

ARMS CODE

This firearm safety manual is issued by the New Zealand Police who acknowledge the assistance of the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council in compiling the booklet and providing instruction for new firearm users.

It is recommended that all shooters join a club where they can mix with experienced firearm users and practise safe and responsible firearms use. A list of local shooting clubs can be obtained from your local Arms Officer, Gun Dealer or NZ Mountain Safety Council.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council is an Incorporated Society established to promote safety in outdoor activities, including the use of firearms. The Firearm Safety section of the Council is funded specifically by, and acts on behalf of, the New Zealand Police.

Under the Arms Regulations 1992 (Section 14) volunteer instructors of the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council are individually approved and collectively authorised by the New Zealand Police to deliver to applicants for firearm licences appropriate basic firearm safety instruction, and to administer the Firearm Safety Test on the contents of the Arms Code.

CONTENTS

SEVEN BASIC RULES	2	RANGE SAFETY RULES	19
CHOOSING A SUITABLE FIREARM	3	CROSSING FENCES	19
FIREARM TYPES	4	STUMBLING IN ROUGH COUNTRY	20
FIREARM MAGAZINES	5	USE OF HALF-OPEN BOLT, OR ACTION	21
OLD SHOTGUNS	6	USE OF PRE-TESTED SAFETY CATCH	21
ANTIQUE FIREARMS	6	SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR MUZZLE-LOADING FIREARMS	21
MUZZLE-LOADING FIREARMS	6	WHERE AND WHEN YOU MAY USE FIREARMS	22
CORRECT AMMUNITION	7	PISTOL SHOOTING	23
EYESIGHT	7	COLLECTORS	24
RELOADING AMMUNITION	7	WHERE TO GET HELP	24
APPLYING FOR A FIREARMS LICENCE	8	MECHANICAL FITNESS OF FIREARMS	24
FIREARM LICENCES AND ENDORSEMENTS	8	EXPORTING AND IMPORTING	25
RECORDING YOUR FIREARMS	9	NEVER WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUGS	25
BUYING OR SELLING	9	DO'S AND DON'TS WITH FIREARMS	25
PURCHASE OF AMMUNITION	9	OFFENCES WITH FIREARMS	27
CARRYING FIREARMS	9	DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF FIREARMS/USERS	28
SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION	10	FURTHER READING	28
SIGHTING IN OR PATTERNING	12		
SEVEN BASIC RULES EXPLAINED	12		

SEVEN BASIC RULES



1 *Treat every firearm as loaded*



2 *Always point firearms in a safe direction*



3 *Load a firearm only when ready to fire*



4 *Identify your target*



5 *Check your firing zone*



6 *Store firearms and ammunition safely*



7 *Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms*

CHOOSING A SUITABLE FIREARM

The Arms Act 1983 defines a firearm as anything from which any shot, bullet, missile or other projectile can be discharged by force of explosive.

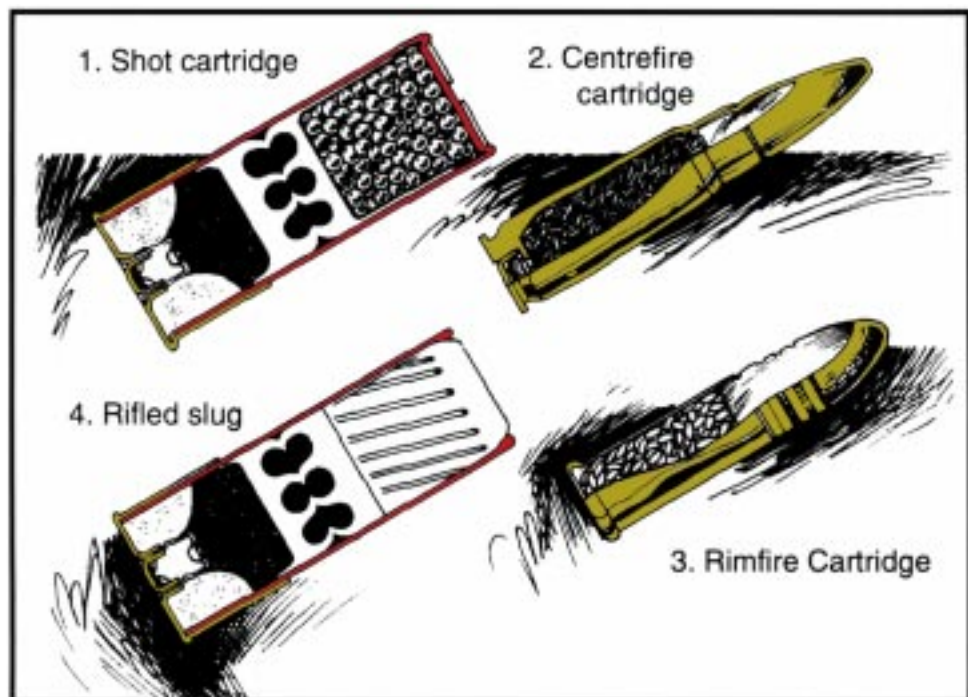
There is no single firearm that will suit all purposes and no ammunition that will suit all purposes. If you are hunting, the bigger and stronger the game the more powerful the cartridge must be to kill animals humanely.

For a beginner a .177 calibre air rifle is inexpensive and will provide plenty of cheap, safe practice. The Mountain Safety Council has an excellent free pamphlet on this called 'Beginning with air guns.' Other types of 'airgun' are available, including the 'soft' air pistols, which fire a plastic pellet at fairly low velocity. Soft airguns are usually made to look like real pistols. It is a serious offence to use one 'as it would be to use a real one' in a robbery. Anyone who brandishes one in public, even in fun, is placing him/herself in danger, so good sense is needed in their handling. Soft air pistols, and another kind of airgun which fires paint pellets, are both used in games in which people fire at each other. Protective gear, especially for the eyes, is essential to avoid injury, and players must be careful not to injure non-participants. People aged 16 and 17 can have and use airguns if they have a Firearms Licence. A Firearms Licence is not needed for airguns by those over 18. Those younger than 16 'or those under 18 who do not have a Firearms Licence' may not possess an airgun and can use one only under direct supervision of

someone who is either a Firearms Licence holder or is over 18.

Shotguns are used for clay target shooting and to hunt small animals such as rabbits, hares, possums and vermin. They are the only firearms allowed for hunting game birds on the wing. There are about 200 pellets in a 12 gauge cartridge which spread out when they leave the muzzle and at 30 metres will strike in a circular pattern nearly a metre across. Shotgun cartridges are loaded with different sizes of shot: Numbers 7, 8 and 9 for smaller birds, 4, 5 and 6 for rabbit and duck, 3 and 2 for swan and geese, and buckshot or a single solid slug for pigs and deer at close range. Different size shot is used for clay target shooting depending on the competition.

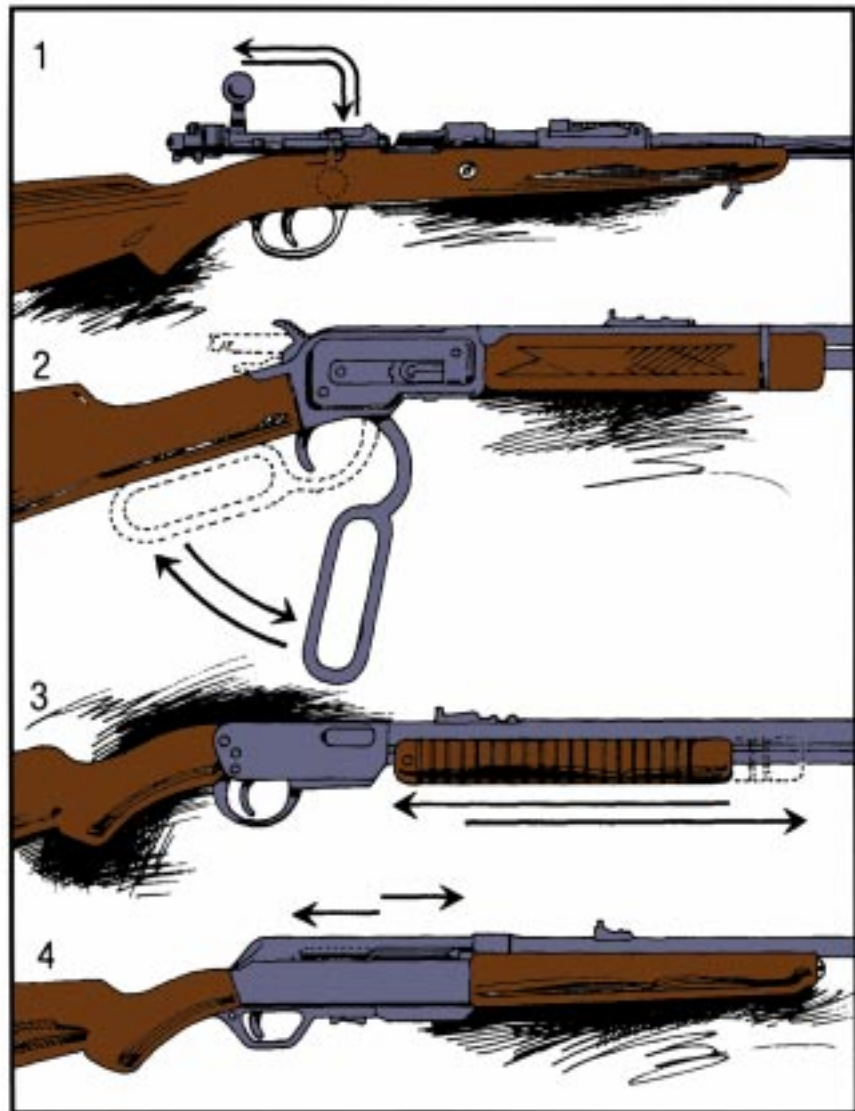
A rifle normally fires a single bullet and, in New Zealand, rifles generally range in calibre from .22 to .45. All are used for target shooting. The .22 rimfire is suitable for small game such as rabbits, hares and possums while centrefire .22's are suitable for hunting goats and wallaby. The .243 is about the smallest calibre that should be used for deer hunting. Some



