on the ground that they are not a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or an airgun; or
- is not a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or an airgun.

The importance of assessing access concerns during the application process is covered in the Access concerns section of this chapter. Further information about fit and proper criteria is available in the Compliance, revocation etc arms chapter.

Note: only a commissioned officer of Police may refuse a firearms licence application. In practice, refusal decisions are made by members of Te Tari Pūreke who are at the level of Inspector.

Fit and proper considerations

The purposes of the Act are to:

- promote the safe possession and use of firearms and other weapons
- impose controls on the possession and use of firearms and other weapons.

The regulatory regime established by this Act to achieve those purposes reflects the following principles:

- that the possession and use of arms is a privilege; and
- that persons authorised to import, manufacture, supply, sell, possess, or use arms have a responsibility to act in the interests of personal and public safety.

These purposes and principles must be kept at the forefront of assessment when determining a person's ongoing fit and proper status as a licence holder.

A person's fit and proper status is a crucial consideration and important express statutory criteria with regard to whether their firearms licence should be issued, suspended or revoked. For the purposes of the revocations part of this arms chapter, if a licence holder is considered not fit and proper the following should be considered:

- temporary suspension (s60A(1)) while revocation is considered under [s27C](#), or
- revocation ([s27\(2\)](#)),

Police will review a person's fit and proper status, and correspondingly the issuing or continuation of their licence when they demonstrate:

- unlawful, dangerous, violent, or unsafe behaviour, or
- non-compliance with the Act, regulations and/or licence, endorsement or permit conditions, or
- behaviour which indicates lack of judgement, or
- poor decision making.

The factors are covered under section [24A\(1\) and \(2\)](#) and may be used as possible grounds for the suspension and revocation of the firearms licence under sections [60A](#), [27C](#) and [27\(2\)\(a\)](#).

The assessment of a person's fit and proper status requires consideration of:

- the specific behaviours, offending or circumstances defined in [s24A\(1\)\(a\)-\(n\)](#) or [24A\(2\)](#) or as considered relevant that the licence holder is involved with, and then
- the severity and recency of the circumstance(s) (specific behaviours, offending listed above) individually at first, and then collectively when considered overall. One significant matter may suffice, or more less significant matters. This includes all other matters deemed relevant.

Information indicating that the person is not fit and proper need to be weighed against other information that may indicate they are fit and proper (for example, whether they have a sound knowledge of the safe possession of firearms).

In most cases, for a person to be found **not** fit and proper to be in possession of a firearm or airgun, they will have met one or more of the circumstances listed below:

Section 24A(1)

Section	Description	Clarification
24A(1) (a)	the person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence in New Zealand or overseas that is punishable by a term of imprisonment (including, but not limited to, an offence involving violence, drugs, or alcohol)	To invoke this section the offence must be punishable by imprisonment If the offence is only punishable by way of a fine, this section cannot be invoked but another applicable paragraph for example, 24A(1)(b) for a fine only Arms Act offence, or section 24A(2)(c) could be used
24A(1) (b)	the person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence under the Arms Act 1983	If there is a breach of the regulations or other breaches of the Act that are not offences (e.g. breaches of conditions) or that did not result in charges but the conduct can be proved to the civil standard on the balance of probabilities may still be relevant under 24A(1)(g).
24A(1) (c)	the person is charged with or has been convicted of an offence against— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 231A of the Crimes Act 1961; or • the Game Animal Council Act 2013; or • the Wildlife Act 1953; or • the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 	
24A(1) (ca)	the person has, or has had at any time, a firearms prohibition order made against them	See Firearms Prohibition Order arms chapter

<p>24A(1) (d).</p>	<p>the person has, or has had at any time, a temporary protection order made against them under —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 79 of the Family Violence Act 2018; or • section 14 of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 	<p>This is for temporary protection orders. See disqualified persons for information about final protection orders</p>
<p>24A(1) (e).</p>	<p>the person has inflicted, or is inflicting, family violence against another person and that other person has grounds under the Family Violence Act 2018 to apply for a protection order in respect of that violence</p>	<p>A protection order is not required to be in place to invoke this section, but there must be grounds for a protection order to be made.</p>
<p>24A(1) (f).</p>	<p>the person has, or has had at any time, a restraining order made against them under the Harassment Act 1997</p>	
<p>24A(1) (g).</p>	<p>the person has engaged in any conduct involving non-compliance with any requirements of—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this Act; or • any regulations made under this Act; or • any conditions to which a permit, licence, or endorsement previously issued to the person under this Act was subject: 	<p>For example, non-compliance with Regulation 19 (security requirements) or any of the general licence conditions in s 24B of the Act, or non-compliance with an improvement notice.</p>

