

CHANGES TO NEW ZEALAND FIREARM LAWS

As a result of the Arms Legislation Act 2020, passed in June this year, there have been significant changes to the law relating to firearms in New Zealand. These changes are far reaching and will be implemented in stages over the next three years as Police develop policies for the administration.

The immediate changes are:

A small group of firearms has been added to the definition of prohibited firearm, (it is anticipated that there will be a buy-back scheme for these) including:

i. Short semi-automatic firearms (for example, because they have a short barrel or have a folding stock). This prohibition does not apply to collectors, curators of museums or employees of film companies. "Small semi-automatic pistols" are excluded so that pistols commonly used for target pistol shooting disciplines are not prohibited; and

II. Centrefire pump-action rifles which are capable of being used with a detachable magazine or that have 1 or more non-detachable magazines capable of holding more than 10 cartridges.

iii. Any firearm containing a centrefire lower receiver that is capable of functioning.

- The duration of a firearms licence for first-time firearms licence applicants will be for five years, rather than 10 years. This will also be the case if you are applying after your previously held licence expires, or is revoked or surrendered. Otherwise the duration of a firearms licence remains at 10 years.
- Endorsements granted for controlling wild animal or animal pests will have a changed duration and will need to be renewed before the firearms licence does.
- Requiring an endorsed firearms or dealer's licence enabling the person to possess a pistol in order to lawfully possess a pistol carbine conversion kit (which converts a pistol into a shoulder-fired firearm).
- Additional regulation-making powers have been included to enable the Governor General to make regulations specifying the security requirements for pistol carbine conversion kits, and for ammunition sellers.
- Import permits will now be required to import ammunition, pistol carbine conversion kits, air pistol carbine conversion kits and all blank-firing firearms.
- Changes to the penalties for many offences, eg the penalty for possessing a non-prohibited firearm without a firearms licence is now up to 1 year imprisonment or a fine up to \$15,000.
- A Minister's arms advisory group to be established with members from the firearm-owning and non-firearm-owning community.
- Those who come to New Zealand who are issued a licence for up to a year (a 'Visitors' licence) will no longer be able to purchase firearms for possession or use in New Zealand. Those with a 'Visitors' licence can import their own firearm, lease, hire or borrow a firearm, or purchase a firearm for immediate export.

More information will be added as it becomes available, the new law and regulations are extremely complex.