



***Secure Storage
Requirements for
Firearms Licence
Holders***

***New Zealand Firearms Licence
Secure Storage Requirements:
Police Policy and Practice
January 2018***



This Policy and Practice Policy is maintained by the Arms Act Service Delivery Group of the New Zealand Police.

Contents

To be finalised

Storing Firearms Safely

Purpose

All firearms licences are subject to conditions requiring safe and secure storage of firearms. There are additional conditions that apply to endorsement holders in relation to pistols, restricted weapons and military style semi-automatic firearms (MSSAs).

This document has been created to assist firearms licence and endorsement applicants by providing guidance on how the security conditions might be met and to facilitate national consistency.

Regulatory Context

The purposes of the Arms Act 1983 (the Act) include promotion of the safe use and control of firearms and other weapons. Secure firearms storage is an important tool in delivering on both these objectives by preventing firearms from falling into the wrong hands or used criminally.

Every firearms licence is subject to the conditions relating to security precautions set out in Regulation 19 of the Arms Regulations 1992 (the Regulations).

It is also a condition of every endorsement in respect of a pistol, MSSA or restricted weapon that the licence holder observes the more stringent security precautions in regulation 28.¹

Regulations 19 and 28 are set out at the end of this document.

Checks on the Storage of Firearms

Police approval of an individual's security is decided on a case by case basis following inspection.

Police will arrange a mutually convenient time to review firearms security if:

- You have applied for a firearms licence (including if you have previously held a firearms licence).
- You are already the holder of a firearms licence and have notified Police that you have changed address.
- You have applied for an endorsement to possess a pistol, MSSA or restricted weapon.
- You are already an endorsement holder.

Police will discuss any weaknesses identified in the security and options for improvement with the individual and, if necessary, arrange a time to do a further check.

Police may also ask to check firearms security following an event that requires reassessment of a licence holder's continued suitability to hold a firearms licence.

¹ Sections 32 and 33A of the Act.

Police Employee Performing Inspections

Licensing interviews and secure storage checks are carried out by a Police employee who will show you a Police issued identity card.

Assessment of Secure Storage

Regulation 19(1) provides that all firearms licences are subject to the following conditions:

(1) Every firearms licence shall be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the holder shall not put a firearm in such a place that a young child has ready access to it:
- (b) the holder, where he or she has both a firearm and ammunition for it in his or her possession, either—
 - (i) shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the ammunition is not stored in such a way that a person who obtains access to the firearm also obtains access to the ammunition; or
 - (ii) shall ensure that, where the ammunition is stored with the firearm, the firearm is not capable of being discharged:
- (c) the holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that any firearm in the holder's possession is secured against theft:
- (d) the holder shall, where he or she has possession of a firearm that is—
 - (i) a flare pistol; or
 - (ii) a humane killer; or
 - (iii) a stock marking pistol,—keep it in a locked container, except where it is under the holder's immediate and personal supervision.

The Police will assess storage against the three matters covered in regulation 19(1) which are:

- Ensuring that young children do not have ready access to the firearms.
- Preventing theft of the firearms.
- Ensuring that ammunition is not stored with the firearm; or that if ammunition is stored with the firearm, the firearm is not capable of being discharged.

For example, Police will look at the materials used, method of construction (including locks, doors and hinges) and how the storage rack, safe, box or cabinet is anchored to the premises.

SECURITY FOR “A” CATEGORY (NON-ENDORSED) FIREARMS

Regulation 19(2) requires licence holders to take reasonable steps to ensure that their firearms are secured against theft. For firearms that do not require an endorsement, those reasonable steps relevant to storage of A category firearms include:

- (a) keeping on the holder's premises –
 - (i) a lockable cabinet, container, or receptacle of stout construction in which firearms may be stored; or
 - (ii) a lockable steel and concrete strongroom in which firearms may be stored; or
 - (iii) a display cabinet or rack in which firearms may be immobilised and locked so that none of them may be fired; and
- (b) keeping locked or immobilised and locked in the cabinet, container, receptacle, display cabinet, or rack required by paragraph (a) every firearm which is on the holder's premises and which is not under immediate and personal supervision of the holder or some other holder of a firearms licence.