Cutaway drawings of four different types of cartridge. Clockwise from top left: 1) a shot cartridge, 2) a centrefire cartridge, 3) a rimfire cartridge, 4) a rifled slug for use in a shotgun.

cartridges are not suitable for hunting pigs and deer. The following ones are recommended: the .308 Winchester (7.62 Nato), 7.62 x 39 (the Warsaw Pact military calibre) .270 Winchester, 30.06, .303 British, 6.5 x 55, 7mm and 8 mm Mauser and the 30.30 Winchester.

Joining a sport shooting club is recommended where experienced firearms users can assist with further information on firearms and ammunition..



Common firearm actions. From the top:

- 1) a bolt action,
- 2) a lever action,
- 3) a pump action,
- 4) a semi-automatic

FIREARM TYPES

All cartridge firing firearms used for target shooting or hunting have the following things in common: the cartridge is inserted into the chamber, it is locked there by the action, the action is cocked, it is fired, it is unlocked, and the empty cartridge case is ejected.

One of the simplest and most trouble-free firearm actions is the bolt action. Starting from the unloaded condition, the action is unlocked by lifting the bolt handle and pulling it back. A cartridge is fed into the chamber by pushing the bolt forward. The bolt handle is then turned downwards, locking the bolt and cartridge in place. A firing pin is usually cocked by movement of the bolt or bolt handle, and when the trigger is squeezed the pin is released, firing the cartridge. The empty cartridge case is then ejected by once more lifting the bolt handle and pulling the bolt back.

The lever action works on the same basic principle, except that a lever is pushed down to unlock the bolt and move it backwards. This movement also cocks the action. When the lever is pulled upwards again it feeds a cartridge into the chamber and locks, ready to be fired by the trigger. After the cartridge is fired the empty case is ejected by once more pushing the lever down.

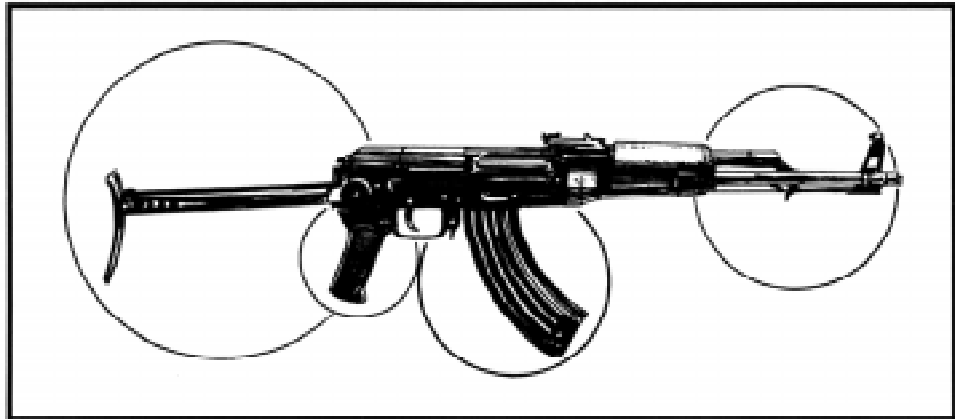
A pump action is again similar. A pump slide is pulled backwards to open the action and cock it. When the slide is pushed forward the action feeds a fresh cartridge, locks and is ready to fire.

A semi-automatic, also known as a self loading action, operates in the same way as the above firearms except ejection and loading is carried out automatically by the force of either the recoil or by

gas pressure. Because of the automatic reloading a cartridge is ready to be fired each time the trigger is squeezed. A hunter with a semi-automatic rifle or shotgun must either hunt with his firearm cocked and loaded, relying on the safety catch, or he must cock and load the firearm when he sees game. It is dangerous to rely on the safety catch and game may be frightened by the noisy loading and cocking mechanism so the semi-automatic firearm may be less suitable for hunting than the other firearms described here.

Most shotguns commonly found in New Zealand are the break-open variety in which the barrel or barrels hinge downwards. There are over-and-under, side-by-side and single barrel shotguns. Some shotguns are semi-automatic or pump action.

Airgun means any air rifle or pistol, from which a projectile can be discharged by the use of gas or compressed air, and not by force of explosive.



An M.S.S.A. is a self-loading rifle or shotgun with one or more of the following features:

- *Folding or telescopic butt*
- *Magazine of more than 15 cartridges for .22 rimfire*
- *Magazine of more than 7 cartridges for others*
- *Bayonet lug*
- *Free standing military style pistol grip*
- *Flash suppressor.*

You will need a permit from the police to obtain one of these firearms.

Pistol means any firearm that is designed or adapted to be held and fired with one hand, and includes any firearm that is less than 762 mm in length.

Military style semi-automatic firearms (M.S.S.A.) are firearms which require an E endorsement and are subject to special security conditions. Because only an E endorsed person may have or use an M.S.S.A. it is an offence for anyone without this endorsement to fire one, even under supervision. Only persons 18 years of age or older can have an endorsement for one of these firearms.

FIREARM MAGAZINES

All repeating and semi-automatic firearm actions have a magazine in which the ammunition is held before being fed into the chamber. Most bolt action rifles have box-type magazines with the cartridges placed one on top of the other. Many lever action and pump action firearms, and some semi-automatics have a tubular magazine in which the cartridges are placed end-on, one behind the other. A tubular magazine can be dangerous.

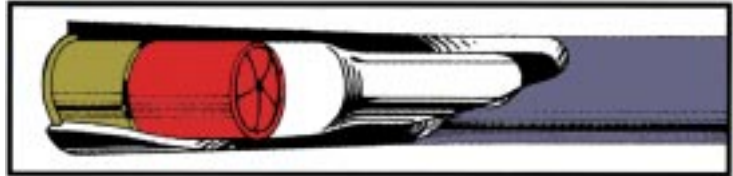
Beware of a cartridge sticking temporarily, perhaps because the tube has been dented, and later coming free and being fed into the action without the shooter being aware of it. Be warned that by putting a magazine which holds more than 15 rounds to a .22 semi-automatic rifle or more than seven rounds to a centre-fire semi-automatic rifle, it changes its definition to that of an M.S.S.A. (see M.S.S.A. definition on page 12).

OLD SHOTGUNS

Shotguns with any pitting of the barrel should not be fired. Beware of using modern ammunition in a very old shotgun. The barrels of some old shotguns are not strong enough for the high pressure of modern ammunition. There are also some moderately old shotguns around which have strong enough barrels but not the chambering to allow for modern star crimp cartridges.

The chamber is the slightly enlarged section of the barrel bore where the cartridge is locked up before being fired.

In the case of a star crimp shot cartridge the chamber needs to be long enough to allow the crimp to peel right forward out of the way of the shot and wad.



A shotgun chamber must be deep enough to allow the modern star crimp to unfold fully, out of the way of shot and wad when the gun is fired.

ANTIQUE FIREARMS

Antique firearms should not be fired. They are valuable and may be damaged. Sometimes they may be in poor condition and dangerous. An antique firearm is normally suitable only for display, or as a collector's item, or because it is an heirloom or has some special significance. The Arms Act specifically describes an antique as a firearm which is not designed for firing, and is not capable of firing rimfire or centrefire cartridge ammunition.

Black powder shooters usually fire replicas of the original firearms. Their replicas are working models of original firearms made of suitable materials and can safely be fired with the correct ammunition. Remember that a black powder firearm can be as lethal as a modern firearm. In fact, their loading and firing is more complex and requires more care.