<p>24A(1) (h)</p>	<p>the person shows, or has recently shown, symptoms of a mental or physical illness or injury that may adversely affect their ability to safely possess firearms</p>	<p>Police must be able to demonstrate that a person's mental or physical illness <i>may affect</i> their ability to safely possess firearms. Ideally health practitioner information would support the belief that the illness or injury may impact on their safety (or the safety of others) if they are around firearms.</p> <p>For example, a person's actions that pose a risk due to a mental health concern may lead to temporary suspension.</p> <p>The presence of a mental health condition alone will not be enough to invoke this section if that condition is being well managed and there is no reason to think that it will adversely affect their ability to safely possess firearms.</p>
<p>24A(1) (i)</p>	<p>the person abuses alcohol, or is dependent on alcohol, to an extent that affects detrimentally their judgement or behaviour</p>	<p>Police must be able to demonstrate that the abuse of alcohol or dependence is affecting the person's judgement or behaviour.</p> <p>e.g., a licence holder who consumes a large amount of alcohol then drives a car has demonstrated that they have abused alcohol to the extent that it has affected their judgement, and their decision making is not lawful or in the interest of personal or public safety. Excess alcohol consumption may also result in fighting violent or aggressive behaviour.</p>

24A(1)(j)	the person uses drugs (illegal or legal) in a way that affects detrimentally their judgement or behaviour	Police must be able to demonstrate that the use of drugs is affecting the person's judgement or behaviour. e.g., a licence holder who consumes a large amount of cannabis then drives a car has demonstrated that they have used drugs to the extent that it has affected their judgement, and their decision making is not lawful or in the interest of personal or public safety.
24A(1)(k)	the person is a member of, or has close affiliations with, a gang or an organised criminal group	There should be evidence of gang membership or close affiliations with a gang (or organised criminal group) before using this section.
24A(1)(l)	the person has shown patterns of behaviour demonstrating a tendency to exhibit, encourage, or promote violence, hatred, or extremism	Police must be able to show that there is a pattern of this type of behaviour. A one-off comment may not be enough to invoke this section (although section 24A(2)(c) may then be relevant).
24A(1)(m)	the person has been assessed as a risk to a State's national security:	
24A(1)(n)	the person satisfies any criteria prescribed in regulations made under section 74(1)(bb)	For example, see Regulation 15A

Police is not limited to section [24A\(1\)](#). Under section [24A\(2\)](#), may also take into account any other relevant matters it considers appropriate when assessing fit and proper:

Section [24A\(2\)](#) – other relevant considerations

There are additional relevant considerations that Police may take into account when considering whether anyone (whether an applicant or an existing licence holder) is fit and proper to possess firearms or airguns specified under section [24A\(2\)](#), being:

1. whether the applicant (for a licence)—

- has a sound knowledge of the safe possession and use of firearms and
- understands the legal obligations of a holder of a firearms licence, including the endorsements that may be made on a firearms licence.

2. Any other criteria prescribed in regulations made under section [74\(1\)\(bc\)](#).

Regulation 15A was made under this provision (see below) and covers situations where it may be difficult to get reliable information about persons who have lived overseas in the previous 10 years, or there have been issues with referees.

3. any other relevant matters the member of the Police considers appropriate ([24A\(2\)\(c\)](#)).

Note: Relevant matters can include traffic-related offending, infringements and suspensions. Some additional traffic-related offences are kept in the Police Infringement Bureau subsystem (PIPS) system, and this system may be accessed for fit and proper assessments. However, access to this system is controlled by the Police Infringement Bureau. As with all cases, the intervention principles should be applied.

Regulation 15A

Regulation [15A](#) provides further provisions for Police to find an applicant to be not fit and proper (under [s24A\(2\)\(b\)](#)) where:

- the applicant spent time outside New Zealand in the previous 10 years and Police sought information about that period to inform a decision as to whether the applicant is a fit and proper person, but Police have not received the information or have not been able to verify the information about that period provided by the applicant.
- any person named by the applicant in compliance with regulation [15\(f\)](#), [\(g\)](#), [\(h\)](#), [\(i\)](#), [\(j\)](#), or [\(k\)](#) (referees and ex-partners or spouses) is unable or unwilling to provide sufficient information to enable the Police to be satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person.
- Police has not been able to contact or confirm the identity of any person named by the applicant in compliance with regulation [15\(f\)](#), [\(g\)](#), [\(h\)](#), [\(i\)](#), or [\(j\)](#) who resides overseas, or the person will not agree to an interview.

Section [24A\(3\)](#) allows for Police to seek and receive any information it thinks appropriate and consider information obtained from any source in determining whether a person is fit and proper.

Access concerns

As per section 24(2) of the Arms Act, a firearms licence must not be issued, if in the opinion of a commissioned officer of Police, access to any arms items at that address would be reasonably likely to be obtained by any person who:

- is disqualified from holding a firearms licence; or
- has had their firearms licence revoked on the ground that they are not a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or an airgun; or
- is not a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm or an airgun.