The following recommendations for:

- cabinets, containers or receptacles of stout construction; and
- display cabinets or racks

provide a good standard of security, but do not exclude other methods which the applicant can demonstrate to the Police undertaking the security check that they are of a similar or higher standard.

Lockable Cabinets, Containers or Receptacles

The lockable cabinet, container, or receptacle must be of “stout construction²” – substantial and sturdily constructed.

Wooden cabinets, containers or receptacles

For wooden cabinets, Police recommend the following:

- The cabinet and door are constructed of a minimum of 16mm plywood.
- All joints are glued and secured with appropriate strength screws. Screw heads must be secured so that the screws cannot be removed.
- A sturdy hinging system such as a ‘piano’ hinge (continuous hinge installed inside the cabinet) that is constructed with at least a 3mm hinge pin.
- A locking system that is compatible with the overall strength of the cabinet. If a ‘Hasp and Staple’ is used, then these are to be of the type known as ‘Security Hasp and Staple’. This locking system (and all fittings) are to be bolted through the cabinet and not screwed.
- The cabinet is secured to at least two surrounding surfaces to prevent firearms being stolen by removal of the whole cabinet. The cabinet is fixed to the building on two surfaces with at least 6 mm fasteners and fastened to a rigid surface or support such as concrete, brick or through plaster board to a stud or dwang. Fasteners of 6mm x 75mm long will ensure at least 50mm of thread is engaged in the rigid support. Use heavy gauge ‘coach’ screws anchored by at least 50mm and a large washer placed under each coach screw head into the framing. If secured into concrete, use similar gauge chemical or expanding bolts.

² Regulation 19(2)(a)

Where the cabinet is fixed to a wooden floor it should be fixed completely through the floor. The bolts will require a stout backing plate or sufficiently large washers to prevent them from being pulled through the floor.

Examples of wooden cabinets:



Note: these cabinets are shown for examples of construction only. They would need to be appropriately secured to the premises.

Steel Cabinets, Containers or Receptacles

For steel cabinets, Police recommend the following:

- A continuous resting/bracing plate inside the doorframe to prevent the flexing of the walls and from the door being pushed in.
- Steel cabinets, containers and receptacles to have walls and a door of at least 3mm thick steel. If the cabinet, container or receptacle is constructed of steel less than 3mm, then bracing is added to provide equivalent strength. The bracing should be to such a level to stop the door of the body of the safe from twisting.
- A door which has an internal bracing frame of angle steel to prevent flexing or bending when closed. Alternatively, the door edge is continuously folded in such a way as to prevent flexing or bending when closed.
- The cabinet is fixed to the building on two surfaces with at least 6 mm fasteners and fastened to a rigid surface or support such as concrete, brick or through plaster board to a stud or dwang. Fasteners of 6mm x 75mm long will ensure at least 50mm of thread is engaged in the rigid support. Use heavy gauge 'coach' screws anchored by at least 50mm and a large washer placed under each coach screw head into the framing. If secured into concrete, use similar gauge chemical or expanding bolts. Floor fixing to a wooden floor to be completely through the floor. The bolts will have a stout backing plate or sufficiently large washers to prevent them from being pulled through the floor.
- Internal or protected hinges that are sturdily constructed of at least 3mm mild steel.
- Locks and hinges are located to prevent the door from being opened or bent using direct force or levers. If the risk can be minimised through other mechanical means then it will be considered by the Police employee.
- Cabinet seams are be welded or folded to prevent the cabinet being accessed using direct force or levers.

Example of steel cabinets



Racks

Racks should secure the firearm to prevent access by young children or theft. The firearms must be locked in the rack and be immobilised by, for example, using a trigger lock or by removing the bolt and securing the bolt elsewhere.