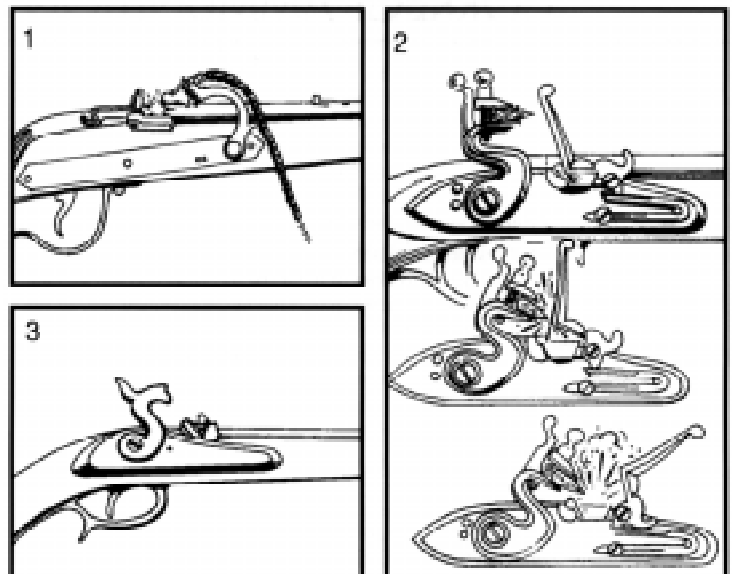
MUZZLE-LOADING FIREARMS

The term muzzle-loader is an obvious one, because of the way that the firearm is loaded: through the muzzle. Black powder or Pyrodex is poured into the barrel and a lead ball or bullet is put into the barrel on top of it. A small hole is at the closed end, usually at the side, just above the trigger. Through this hole a flame enters the barrel, and ignites the powder charge behind the bullet.

Some actions fire by way of a percussion cap. In others a mechanism may send sparks from flint into a flash pan where there is a small amount of fine powder to carry the flame down the flash hole. In other actions a slow-burning 'match' is pressed down into the flash pan.

Three drawings show:

- 1) a matchlock action in which a slow-burning match_ is applied to the priming powder to cause ignition,*
- 2) a flintlock action and how it causes the flint to strike down the surface of the steel, uncovering the priming powder to a shower of sparks,*
- 3) a percussion action in which the hammer strikes a cap to ignite the charge.*



CORRECT AMMUNITION

RELOADING AMMUNITION

When you have gained experience you may wish to begin reloading ammunition yourself. Besides saving money (if you fire a lot of rounds) this can add a great deal of interest to your sport. Be warned, however, that you need the right equipment, powder and projectiles. You must first seek the advice of an experienced reloader in addition to reading one of the many excellent books on this subject.

Unless you obtain a special licence, it is unlawful to load or reload ammunition to sell or give away to another person. You are also breaking the law if you store any propellant powders in a house. Only the smallest quantities of propellant should be stored, in a separate building such as a locked garden shed. The storage shed should be cool and dry.

EYESIGHT AND HEARING

It is important to have good eyesight for shooting. You must be able to identify your target and shoot with accuracy. Even colour blindness can cause problems. If you have any doubts, have your eyesight checked by a specialist.

It can be wise to protect your eyes by wearing protective glasses while shooting.

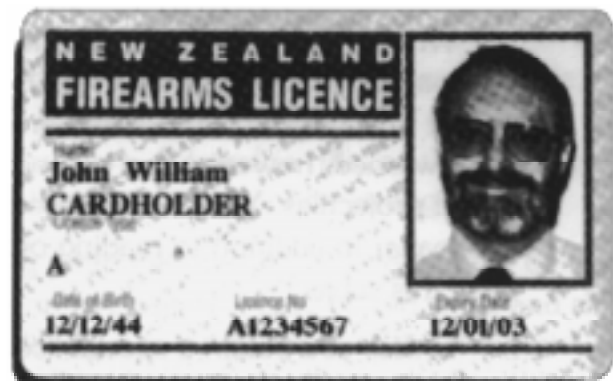
Ears are easily damaged, especially on a range where others are firing alongside. Hearing protection is essential on ranges, and elsewhere when possible.

APPLYING FOR A FIREARMS LICENCE

To obtain a firearms licence you must first apply to the Arms Officer at a police station, complete an application form and supply two coloured passport type photos of yourself. A fee is payable on application. The Police will check whether you are a suitable person to possess firearms, and can provide safe storage. They will ask for the names of two persons (one a relative) who will be interviewed about your suitability. People who have a history of violence, or involvement with drugs, or who are irresponsible with alcohol, may find it difficult to satisfy the Police that they are fit and proper to have a firearm.

You are required to study the Arms Code and to attend a lecture on firearm safety. These lectures are given by New Zealand Mountain Safety Council volunteer instructors acting on behalf of the Police.

At the conclusion of the lecture a 30-question test is given and you must get at least 28 of the 30 questions correct. Seven of the questions are vital, relating to the seven basic rules of firearm safety. If any one of these 'compulsory' questions is answered incorrectly you could fail.



It is not difficult to pass the test if you study the Arms Code thoroughly, rather than merely read it through. Anyone who fails the test may apply to sit another test at a later date following further study of the Arms Code and attendance at a further lecture.

Each applicant who passes the test is given a certificate by the firearms instructor. You can also qualify by completing a Firearms Safety and Appreciation course at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. Police may in some circumstances ask the applicant to undertake the NZ Mountain Safety course.

FIREARM LICENCES AND ENDORSEMENTS

Everyone who has or who uses a firearm (except under immediate supervision of a licence holder) needs to have a firearms licence. The minimum age for a licence holder is 16. To own and use some firearms you may need a special endorsement on your licence.

There are two types of licence ' Firearms Licence and Dealer's Licence. For ease of administration, the Police call these two types of firearms licence A and D licences.

No matter how old you are, if you do not have a licence but want to use a firearm you may do so only under the immediate supervision of someone who has a firearms licence. In other words, the person with the licence must be with the shooter with one firearm and close enough to be able to control the shooter's actions. The supervisor must not be using a firearm at the same time.

You do not need a firearms licence for an airgun if over 18 years.

A LICENCE (General Firearms Licence)

A firearms licence allows the holder to have and use sporting type shotguns and rifles without reference to the Police. The licence is also required by people aged 16 and 17 who wish to buy or use an airgun. Parents need to be aware of the arms law because it is an offence to supply or sell an airgun to an unlicensed person under 18. This could arise from an adult buying an airgun and giving it to a child for a birthday gift.

Any licence holder may supervise a non-licence holder using rifles, shotguns or airguns. Immediate supervision is described above.

A person with an A licence will require an endorsement if that person wishes to become a collector, or if the holder is a member of a pistol club and wishes to own a pistol. Firearms dealers require a special licence.

D LICENCE (Dealer's Licence)

D licences are required for arms dealers who buy and sell or make firearms by way of business.

ENDORSEMENTS

B Endorsement

This allows the holder to own or possess pistols (as long as he/she is a member of an incorporated pistol club recognised by the Commissioner of Police) and to take those pistols to and from the pistol club under certain conditions.

C Endorsement

This allows the holder to have pistols and/or restricted weapons. These may not be fired, are subject to strict storage security and are registered with the police. Persons who come within this category are in the sub-categories of:

- Bona fide collectors.
- A person to whom a pistol or restricted

weapon has special significance (heirloom or memento).

- The director or curator of a bona fide museum.
- Employees of theatrical groups or film making organisations.

NOTE: Each of these endorsements is issued under the authority of a different subsection of the Arms Act and is specific for the purpose it was issued. If you have a C Endorsement for one category it does not automatically entitle you to any other category.

E Endorsement

This is required for people to have military style semi-automatic rifles and shotguns.

REVOCATION

Your firearms licence or endorsements can be revoked by a Commissioned Officer of Police if you act in such a way that indicates you are no longer a fit and proper person to be in possession of a firearm.

Police are required to seize firearms and consider revocation of a person's firearms licence if that person is involved in family (domestic) violence. A protection order issued under the Domestic Violence Act has the effect of revoking a firearms licence. This can be varied only by application to the Court.

BUYING OR SELLING

Anyone who sells you a firearm will need to see your licence, and you should carry it with you wherever you take your firearm. If you are questioned by the police and do not have your licence you will be required to produce it within seven days. Whenever you supply a firearm it must be only to a person with a firearms licence.

It is in your own interests to keep a record of the firearms you have bought or sold, because if one should be lost, destroyed or stolen you must inform the police in writing, straight away.

Pistols, military style semi-automatic firearms and restricted weapons can be supplied only to a purchaser who has a special permit issued by the police.

RECORDING YOUR FIREARMS

Write down the details (make, model and serial number) of the firearms you own. It is a good idea to keep these records in a safe place, separate from your firearms.

Every licence holder is required to advise the

Police in writing within 30 days whenever there is a change of address.

There are pages at the back of this book on which you can record details of your firearms, and to notify changes of address.

PURCHASE OF AMMUNITION

You must produce your firearms licence when purchasing firearms or ammunition.

If you wish to obtain firearms or ammunition by

“mail order” the supplier will require an order in writing signed by you and endorsed by a member of the police.

CARRYING FIREARMS

Before you obtain your first firearm you will need to think about where you will keep it and how you will carry it home.

From the moment you leave a dealer's shop you will be carrying your unloaded firearm in a public place. You may even need to carry it on a bus or train, an aircraft, or inter-island ferry.

Many people are alarmed at the sight of a firearm. Because of this, and because it will protect the firearm, you are strongly advised to get a padded cover or case in which to carry it.

This ensures the firearm stays in good condition and makes it less obvious. Make sure the action is open when around other people.