Police should be vetting any persons who reside at the primary residence of the applicant and consider if any other people who reside there meet one of the above criteria. If they do, Police must determine whether the person would be reasonably likely to access any firearms at the address. In cases where it is determined that access is reasonably likely, or there are significant concerns about a person at the address, consideration of refusal may be required.

What does “reasonably likely” mean with respect to access?

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples where access would be considered reasonably likely as each case will have its own unique circumstances or factors. This guidance is intended to assist decision makers during their assessments.

“Reasonably likely” means a real risk, but not necessarily a probability, that a person holding the firearms licence, is practically unable to prevent unauthorised access to the firearm, due to a failure to exercise adequate control over the firearm.

The practical inability may arise from a power imbalance (for example, if the firearms holder is a child living with their unlicensed parent) or coercion/influence from criminal third parties or an intimate partner.

Physical proximity between the unlicensed party and the firearm tends to increase the reasonable likelihood that the unlicensed party will have access to the firearm.

New Zealand matters that inform this interpretation include:

Helming v Police [2020] – Helming (H) had a gang member (M) living with him, who was dishonest with H about his previous interaction with Police. The court found it reasonably likely that M would gain access to H’s firearms as H did not take adequate measures to deny access.

Constable v Police [2022] - an example of a spouse (who is not fit and proper) exercising control. Constable (C) had their firearms licence application refused. His wife was also a licence holder, and it was found she had an inadequate understanding of what firearms and ammunition were in her possession and inadequate control over who had access.

The court found she did not have proper control as husband had more knowledge of the firearms in the safe (and other things) and concluded that the wife did not exercise proper control over the firearms.

Stedman v Police [2022] – Stedman’s licence was revoked due to his firearm not being stored securely (kept under a blanket). His son, who was living with him and who had mental health issues, accessed the firearm and shot himself.

An Australian matter discussing a similar meaning provides further insight:

Dept of Agriculture and Rural Affairs v Binnie [1989] VR 836, 842, as referred to in *USTLII - [2019] AIAAdminLawF 24; (2019) 97 AIAL Forum 75*

Reasonable likelihood is a chance of an event occurring or not occurring which is real – not fanciful or remote. It does not refer to a chance which is more likely than not to occur, that is, one which is “odds on” or where between nil and certainty it should be placed. A chance which in common parlance is described as ‘reasonable’ is one that is ‘fair’, ‘sufficient’ or ‘worth noting’.

The word likelihood in reasonable likelihood was held to infer a standard which is less definite than probable.

Disqualified persons

Disqualified – section 22H

Under section [22H](#) of the Arms Act 1983 a person is disqualified from holding a firearms licence if:

- the person has within the previous 10 years been convicted, or released from custody after being convicted, of any of the following offences:
 - sections [16\(4\)](#), [16A](#), [44A](#), [50A](#), [50D](#), [51A](#), [53A](#), [54](#), [54A](#), [55](#), [55A](#), [55D](#), [55E](#), or [55F](#) of the Arms Act 1983
 - a specified violent offence as defined in section [4](#) of the Victims' Orders Against Violent Offenders Act 2014:
 - an offence under section [92](#), [98](#), [98A](#), [189A](#), [199](#), [202C](#), [238](#), [267\(1\)](#), [269\(1\)](#) and [\(3\)](#), [306](#), [308A](#) of the Crimes Act 1961
 - an offence under section [6](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [12A](#), [12AB](#), or [12F](#) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, or
- the person has, or has had within the previous 10 years, a protection order made against them pursuant to section [79](#) of the Family Violence Act 2018 or section [14](#) the Domestic Violence Act 1995.
- the person is subject to a firearms prohibition order.

Custody should be interpreted as when the person is in a custodial facility while serving the sentence of imprisonment, and ending when they are released, for example because their sentence has ended, or they have been released on parole.

Members of the Armed Forces may be charged with “civil offences” under section [74](#) of the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1971. They can be charged with committing an offence against section [74](#) of the Armed Forces Discipline Act, by doing an act (whether in New Zealand or elsewhere) which if done or committed in New Zealand, would be an offence against a New Zealand Act. If a person is convicted of an offence against section [74](#) of the Armed Forces Discipline Act because they engaged in conduct that is an offence against one of the offence provisions in section [22H](#) (for example, an offence under section [6](#) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975), that conviction will not be a disqualifying conviction for the purposes of section [22H](#). However, the proven conduct will still be highly relevant to whether the person is fit and proper to possess firearms and should still be taken into account.

Some key words to look out for when reviewing offences/charges/convictions in NIA

include:

- Prohibited firearms
- Sexual-related offences
- Wounding or injuring
- Threatening to kill
- Strangulation
- Assault with weapon
- Cultivating (drugs)
- Supplying (drugs)