To ensure a rack complies, Police recommend the following:

- That the rack is made of steel.
- The rack should be fastened to the premises by a minimum of 6 mm screws or bolts to a rigid surface or support such as concrete, brick or through plaster board to a stud, rafter or dwang. Fasteners of 6mm x 75mm long will ensure at least 50mm of thread is engaged in the rigid support.
- The firearm placed on the rack should prevent access to the securing bolts / screws when it is locked in place or the bolts / screws should be of a type that prevents removal when fitted. For example, by using coach screws or welding the bolt or screw to prevent removal. This approach can prevent theft by the removal of the whole rack and firearm.
- There is a trigger locking mechanism locked in place or the firearm is otherwise immobilised in the rack.
- A security cable (of at least 6mm Stainless Steel and substantial padlock) should be used to lock the firearm to the rack.
- That the rack is hidden from sight and not easily detectable by someone unfamiliar with your property.

Example of a wall mounted gun rack:



Display Cabinet

The firearm needs to be able to be immobilised and locked in the display cabinet.

To ensure the display cabinet complies, Police recommend the following:

- The cabinet is lockable.
- The cabinet contains a lockable firearm rack or shielded cable (6mm Stainless Steel and substantial padlock) to secure the firearms.
- The cabinet is also affixed to the premises by a minimum of 6 mm x 75mm screws or bolts to a rigid surface or support such as concrete, brick or through plaster board to a stud, rafter or dwang. Fasteners of 6mm x 75mm long will ensure at least 50mm of thread is engaged in the rigid support.
- There is a trigger locking mechanism locked in place to immobilise the firearm or other mechanism for immobilising the firearm.

Ammunition

Licence holders need to take reasonable steps to ensure that ammunition is not stored in such a way that a person who obtains access to the firearm also obtains access to the ammunition.³

If ammunition is stored with the firearm then the firearm has to be stored in a way that it cannot be discharged.⁴ Methods of doing this include immobilising the firearm by way of a trigger lock, cable or other system to ensure that the firearm cannot be fired.

Ideally bolts and ammunition should be secured in a separate location from the firearms.

For additional security ideas please consider elements suggested for endorsed items in the section on general security of buildings.

³ Regulation 19(1)(b)(i).

⁴ Regulation 19(1)(b)(ii).

SECURITY FOR ENDORSED FIREARMS

Security requirements are more stringent for endorsed weapons.

Regulation 28 requires anyone lawfully entitled to possess a pistol, MSSA, or restricted weapon to ensure that the pistol, MSSA or restricted weapon is:

- a) Kept in a steel and concrete strong room
- b) Kept in a room of stout and secure construction; or
- c) Locked in a steel safe, steel box or steel cabinet.

Police approval of an individual's security is decided on a case by case basis following inspection.

Restricted weapons also need to be rendered inoperable (by removal of a vital part) and maintained in inoperable condition.⁵

Steel Safes, Boxes or Cabinets

A steel safe, steel box or steel cabinet must be:

- of sound construction;
- approved in writing by Police; and
- bolted or otherwise securely fixed (in a manner approved in writing by Police) to the building within which the pistol, MSSA or restricted weapon is kept.⁶

Ammunition cannot be kept with the pistol, MSSA or restricted weapon in the steel safe, steel box or steel cabinet.⁷

Police recommends:

- The steel safe, box or cabinet should be constructed from 6mm mild steel or its equivalent. The steel safe, box or the cabinet should be built and finished in a competent manner with negligible gaps between all fixed parts. If you propose to construct the safe, box or cabinet of a single plate dimension measuring less than 6 mm mild steel, you must provide evidence to Police, to demonstrate the material will perform to the same standard or exceed the level of 6mm mild steel.
- The steel safe, box or cabinet to have locking mechanism(s) of no less strength and security performance than a five lever mortise dead lock that engages the door with the frame at least at two or more points. If the door on a steel box is of a reduced size (for example, intended for pistols, only one locking mechanism may be sufficient. However the construction of the door is constructed in a way that prevents distortion due to a direct force or leverage.
- Any door handle fitted to be designed to break off under leverage. If the door handle is not designed to break off under leverage, the handle to operate the locking mechanism through a clutch system designed to slip before causing the lock to fail.
- A steel safe, box or cabinet to be bolted to a minimum of two surfaces, one of which must be the floor. Bolt shafts shall be a minimum of 10 mm in diameter and when bolted into concrete, expanding or chemical setting bolts may be used.
- Where the steel safe, box or cabinet is bolted to a wooden floor, it should be bolted through the floor to a 6mm mild steel plate (or equivalent), which exceeds the floor area of the cabinet and is

⁵ Section 32(1)(b).