On trains firearms must be handed in and treated as luggage. A hard carrying case will protect your firearm during the journey. -On inter-island ships, if your firearm is not in a vehicle, it must be handed in at the Purser's Office. On aircraft, firearms and ammunition must be declared at the ticketing counter, checked and stored in the luggage

compartment. A maximum of 5 kg of ammunition may be carried as checked baggage, subject to airline regulations. Duck shooters should check their game licence before they use a firearm in a boat.

Be careful about putting a firearm in, or taking it out, of a vehicle. Do not point it at yourself, or at anyone else. Do not pull it towards you by the muzzle. You should not leave firearms in an unattended vehicle. On occasions when there is no sensible alternative, the firearm must be out of sight and the vehicle locked.

You should not leave firearms in an unattended vehicle. “Unattended” means no-one is in or near the vehicle, or able to watch it and make sure it’s secure. You must have a particular lawful, proper and sufficient purpose to have firearms with you, so you should have firearms — unloaded — in your vehicle only on the way to or from a hunting trip, or shooting range, or for some other genuine reason.

You must plan ahead to avoid situations where you may have to leave any firearm in an unattended vehicle. But occasionally there may be a genuinely unforeseeable occasion when concealing the firearm in a locked vehicle is actually the most “reasonable step” available. In those cases you should make the firearm inoperable (for instance by taking out the bolt) if that is possible, and make sure that there is



To protect your firearm while travelling a haerd case with a soft lining is ideal. Not as protective, but quite useful, is the soft padded cover carried by this woman in the picture.

no ammunition in the vehicle. You should be able to keep the vehicle under observation.

If you don’t follow these basic security precautions, the Police may revoke your licence if they do not believe that you took the required reasonable steps.

SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION

Every firearms licence is issued subject to certain conditions. They include taking precautions to store firearms safely and securely. The Arms Regulations require these minimum standards:

- 1) A firearm must not be put in any place where a young child has ready access to it.
- 2) Ammunition must be stored separately **or** the firearm made incapable of firing (the bolt should be removed or the firearm fitted with a trigger locking device). It is sound practice to do both.
- 3) Licence holders must take “reasonable steps” to secure firearms against theft.
Some of those “reasonable steps” are spelt out. You must have somewhere to lock away firearms. It could be:
 - A lockable cabinet, container or receptacle of stout construction (“stout construction” means strong enough to stop a child or casual opportunist thief getting access); or
 - A display cabinet or rack which locks in and immobilises firearms so they can’t be fired; or even
 - A steel and concrete strongroom.

At home, unless your firearms are under the immediate supervision of a licence holder, you must keep them unloaded and locked away.

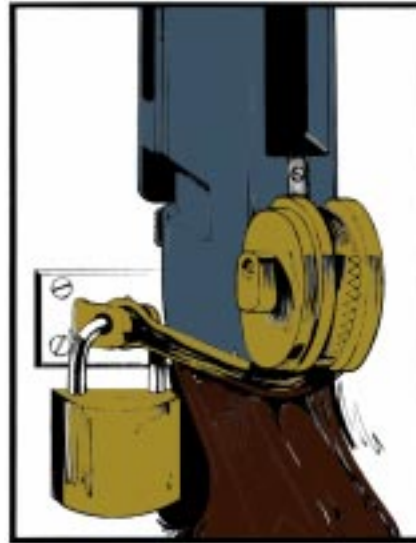
For owners of pistols and M.S.S.A.s, and for collectors, there are additional security requirements which they are advised of when they apply for their special endorsements.

Before putting the firearm away you should clean the barrel with a rod, clean patches and solvent. Where possible insert the cleaning rod from the chamber end of the bore to avoid damaging the muzzle. When the barrel is clean, push an oily patch through.

Clean the action and the outside of the firearm and wipe all metal parts with a lightly oiled rag.

On taking the firearm out for use, point it in a safe direction then check that it is not loaded. Push a clean patch through the bore and check that the barrel and action are clean and dry. Grease or any quantity of oil in the action can cause a misfire. If they are in the barrel they could cause even more serious trouble, such as a bulged or burst barrel.

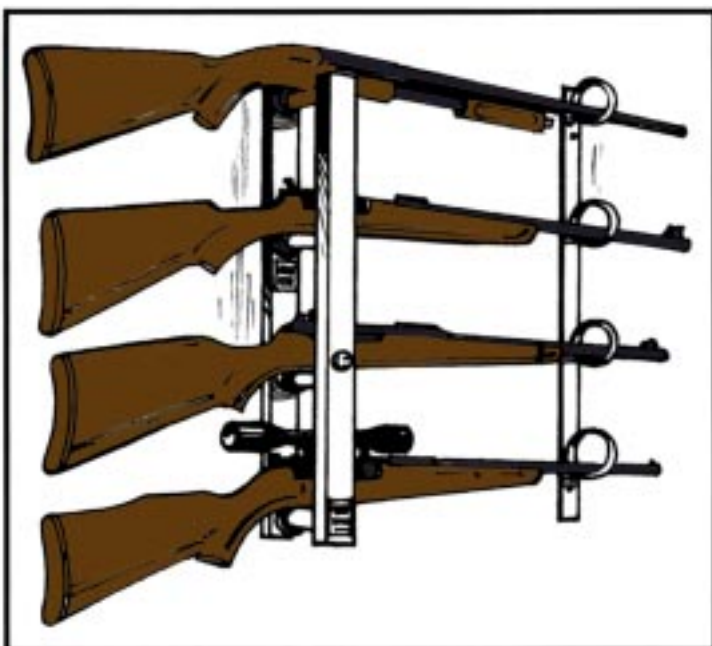
When hunting, take cleaning gear with you; at least a pullthrough, patches and oil. At the end of each day clean and oil the barrel, and then clean the barrel again in the morning before setting out on the next day's stalk.



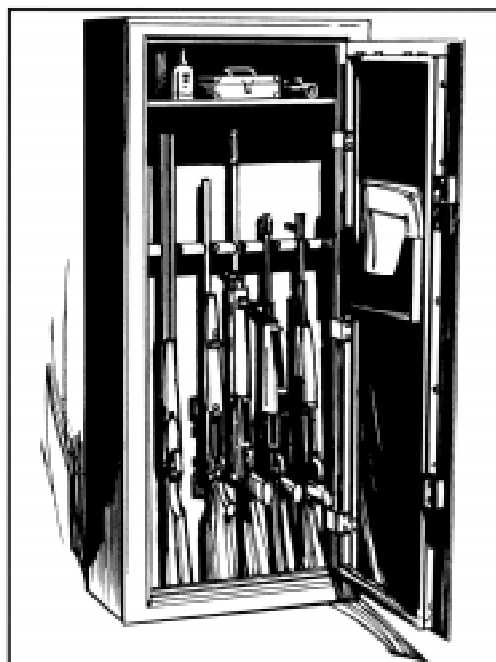
A trigger locking device fitted to a rifle can be a useful security measure.



Cleaning a firearm, the rod being inserted from the chamber end of the barrel.



The sort of rack available that can store a variety of firearms.



The sort of steel cabinet available that can store a variety of firearms.

SIGHTING IN OR PATTERNING

Before you use a shotgun for hunting it is useful to see what sort of pattern it fires with the cartridges you intend to use. Tack up a large sheet of paper or cardboard at a distance of 40 metres. See where the pattern of shot hits.

“Sighting in” with a rifle is even more important. If your rifle has a telescopic sight a dealer or gunsmith can check for you that the sight is correctly set according to a collimator but it will

still require checking on a range or suitable rural area with the ammunition you intend to use.

“Sighting in” is best carried out on an established range. In any case it should be in a place safely away from people, stock or property which could be damaged and with a safe back stop.

Shoot from 25 metres and adjust sights until the point of aim and the bullet impact are the

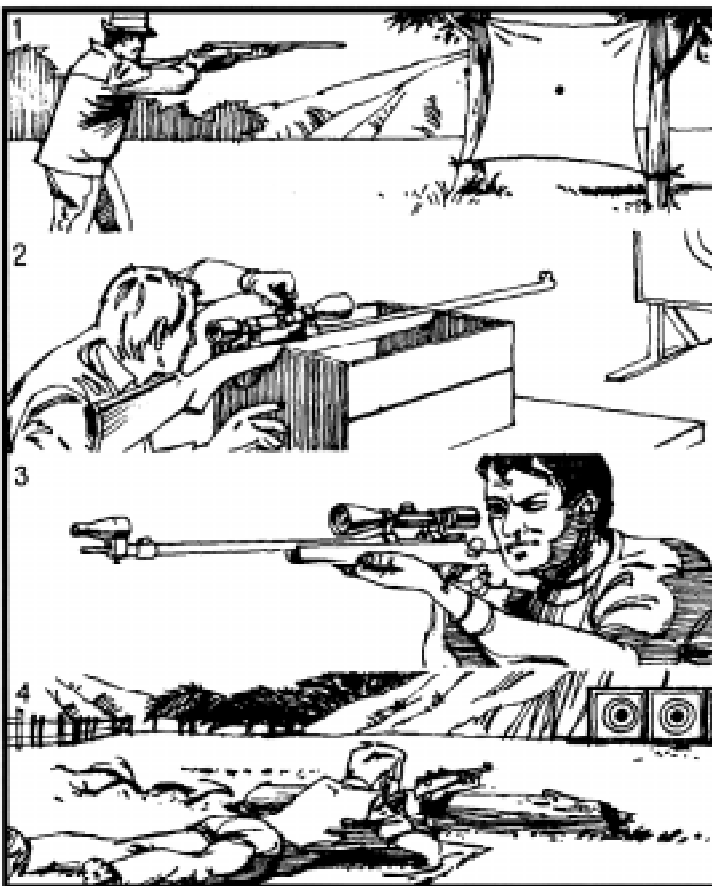
same. If you are using iron sights always move the rear sight in the direction you want the shot to move. The foresight is the reverse of this. With a scope, follow the arrows on the scope adjustment. (But beware that some scopes have the arrows reversed.) Next go back to 100 metres, fire shots in pairs, and adjust sights. Most high powered rifles are best zeroed so the bullet hits the target about 75 mm high at 100 metres. Get to know your own firearm thoroughly; learn how it works, and how to look after it properly.

1) *Patterning a shotgun.*

2) *Bore-sighting a rifle, using a steady rest for the firearm and adjusting the sights until they coincide with a target seen through the barrel.*

3) *Checking sights with a collimator.*

4) *Sighting in on a range. Bore sighting or checking with a collimator are useful ways of getting the sights close to where they need to be, but sighting in on the range is still necessary to ensure the sights are set correctly.*



SEVEN BASIC RULES EXPLAINED

As long as a firearm is in good condition and handled properly, it can not hurt anyone. You are responsible for making sure your firearm is in good condition and for handling it safely.

There are seven basic safety rules:

1. ***Treat every firearm as loaded.***
2. ***Always point firearms in a safe direction.***
3. ***Load a firearm only when ready to fire.***
4. ***Identify your target.***
5. ***Check your firing zone.***
6. ***Store firearms and ammunition safely.***
7. ***Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms.***

Rule 1: TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS LOADED

Check every firearm yourself. Pass or accept only a firearm which has the action open and is not loaded.

- Do not take anyone's word that a firearm is unloaded.
- Keep your finger off the trigger; always point the muzzle in a safe direction; open the action and inspect the chamber and magazine.
- If you do not know how to open a firearm, leave it alone.
- If it is someone else's ask them to show you that it is empty.

Handing Firearms to Other People

Before handing over a firearm:

- point the muzzle in a safe direction
- open the action
- check that the chamber is empty.

If someone hands a firearm to you:

Before accepting it:

- ask that it is opened first



*A firearm must be **open** and **empty** before you pass it on to someone, or before you accept it from anyone.*

- point the muzzle in a safe direction
- check the chamber is empty.

Rule 2: ALWAYS POINT FIREARMS IN A SAFE DIRECTION

Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

- "A safe direction" will depend on where you are; remember that bullets can go through walls or ceilings.
- Do not let careless habits form. Think about what you are doing when handling firearms - no daydreaming.
- Do not point a firearm at anyone else, or at yourself.

To avoid accidental firing or damage, firearms should never be leant against vehicles or in any place where they could slide or fall.

Always be particularly careful when placing firearms in (or removing them from) vehicles, boats and storage. Never let the muzzle point at yourself or any other person.

Moments for Special Care

Be very careful at the moments of closing the action or releasing the safety catch, uncocking or opening a loaded firearm. These are danger times when the firearm can go off by accident, so take special care.

Rule 3: LOAD A FIREARM ONLY WHEN READY TO FIRE

Only load a firearm when you intend to use it, and only in an area where it can be safely and legally discharged.

- Do not load the magazine until you reach your shooting area.

- Do not load the chamber until you are ready to shoot.
- Unload the chamber if the game gets away.
- Unload the magazine before leaving the shooting area.



When hunters are entering the area where they may have a chance of a shot they may load the magazine in preparation, but the chamber should be empty.

When game is sighted a cartridge may be loaded into the chamber.

If the game gets away without the shot being fired, the cartridge must be removed.

Only when you have reached your shooting area should you load any ammunition into your firearm, and then only into the magazine - never into the chamber.

The firearm is then carried with the bolt or action closed on an empty chamber. The cartridges are readily available from the magazine and it is only a matter of a split second to open the action and feed a round into the chamber. If the opportunity to shoot at game does not occur, perhaps because the animal

runs away, the round should be removed from the chamber. Put it back in the magazine and close the bolt on an empty chamber.

The Importance of Unloading Completely

You must unload completely before leaving the shooting area or entering a hut or camp. This is important because you could have loaded your firearm and then for some reason not fired the round. Empty the magazine and then check again that the chamber is empty.

Never rely on safety catches. In most cases they lock the trigger or the bolt but, like all mechanical things, they are subject to wear and tear and may not work properly. Use the safety catch only as a supplement to safe handling.

Because it is not practical to apply this rule to semi-automatic shotguns and rifles, it is recommended that when you have seen or expect to flush game at any moment you load the firearm and place the previously tested safety catch on "safe". If you release the safety catch but decide not to shoot, then re-apply the safety catch. Whenever a round is in the chamber you must be absolutely sure that the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. Test the safety catch before loading any ammunition into the chamber. If you have any doubt about the safety catch don't trust it. Have it checked by a gunsmith.

Never use live ammunition to check the mechanism. Dummy ammunition can be used to test actions.

Dummy ammunition consists of a normal projectile and case but the case is empty. There is no propellant powder and no primer in it.

Blank ammunition is quite different. A blank round has a small charge of propellant and a primer and will fire, making a loud bang but not firing a projectile. Be warned, however, that it is dangerous to fire a blank cartridge near, or at, any person.

Although there is no bullet, a wad is often discharged. People have been killed through being struck by the wad from a blank cartridge.

Rule 4: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

- Your target must be positively identified before firing; if in doubt, don't shoot.
- Never fire until you are absolutely certain.

Do not fire at movement only

Do not fire at colour only

Do not fire at sound only

Do not fire at shape only

When a hunter is keyed up and possibly fatigued, perception can play tricks. It is possible to think you "see" what you expected

to see. Objects — even people — may look like game animals.

You may not know of other hunters nearby. They may make noises imitating the calls of game. Even the definite sight of skin and antlers is not positive enough — hunters have been shot while carrying a deer.

In the early morning or late evening it is not easy to see because of dim light. Be sure you have clearly identified your target before you shoot. Keep your finger away from the trigger

until you are absolutely certain it is safe to fire. Bright coloured gear is easily seen against the bush, but don't expect bright clothing and equipment to save you from danger if another hunter does not properly identify their target.

Telescopic sights and binoculars help you to identify your target. When using them, however, beware of the "tunnel vision" effect of the telescope, which limits your view to each side. Sweep the telescope or binoculars from side to side to ensure no person is close to your field of fire.



Positively identify your target. Other hunters may be wearing clothing which blends with the surroundings. Do not fire at movement. Do not fire at colour. Do not fire at shape. Do not fire at sound.

Rule 5: CHECK YOUR FIRING ZONE

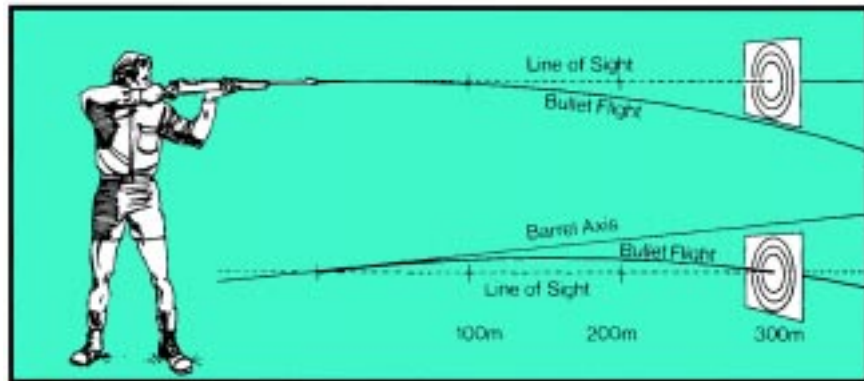
THINK! What could happen if you miss your target?

You must think about what you could hit in the area between you and your target and in the area beyond your target. Extreme range for projectiles may be as much as:

.22 rimfire	1.5 kilometres
.308 calibre	4.5 kilometres
Airgun	up to 400 metres
Shotgun	from 250 metres to 750 metres depending on the type of cartridge.

A charge of shot from a shotgun has a wide spread, particularly at longer ranges.

When shooting near thick bush or scrub extra care should be taken because you may not be able to see all of your firing zone.



A bullet begins dropping from the moment it leaves the barrel, so if your sights are just lined up with the barrel the bullet will drop below where you are sighting.

Ricochets can be caused by any flat or hard surfaces, rocks, snow, trees and even water! Be especially careful in rocky river beds.

Bear in mind that when you follow a moving target with your firearm your firing zone changes rapidly. Be sure of the position of other hunters so that, as you swing the muzzle around in an arc, they are not caught in the path between your firearm and the target, or even beyond the target. This applies particularly when shooting with shotguns. Duck shooters sharing a maimai can drive vertical poles into the ground to prevent an over-swing endangering a companion.

If you are using telescopic sights you are able to see much further, but your vision to each side is much narrower. As a result there is a greater danger of persons moving into your firing zone without you noticing.