⁶ Regulation 28(1)(c).

⁷ Regulation 28(2).

retained on at least two floor joists in the sub-floor space. All nuts should be on the inside of the cabinet with the bolts welded or burred to resist removal. Police recommend that the steel safe, box or cabinet be bolted into a confined space, such as a wardrobe or a cupboard.

Rooms of Stout and Secure Construction

For individuals intending to construct a room of stout and secure construction to secure endorsed weapons, early discussion with Police at the design stage is recommended to ensure that the room will be acceptable to Police.

The room must be:

- of stout and secure construction capable of being adequately secured against unlawful entry
- approved for the purpose by Police in writing; and
- which meets the following requirements:
 - i. the room is in structurally sound condition:
 - ii. the doors that give access to the room, and their locks, bolts, hinges, and other fastenings shall be in good condition:
 - iii. the windows, skylights, or other things intended to cover openings to the room, and their locks, bolts, hinges, and other fastenings shall be in good condition:
 - iv. the doors that give access to the room and the windows, skylights, and other things referred to in (iii) must be capable of being secured against unlawful entry.⁸

Police recommend the following additional security:

Doors

- Doors should be constructed of a material equal in security rating of 6 mm mild steel strength. For example, solid wood construction, no less than 40 mm thick, covered on the outside with a sheet of steel no less than 16 gauge/1.52mm thick (applied to fully cover the door and bent to afford fixing to all edge surfaces), or armour coated or laminated glass protected by substantial grilles or other shutter covering. The doors, where practicable, should be hung on the inside with three heavy duty hinges. Hinge security bolts must be fitted. Where doors are required to be hinged on the outside, componentry must be fitted or adapted to prevent the removal of hinge pins or component parts. Door framing should include a rebate and be of a substantial construction to resist splitting or forcing and fitted to prevent prising or stretching.

Locks

- A locking mechanism of no less strength and security performance than a five-lever mortise dead lock should be fitted to entry doors of the premises and the room. Where mechanisms other than mortise locks are used, internally operated drop bars or shooting bolt mechanisms retained by a lock to the same standard should be fitted. If padlocks are used, they should be of a key retaining variety of a high security rating with hardened steel closed shackles. Pad bars or hasp and staples with a similar high security rating to the padlock should be used with the padlock. Where closed shackle padlocks are not used, the mechanism should be completely shielded by being enclosed within a tunnel welded to the body of the door. In the case of double opening doors, penetrating bolts should be used on the top and bottom of the first leaf, or flush bolts should be fixed in the edge of the first leaf. The second leaf shall be securely locked, as described above.

⁸ Regulation 28(1)(b).

Walls, ceilings and floor structure

- The existing walls, ceiling and floor structure should be strengthened by internally fixed, substantially gauged steel mesh (1.97mm minimum) to the framing, or the addition of 16 mm construction ply or a panel product of similar security rating should be securely fixed through the existing lining to the frame. New structures should have a similar construction if framed, or of a similar resistance to attack if constructed of other materials.

Windows

- The Police does not accept the installation of louvre windows. All windows and skylights must be affixed with substantial steel grilles with a performance-rating equal to 19 mm mild steel rod erected at 127 mm centres, which incorporate welded cross ties, 305 mm apart to prevent spreading. The grille must be secured with coach bolts, burred or counter sunk to prevent removal, or secured with substantially gauged, one-way screws, commensurate with the gauge of the bars. Where there are other security measures that are of a high standard, such as where laminated or armour coated window glass are used, substantial steel grilles, as described above, may be dispensed with or substituted with lesser grilles, as agreed with police.

Alarms

The Police encourages the use of a monitored intruder alarm system. Such intruder warning devices should be monitored and audible, but other arrangements may be suitable, depending on the particular circumstance.