Do not shoot at night unless you are absolutely certain it is safe to do so. Obviously, shooting at night is dangerous because you cannot see all of your firing zone. Remember that a spotlight lights up only a small part of the firing zone and only a fraction of the projectile's range. It is forbidden to shoot during the hours of darkness in any State forest, forest park, or national park: a permit can be obtained for shooting in the day time only.

It is unsafe to fire at an animal on the skyline



If you are firing a shotgun, be aware of the spread of the shot which may endanger something other than the target.



Setting of Sights

It is important for sights to be correctly set; if not, rounds may fall short or go far beyond the target. Sights should be adjusted for distances suitable for the calibre and intended use.

The following points need careful thought:

- Never fire when companions are ahead of you.
- Never shoot when stock, human activity or buildings are around.
- It is unsafe to shoot at a target on the skyline. Remember that many hunting areas have rural and urban developments close by.
- Night shooting is dangerous, especially if using telescopic sights. Spotlights light up only a small part of the firing zone.
- Use extra care when shooting at a moving target, particularly with telescopic sights, because your field of view is limited.

A hard, flat surface, stones or water, may cause a ricochet.



Beware of endangering anyone as you swing your firearm to cover moving game. Poles driven into the ground at a maimai keep these duck shooters firing over a safe sector.

Rule 6: STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SAFELY

When not in use, lock away the unloaded firearm and ammunition separately.

A complete firearm may be dangerous in the wrong hands. If the bolt and ammunition are removed and stored separately, the firearm can not be fired. So think when putting your firearm away. You must have a safe place to store your firearms.

Children have been killed or injured because firearms were not unloaded and locked away safely in the home. Firearms locked away out of sight will also help prevent removal by thieves.

- Make sure that both the chamber and the magazine are empty.
- Remove the bolt and magazine where possible. Lock these away separately from the firearm.
- Clean and oil the firearm before storing it.
- For lever, pump or semi-automatic firearms, you may not be able to remove the action. Break-open types can be dismantled. Trigger-locking devices are recommended for firearms which can not be taken apart.



While children should not handle a firearm except under the supervision of a firearms licence holder it can ease their curiosity to show them your firearm and explain that it must never be touched except when you are there.



Ammunition should be stored separately under lock and key.

- On the other hand, letting children handle firearms when you are supervising them may help to satisfy their natural curiosity. It is essential that children realise that real firearms are not playthings and must be treated with respect.

When you intend to use your firearm in the field or on a shooting range, check that:

- it is not loaded
- the barrel is not blocked
- the grease and oil is removed from the barrel and action
- the ammunition is correct for the firearm.

Rule 7: AVOID ALCOHOL OR DRUGS WHEN HANDLING FIREARMS

- Alcohol and some drugs even if prescribed, dull and slow your mental and physical reactions. This is very dangerous because you must be able to think clearly when using firearms.
- Alcohol and drugs must never be taken just before you go shooting, while you are shooting, or until your firearm has been put safely away.
- Don't shoot with others who are, or have been, drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

RANGE SAFETY RULES

1. All persons on a range must obey the instructions of the Range Officer immediately and without argument.
 2. Firearms must be handled very carefully and be stored or carried with the actions open at all times.
 3. You must not handle other persons' firearms and ammunition without their permission, except when a Range Officer or other responsible official thinks they have been left in a dangerous manner or position and directs you to shift them.
 4. All firearms used on a range must be in good mechanical condition.
 5. Firearms may be loaded only on the Range Officer's instructions, and every shooter must make sure that the muzzle of his firearm is pointed in a safe direction at all times.
 6. Only the group actually shooting may be on the firing point, and all must remain there until released by the Range Officer.
 7. If a red flag is raised from the butts, or if the Range Officer gives the command "Cease Fire", all firing must stop immediately. All shooters must extract cartridges from the chamber and leave all bolts and actions open.
 8. Shooters must make sure that no cartridges are left in the firearm when they've finished firing. The Range Officer must inspect each firearm to check complete unloading before releasing the shooters from the firing point. Special rules apply to muzzle-loader shooting.
 9. Any breach of the safety rules, or unsafe firearm condition, must be reported to the Range Officer.
 10. No shooter may fire on the range while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 11. Safety glasses and ear protectors should be worn.
 12. Visitors and children must be closely supervised on ranges.
- On a rifle range there are strict rules and a range officer is in charge. In the hunting situation you are not under such control. Even so, accidents should never happen. If every member of a hunting party took notice of the basic firearms safety code, especially Rule 2, "Always point firearms in a safe direction," shooting mishaps should not be possible.

CROSSING FENCES

Injuries and deaths have occurred when shooters have tried to get over or through fences and over obstacles with loaded firearms. Use a gate if there is one.

- If two or more people are together, one should climb over the fence without a

firearm. The unloaded firearms are then passed across with the actions open, and pointed in a safe direction.

- If you are on your own, unload the firearm and place it through the fence muzzle first and lay it down before climbing over. Never

climb a fence while carrying a firearm. Lay it on the ground, then climb over the fence. Take special care when crossing electric fences. An electric shock can cause your muscles to contract, and your hands to clench. It is important to have your firearm unloaded and the action open before you get near an electric fence.



If you need to cross a fence with a firearm, unload and pass the empty and open firearm under the fence before getting over the fence yourself.

Don't try to jump ditches and streams, or to cross on slippery rocks. Walk through streams if carrying a firearm.

Be careful when going along riverbeds or dry creek-beds as they are often slippery or icy. Don't let all your attention be taken up in trying to sight game. Watch your step.

In heavy rain or snow, to prevent water getting into the barrel, keep the muzzle pointed down,

but watch that it does not come into contact with the ground as it may become blocked.

A small square of insulation tape or masking tape over the muzzle is useful for keeping snow and mud out of the barrel, but never insert a plug of cloth or other material into the barrel.

STUMBLING IN ROUGH COUNTRY

If you fall or stumble when carrying a firearm, your first and most important responsibility is to make sure the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. Then make sure the barrel is not blocked.

It is vitally important that the barrel is kept free from any obstruction at all times.

- If you fall and the muzzle touches the ground, **always stop and check** for any signs of blockage. Try to carry your firearm in such a way that you can control the direction of the muzzle should you stumble and fall.
- Every time your firearm misfires, check the barrel in case a bullet is stuck in it.
- Never "plug" the barrel with cloth or other material as a way of preventing entry from twigs, dirt, mud or water. A small piece of sticky tape across the barrel is, however, an acceptable way of keeping rubbish **out**.
- When hunting in heavy scrub, make sure twigs and other things do not get into the barrel.
- If you have a firearm action with an exposed hammer be especially careful that the hammer is not cocked accidentally by brushing through scrub.

USE OF HALF-OPEN BOLT OR ACTION IN A STATE OF SEMI-READINESS

(Shotguns and rifles except semi-automatic)

The state of “semi-readiness” can be taken up when you have seen game or expect to flush it at any moment. You should hold the firearm in both hands, with a cartridge pushed partly forward into the chamber.

Do not close the action unless you know you will have time to make a safe shot. If you do close the action but then decide not to take a shot, go back to the “semi-ready” state with a half-open action.

A “break open” shotgun can be carried in the hinged open position with cartridges in the chambers. This is semi-ready with a shotgun. The gun is safe while open and it can be closed and fired quickly and easily if there is the chance of a shot.

Only the leader of a hunting party or group should be in a state of semi-readiness. If the chance for a shot does not come remember to open the gun again.

Unfortunately the semi-ready condition with half-open bolt is not always practical. Unless the bolt is held with the thumb it may tend to slide backwards and eject the round completely. In such a case the bolt is best left closed on an empty chamber. When you expect to take a shot a round may be loaded into the chamber and the firearm carried firmly in both hands to control muzzle direction. Only the leader may take up the ready-to-fire position and if the opportunity for a shot passes, the firearm should be unloaded again.

USE OF A PRE-TESTED SAFETY CATCH FOR SEMI-AUTOMATIC SHOTGUNS AND RIFLES

It is not possible to use a half-opened bolt with Semi-Automatic Rifles and Shotguns, so it is recommended that when you have seen game, or expect to flush game at any moment, you load the firearm and put the pre-tested safety catch on. If you release the safety catch but decide not to shoot, then put the safety catch back on. Keep the muzzle pointing in a safe direction, and unload the chamber as soon as it is clear there will be no opportunity for a shot.

If you have a semi-automatic rifle or shotgun you should test the safety catch with no ammunition in the action before relying on it.

Better still, have it checked and tested by a competent gunsmith. If testing it yourself, be sure there is no ammunition in the firearm and that you are pointing the muzzle in a safe direction. Cock the action, apply the safety catch and check the firearm can not be fired by pulling the trigger a number of times, by bumping the firearm, or by releasing the safety catch after these activities. If you have any doubt about a safety catch, do not trust it, take it to a gunsmith.

As mentioned before the use of a safety catch alone is strongly discouraged and should only supplement good firearms handling.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR MUZZLE LOADING FIREARMS

Before loading a muzzle loading firearm check that it is not already loaded.