Steel and Concrete Strong Rooms

Regulation 28 requires that a steel and concrete strong room is of:

- of sound construction; and
- of a type approved in writing by a member of Police ⁹

If considering building a steel and concrete strong room:

- The steel or concrete strong room should be constructed in its entirety of no less than 100 mm concrete with a minimum strength of 20 MPa. The concrete shall incorporate 10 mm reinforcing steel rods set at 200 mm centres in two directions, or other equivalent reinforcing, such as steel, which should be lapped and tied with steel to the walls, floor and roof. Whenever concrete masonry blocks are used, they should be of a minimum of 140 mm thick reinforced with 10 mm steel in both directions at 400 mm centres. Reinforcing steel is to be lapped and tied at joints of the walls, floor and roof. All block cavities shall be fully grouted. The strong room door should be constructed of no less than 6 mm mild plate steel and of a comparable security performance to the walls, hung with heavy-duty hinges, where practicable, on the inside. Hinge security bolts should be fitted. Where doors are required to be hinged on the outside, the standard required is outlined above in relation to steel cabinet doors.
- Door framing should include a rebate and be of a substantial construction to resist splitting or forcing and fitted to prevent prising or stretching. Locking mechanisms should be of no less strength and security performance than a five lever mortise dead lock as outlined for safe doors above. Such locks may be keyed alike, though they should differ from other locks within the premises, and be fitted towards the top and the bottom of the door with steel strapping behind each lock.

⁹ Regulation 28(1)(c).

- Where mechanisms other than mortise locks are used, internally operated drop bars or shooting bolt mechanisms retained by a lock to the same standard should be fitted. If padlocks are used, they should be of a key retaining variety, of a high security rating, with hardened steel closed shackles. Pad bars or hasp and staples with a similar high security rating to the padlock should be used with the padlock. Where closed shackle padlocks are not used, the mechanism should be completely shielded by being enclosed within a tunnel, which is welded to the body of the door.

General Security of Building

The following are some additional suggestions for further precautions that could be taken in and around the premises where firearms are stored to reduce the risk of burglary:

- Locked gates at the entry of the property can restrict access; padlocking gates or doors that access the property is recommended.
- Having a dog able to roam in a fenced off area around your house.
- Placing your rack, safe, box or cabinet so it cannot be seen through a window or when the garage door is open.
- Locating a rack, safe, box or cabinet in a confined space, such as a cupboard or a wardrobe where it is difficult to access with tools.
- Locking access doors to the room where a cabinet, box or safe is located within a dwelling. This should be secured at all times when the premises are unoccupied. This may also apply to rooms where reloading or repairs are done, to prevent children accessing dangerous tools or components.
- Locking up specialised tools you own so they may not be used by thieves to breach your security container.
- Planting plants that prevent access to windows or fences, for example climbing roses.
- Letting trusted neighbours know when you are away and asking them to be vigilant for any persons that are seen near your property.
- The installation of security cameras that can be monitored remotely.

EXTRACTS ARMS REGULATIONS 1992 (SR 1992 / 346)

19 Conditions relating to security precautions

(1) Every firearms licence shall be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the holder shall not put a firearm in such a place that a young child has ready access to it:
- (b) the holder, where he or she has both a firearm and ammunition for it in his or her possession, either –
 - (i) shall take reasonable steps to ensure that the ammunition is not stored in such a way that a person who obtains access to the firearm also obtains access to the ammunition; or
 - (ii) shall ensure that, where the ammunition is stored with the firearm, the firearm is not capable of being discharged:
- (c) the holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that any firearm in the holder's possession is secured against theft:
- (d) the holder shall, where he or she has possession of a firearm that is –
 - (i) a flare pistol, or ; or
 - (ii) a humane killer; or
 - (iii) a stock marking pistol – keep it in a locked container, except where it is under the holder's immediate and personal supervision.

(2) On and after 1 July 1993 the reasonable steps required by subclause (1)(c) shall include–

- (a) keeping on the holder's premises –
 - (i) a lockable cabinet, container, or receptacle of stout construction in which firearms may be stored; or
 - (ii) a lockable steel and concrete strong room in which firearms may be stored; or
 - (iii) a display cabinet or rack in which firearms may be immobilised and locked so that none of them may be fired; and
- (b) keeping locked or immobilised and locked in the cabinet, container, receptacle, strong room, display cabinet, or rack required by paragraph (a) every firearm which is on the holder's premises and which is not under immediate and personal supervision of the holder or some other holder of a firearms licence; and
- (c) ensuring that no firearm in the holder's possession is left in a vehicle that is unattended.