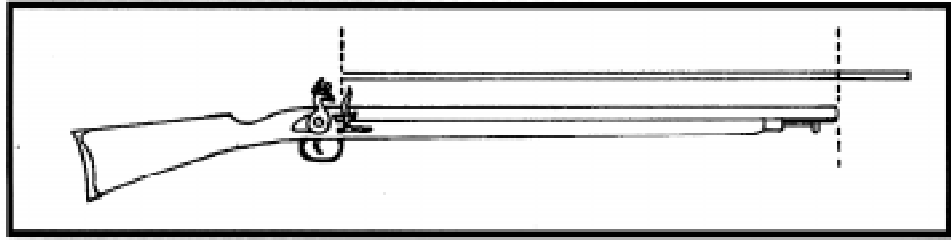
A simple way to ensure there is nothing already down the barrel is to put a ramrod or wooden dowel down the bore. When it will go no further, mark the dowel at the muzzle.

Remove the dowel and position it on the outside of the barrel with the mark at the muzzle. The dowel should almost reach to the flash hole.

If the dowel does not, the firearm may be loaded and dangerous. In any case you will not

be able to safely load and fire it. Take it to a gunsmith.

This way of checking that the firearm is empty applies to all muzzle loading firearms.



A simple way to check safely that a muzzle loading firearm is not loaded.

If the barrel is clean and you are sure it is empty and the flash hole clear, a recommended measure of black powder can be poured down the barrel. A suitable bullet or ball and patch can then be pushed down the bore. Note that only black powder or its modern equivalent pyrodex may be used with safety. Powder made for modern firearms must not be used or mixed.

Often a short “starter” rod is used to start the projectile down the bore. After that the ramrod should be used to push the projectile firmly against the charge. There should be no gap between projectile and charge.

When loading, you must be careful not to double up the powder charge and not to insert more than one projectile.

After priming the flash pan or fitting a percussion cap, the firearm may be fired, taking care to hold your aim until it discharges. Under some conditions, such as a damp atmosphere, there can be a delay before the projectile is fired because the charge may not ignite immediately. This is known as a “hang fire” and you must hold your aim for several seconds until the discharge takes place. If the

firearm fails to discharge, (after ten seconds), taking care to keep the muzzle in a safe direction you can clear the flash hole, re-prime, or cap and attempt again to fire.

When reloading, there is a danger that a glowing ember from the recently fired black powder may remain in the barrel. Use a damp patch to clean the bore and hold the muzzle away from the direction of your face and body while pouring a charge down the barrel.

Do not pour powder in from a bulk powder container. A suitable separate powder measure should be used, again because of the danger of ignition from a glowing ember in the barrel. Pour from bulk container to measure, then from measure to muzzle.

Once such a firearm has been loaded it is important to see that it is fired, or the charge and projectile removed to ensure it is not double loaded later. It is quite easy, and quite dangerous, to double load a muzzle loading firearm.

If in doubt seek advice from a Black Powder shooting club, or NZ Black Powder Shooters Federation, or a gunsmith.

WHERE AND WHEN YOU MAY USE FIREARMS

Anyone who is keen to get a firearm and do some shooting should think about when and where the firearm can be used.

A .22 rimfire rifle has been the traditional first rifle of many New Zealanders. It was spoken of as a “pea rifle” and regarded as a safe and inexpensive firearm for a young person. Many young people still choose a .22 rimfire rifle for their first firearm.

A .22 rimfire rifle can be just as deadly as any

other firearm. It must be handled with all the respect and care every firearm needs.

One place where it can be used is at a rifle range, either indoor or outdoor. The only other place is on private property, with the owner’s permission. The .22 rimfire rifle is not generally permitted on any land managed by the Department of Conservation which includes conservation parks and national parks.

In general, shotguns are also forbidden in State forests. The reason for these restrictions is that while shotguns and .22 rimfire rifles are suitable for some of the game in the forest such as rabbits, hares or possums, they could also be used to kill birds.

A shotgun is the only firearm suitable for shooting at birds on the wing. Firing a rifle in the air carries the danger of some person or property being struck when the bullet falls back to earth. Shotgun pellets fall back to earth too, but they do not travel so far and are much lighter, so they are less likely to endanger someone when they fall.

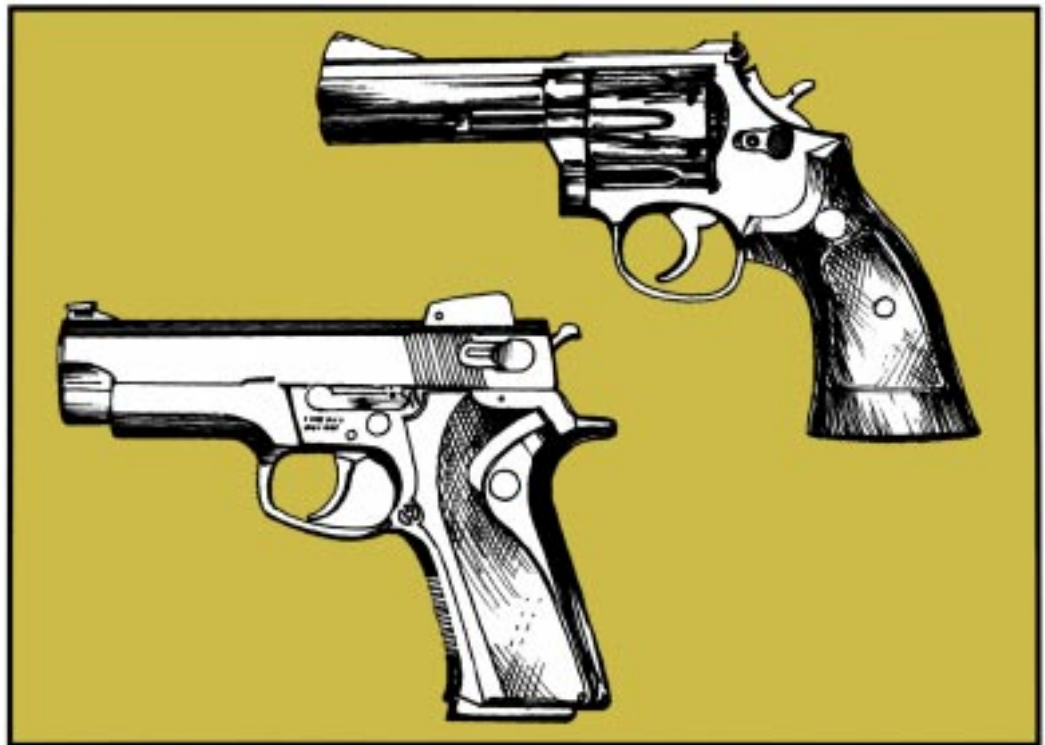
Besides being used for fast-moving game on the ground or in the air, the shotgun is also used for competitive shooting at clay targets.

Centrefire rifles in various calibres are suitable for a whole range of game and target shooting. There is such a variety of calibre, projectile type and weight, however, that no single firearm or cartridge is suitable for every purpose. It is important, therefore, to think about where you can use your firearm before buying one. If you have any doubt, ask someone who is involved in that sport. Often the Police, sports goods retailers or a Mountain Safety Council instructor will be able to help.

PISTOL SHOOTING

If you wish to fire pistols you are required by law to belong to a recognised pistol club and may use the pistols only on an approved range. You will be required to shoot regularly with the club for six months before the club will make a recommendation to the Police that you should receive the B endorsement entitling you to have a pistol of your own. You will then need to obtain a special permit, known as a “permit to procure”, from the Police so you can buy a pistol.

The Arms Officer will need to be satisfied with the security of your firearms storage at home before you will be allowed to keep the pistol there, and you will be permitted only to take



“Pistol” means any firearm that is designed or adapted to be held and fired with one hand; and includes any firearm that is less than 762 millimetres in length.

the pistol from home to the pistol club’s range or to a gunsmith or dealer.

To retain your B endorsement you must continue to participate actively in the affairs of the club at least 12 times a year.

COLLECTORS

By obtaining a C type endorsement to your firearms licence you will be entitled to purchase and keep a wide range of collectable firearms and restricted weapons. You will need a “permit to procure” for each of these firearms before it may be purchased. Permits to import

or procure will be approved only if the items sought will in some way enhance your collection.

Extra special security is required for C endorsement.

WHERE TO GET HELP

With all firearms pursuits there is a good case in favour of getting involved with an appropriate club. Whether your interest is in collecting firearms, in target shooting, in hunting or in collecting antique firearms, it will be to your advantage to belong to a club catering for your particular interest. The members of these clubs are enthusiasts who can pass on valuable

information. The Police Arms Officer or the Mountain Safety Council, or local firearms dealers, can give you lists of clubs in all the firearms pursuits.

Another source of valuable information, advice and practical help is a qualified gunsmith. Even when brand new your firearm may need telescopic sights or other modifications.

MECHANICAL FITNESS OF FIREARMS

It is dangerous to tamper with your firearms. Take your firearm to a competent gunsmith even for what appear to be minor repairs or adjustments. A gunsmith has the equipment and skill to check these important items:

1. Headspace (the distance between the base of chambered cartridge and the face of the bolt).
2. Firing pin protrusion and shape (affecting safe, reliable firing).
3. Tightness of action and stock (affecting accuracy).
4. Condition of barrel and chamber (important for safety as well as accuracy).
5. General condition of firearm, including action and stock.
6. Safety catch (especially important for semi-automatic shotguns and rifles).
7. Trigger pull (vital for both safety and accurate shooting).