28 Security precautions in relation to pistols, military style semi-automatic firearms, and restricted weapons

(1) Every person who is lawfully entitled to possession of a pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon other than an air pistol by virtue of a permit under section 18 of the Act or a firearms licence endorsed under section 30 or section 30B of the Act shall ensure that, except when the pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon is in his or her immediate physical possession or is being used, in accordance with section 31 of the Act, for the purpose of making a broadcast or producing or staging a play or filming a cinematic production or television film or is in the custody of a licensed dealer or a member of the Police, it is –

- (a) kept in a steel and concrete strong room of sound construction and of a type approved for the time being in writing either generally or in the particular case by a member of the Police; or
 - (b) kept in a room of stout and secure construction capable of being adequately secured against unlawful entry, being in every case a room which is approved for the purpose by a member of the Police and which meets the following requirements:
 - (i) the room shall be in structurally sound condition:
 - (ii) the doors that give access to the room, and their locks, bolts, hinges, and other fastenings shall be in good condition:
 - (iii) the windows, skylights, or other things intended to cover openings to the room, and their locks, bolts, hinges, and other fastenings shall be in good condition:
 - (iv) the doors referred to in subparagraph (ii) and the windows, skylights, and other things referred to in subparagraph (iii) shall be capable of being secured against unlawful entry; or
 - (c) locked in a steel safe or steel box or steel cabinet (being in every case a safe, box, or cabinet of sound construction and of a type approved in writing either generally or in the particular case by a member of the Police) bolted or otherwise securely fixed (in a manner approved in writing either generally or in the particular case by a member of the Police) to the building within which the pistol or military style semi- automatic firearm or restricted weapon is kept.
- (2) Where a pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon is kept in a steel box, steel cabinet, or steel safe in accordance with sub clause (1)(c), ammunition for that firearm shall not be kept in that steel box, steel cabinet, or steel safe.
 - (3) Where the governing body of a bona fide museum keeps a pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon in a room in accordance with sub clause (1)(b), that governing body shall ensure, if the room is one to which members of the public have access, that the pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon is adequately secured, in a manner approved in each case by a member of the Police, to prevent unlawful removal.
 - (4) The Commissioner may, by writing, exempt any person from compliance with any of the provisions of sub clauses (1) to (3) where the Commissioner is satisfied that the precautions being taken by that person are sufficient to prevent unlawful removal of the pistol or restricted weapon; and any such exemption may in like manner be revoked.
 - (5) Every permit under section 18 of the Act and every firearms licence that is endorsed under section 30 or section 30B of the Act shall be deemed to be issued subject to the condition that every person who is lawfully entitled to possession of a pistol, military style semi-automatic firearm, or restricted weapon by virtue of that permit or firearms licence (as so endorsed) will observe the provisions of this regulation to the extent that they are applicable to that person.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ARMS ACT 1983

32 Conditions of endorsements

- (1) It is a condition of every endorsement made under section 30 that the holder of the firearms licence—
 - (a) observes, in respect of every pistol or restricted weapon or part of a restricted weapon in his possession, such security precautions as are required by regulations made under this Act; and
 - (b) ensures that every restricted weapon in his possession is both rendered inoperable by the removal of a vital part and maintained, by reason of the removal of a vital part, in an inoperable condition.
- (2) Any member of the Police may, on the direction of the Commissioner, impose, as conditions of an endorsement made by that member of the Police under section 30, such conditions with regard to the use or custody of the pistol or restricted weapon (being conditions additional to those specified in subsection (1)) as that member of the Police thinks fit.

33A Conditions of endorsement in respect of military style semi-automatic firearms

- (1) It is a condition of every endorsement made under section 30B that the holder of the firearms licence observes, in respect of every military style semi-automatic firearm or part thereof in that holder's possession, such security precautions as are required by regulations made under this Act.
 - (2) Any member of the Police may, on the direction of the Commissioner, impose, as conditions of an endorsement made by that member of the Police under section 30B, such conditions with regard to the use or custody of a military style semi-automatic firearm (being conditions additional to that specified in subsection (1)) as that member of the Police thinks fit.
-