It is recommended that the weight of trigger pull should be not less than the following:

<i>Type of firearm pull</i>	<i>Minimum trigger</i>
.22 rimfire rifle	1.5kg
Centrefire sporting rifle	1.5kg
Single-trigger shotguns	1.5kg
Double-trigger shotguns	1.5kg first trigger and 1.8kg second trigger
Target rifles	As regulated by competition rules
Set triggers	Follow manufacturers' recommendations

Semi-automatic firearms often require a heavier pull than conventional firearms and the manufacturer's recommendations should be strictly adhered to.

Warning:

DO NOT exchange bolts, bolt heads or other action parts. These must be fitted by a competent gunsmith.

EXPORTING AND IMPORTING

If you wish to send or take any pistol, M.S.S.A. or restricted weapon out of the country you must let the Police know at least four days in advance.

You should obtain a certificate of export from the Customs Department so you can show on your return that the firearms have not been bought overseas.

You can obtain the certificate at any Customs office a few days before departure or at the airport of departure. If you are seeking the certificate at the airport allow yourself sufficient time for these formalities.

You must have an import permit for all firearms on return from overseas. You must get this permit from the Police before you leave.

Some countries will not allow you to enter with firearms, so before you leave home check the law of the country involved by contacting that country's embassy.

If you wish to buy a firearm (or any parts) overseas and bring or send them to New Zealand you must contact a Police Arms Officer to see whether the firearm (or parts) is approved for import. You will also need to apply for an import permit. If you do not have a permit to import from the Police and the firearm (or parts) is not approved for import you risk prosecution and you will be required to send the firearm or parts out of the country or surrender them unconditionally to the Police.

NEVER WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

Firearms should be kept right out of the way when liquor is consumed. It may be your choice to have a few relaxing drinks after a day's shooting, but all firearms should be cleaned and put away safely before taking a single sip.

Duck shooting is an occasion when some people will have a drink, often spirits, while shooting. The reason often given for this to keep warm while waiting for the ducks to appear. It is a mistake that has led to several deaths.

Alcohol slows reactions and dulls perceptions but makes the drinker feel that his performance is improving.

When the weather is cold (as it often is during the duck shooting season) alcohol causes dilating of the blood vessels near the body's surface, making the drinker feel temporarily warmer yet actually chilling the body, a phenomenon which has led even to death by exposure.

DO'S AND DON'TS WITH FIREARMS

Most accidents could have been prevented if the do's and don'ts of firearms use, outlined below, had been observed.

DO'S

- Do point the muzzle in a safe direction, whether the firearm is loaded or unloaded.
- Do treat every firearm as being loaded. Check every firearm yourself. Pass or accept only open and unloaded firearms.
- Do identify your target and check that you have a clear field of fire.
- Do protect your hearing with proper muffs or ear plugs and protect your eyes with safety glasses when shooting.
- Do make sure there is nothing obstructing the barrel of your firearm before you fire.
- Do completely unload before you leave the shooting area.
- Do get permission before shooting on any land, be it Crown, local body or privately owned. Someone else may be shooting there at the same time that you are.

- Do lock the unloaded firearm, the bolt and the ammunition away separately when storing the firearm. The ammunition should be kept in a dry place away from children. Lock firearms away out of sight.
- Do have your eyesight checked. Shooting requires good vision for target identification and accuracy.
- Do have your firearm checked periodically by a gunsmith who knows about the firearm you own.

DON'TS

The ownership or possession of a firearm for the purposes of self-defence is NOT RECOMMENDED.

BE WARNED, the use of a firearm to protect yourself from another person will, in most situations, involve the excessive use of force. Serious injury or death to the other person yourself or is likely to result.

You could be criminally responsible for any excessive use of force and your actions the subject of a police investigation. You may well face serious criminal charges.

Remember that you will also be criminally responsible should you make a mistake and harm the wrong person.

What to do

If you need advice on how to defend yourself contact your local police. They will be able to offer good sensible suggestions as to what you should do. More importantly they will also be able to advise on how to prevent putting yourself in the situation where you may need to defend yourself.

- Don't point a firearm at anyone, yourself included.

- Don't leave firearms loaded.
- Don't load the magazine until you reach your shooting area.
- Don't drink alcohol and don't go shooting with anyone who has been drinking. If on medication, be sure the drugs you take do not affect your mental and physical reactions.
- Don't shoot when in doubt, and:
 - Never at movement only.
 - Never at colour only.
 - Never at sound only.
 - Never at shape only.
 - Never at a target on the skyline.
 - Never when companions are ahead of you.
- Don't lean firearms against a vehicle or wall where they could accidentally fall.
- Don't close the action on a live round until ready to make a safe shot.
- Don't rely on safety catches. They are subject to wear and tear and may not work properly.
- Don't cross a fence without unloading the firearm.
- Don't try to jump a stream or cross on slippery rocks when carrying firearms. Walk through the stream.
- Don't daydream. Concentrate on what you are doing when you handle firearms.
- Don't ignore careless or unsafe behaviour with firearms. Explain what the dangers are and give advice on safety. (Careless use of a firearm is an offence.)

OFFENCES WITH FIREARMS

There are many provisions of the Arms Act which place obligations on firearms owners and users, and can lead to prosecution if contravened. Most of these provisions are common sense but if you are in any doubt, or require more information, you should contact a solicitor, the Police, or obtain a copy of the Arms Act and Regulations.

Listed below in general terms are some of the offences.

- Using or possessing a firearm without either being licensed or under the direct supervision of the holder of a firearms licence.
- Being in possession of firearm or airgun after revocation of firearms licence.
- Being in possession of a pistol, restricted weapon or MSSA without the proper endorsement.
- Failing to produce a firearms licence when required by Police.
- Carrying or possessing a firearm without a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose.
- Carrying an imitation firearm without a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose.
- Carrying a pistol or restricted weapon without approval from the Police.
- Carrying a firearm, airgun, imitation firearm or ammunition with criminal intent.
- Pointing any firearm whether loaded or not at any person.
- Careless use of a firearm, airgun, pistol or restricted weapon.
- Discharging a firearm, airgun, pistol or restricted weapon in or near a dwelling house or public place so as to endanger property or to endanger, annoy or frighten any person.
- Being in charge of a firearm or airgun while under the influence of drink or drugs.
- Carrying a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle in any place to which members of the public have a right of access.
- Altering any firearm so that its total length is less than 762 mm.
- Using or attempting to use a firearm with criminal intent or in the commission of a crime.
- Selling or supplying a firearm or ammunition to someone without a licence.
- Supplying an airgun to a person under 18 years of age (unless that person is licensed).
- Supplying a pistol, restricted weapon or M.S.S.A. to someone who does not have a permit to procure.
- Selling firearms or ammunition by mail order sale without a written order signed by the purchaser and bearing the endorsement signed by the Police.
- Importing a firearm or parts without first obtaining a permit from the Police.
- Not advising the Police when a firearm is lost, stolen or destroyed.
- Tampering with or altering the details of any firearms licence.
- Failing to surrender firearms if licence revoked.
- Failing to give four days notice of intention to remove a pistol, M.S.S.A. or restricted weapon from New Zealand.
- Failing to notify police of change of address for firearms licence.
- Failing to report injuries caused by firearms.

DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF FIREARMS OWNERS/USERS

The Arms laws require that you:

PRODUCE YOUR LICENCE WHEN REQUIRED TO DO SO BY A MEMBER OF POLICE.

If you don't have your licence with you when asked, you may be given 7 days in which to produce it to the Police.

NOTIFY THE POLICE IN WRITING WITHIN 30 DAYS OF A CHANGE IN YOUR RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

Forms for this purpose are included in the Arms Code.

NOTIFY THE POLICE WHENEVER ANY FIREARM YOU OWN IS LOST OR STOLEN.

You should record the make, model and serial number of your firearms.

GIVE YOUR FULL NAME, ADDRESS AND DATE OF BIRTH IF REQUESTED BY THE POLICE WHEN YOU ARE FOUND IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM (INCLUDING AN AIRGUN).

Refusal to give these details, or giving false details, can lead to arrest.

ENSURE THAT ANY PERSON TO WHOM YOU SELL A FIREARM OR AMMUNITION IS THE HOLDER OF A FIREARMS LICENCE.

Persons aged 16 or 17 require a licence to buy or use an airgun. Persons buying pistols, restricted weapons or M.S.S.A.'s also require a permit to procure issued by the Police.

REPORT ANY INJURY, INCLUDING DEATH, CAUSED BY A FIREARM, AIRGUN, PISTOL OR RESTRICTED WEAPON

Report must be made in person as soon as possible, at any Police Station or to a member of Police.

FURTHER READING:

More information on firearms, cartridges, shooting techniques, sights and sighting, firearm care and maintenance is presented in the Firearm Handbook available from the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council. The Firearm Handbook also lists a number of other useful books for the shooter.