



New Zealand  
Firearms Licence

# Vetting Guide

For Police use only

## Master Guide

These training notes provide a guide for firearms licensing staff. They should be read together with the Arms Manual.

### Note:

Vetting is not necessarily to be limited to the referees/interviews contained in the guide. Additional inquiries may be necessary before the applicant is considered "fit and proper".



## 1. Applicant Details

Page 1 of the  
Vetting Guide.

### Summary statement

The person carrying out vetting is to summarise the basis for their recommendation as to whether or not the person should be issued the licence and/or endorsements applied for.

## 2. Identity

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Vetting Guide.

It is not intended that confirmation of identity be done at the time the person lodges their application (at a Police station). It is best done either at the interview, or at the inspection of security. The reason for this is that these are most likely to occur at their home, or a location where they will have the necessary documentation at hand.

## 4. Additional Checks

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Vetting Guide.

Additional checks might include, where indicated as necessary, the requirement for the applicant to provide a doctor's certificate as to their mental stability (this should be from their GP or other doctor who has treated them).

## 5. Referee (Unrelated person 20 years or older)

Pages 4 and 5 of the  
Vetting Guide.

For first time applicants, this interview must be conducted face-to-face. For those applying to renew their photo ID licence, the interview may be conducted by phone unless otherwise required to be face-to-face.

The applicant is not to be present at the interview of the referees.

All parts of the interview guide are to be completed in narrative form (unless tick-box is provided).

Referee checks on sheets other than the vetting guide will be returned for completion.

These are notes of the interview and should be signed and initialled in the appropriate spaces on each page.

Referees should sign any corrections made in the text.

Use the job sheets in the rear of the Vetting Guide as additional space is required.

No guarantee of confidentiality should be given. Generally information provided by referees will be made available to the applicant on request. However, the Privacy Commissioner agrees there will be times when this is not appropriate (especially where the referee has provided information that might put them at risk).

### Interviewing member's comments

Summarise your opinion as to the credibility of the referee.

## 6. Referee (spouse/partner/next of kin)

Pages 6 and 7 of the Vetting Guide.

This is the person who lives with, and probably best knows the applicant in a personal sense. Be prepared to interview any previous spouse/partner.

Refer to the notes in section 5, *Referee (Unrelated person 20 years or older)* on page 2 of this guide, with the exception that the spouse/partner/next of kin must be interviewed face to face for every application.

It is especially important that the spouse/partner/next of kin is interviewed without the applicant being present.

Be attuned to anything that might indicate the applicant has a violent disposition, not readily apparent outside the home.

If the applicant does not have a spouse/partner/next of kin, or the next of kin does not live with the applicant, interview the person who lives with them, or a person who is likely to know them best in a personal sense.

### Interviewing member's comments

Summarise your opinion as to the credibility of the referee. If you have detected nuances of violence in the applicant, you should record these, and your reasons, on a job sheet (provided at the back of the vetting guide).

## 7 Applicant interview

Pages 8 and 9 of the Vetting Guide.

The applicant should be interviewed after the referees.

Ideally, and in most cases, the interview of the applicant, spouse/partner, confirmation of identity, and inspection of security (and testing of applicant if a renewal) will take place during the same visit.

Refer to the notes in section 8, *Referee (For endorsements or dealers licence)* on page 4 of this guide.

Applicants for any endorsements are to provide additional documentation. This will confirm the bona fide of their application.

Applicants for the 29(2)(b)-(e) endorsements in particular ("C") are to provide, in writing, a full explanation for wanting the endorsement. This will depend on the endorsement applied for. The letter and vetting should cover the points listed on the back of Police form 67G ("Application for C Endorsement").

### Personal History – Medical Details

Details provided would necessarily include treatment given and the medical professional providing this. The applicant might be required to obtain and provide to Police, a letter from their medical professional attesting to their suitability to possess firearms.

**Attitudes (private land/self defence/safety/security)**

The purpose of this question is to probe the applicants' attitude to private land, the use of firearms for self defence and general attitude to security and safety.

**Membership of any firearms clubs or associations**

**Firearms licence holders, if interested in a particular field of shooting, should be encouraged to join a club.** Clubs provide peer support, advice, training, social environment, and an indirect control on firearms and firearm safety.

**Any points arising from vetting inquiries**

Before interviewing the applicant ensure you have read the notes from the referee interviews. Note in the margin any key points/issues you wish to cover with the applicant.

## **8. Referee (For endorsements or dealers licence)**

Pages 10 and 11 of the  
Vetting Guide.

The possession of a dealer's licence indicates a person is fit and proper to be in business, specifically the selling and manufacture of firearms. The interview of the applicant for a dealer's licence, and their referees, should probe their business acumen/ability as a business person. This might include:

Who does their accounts?

Have they been in business before? How did that go?

How are their business relationships with suppliers, intended customers?

Information held by Police as to their honesty.

Business structures – are they a sole trader, partnership, limited liability?

**Note:** A recent court ruling stated that matters relevant in determining a person "fit and proper to be in business" include: compliance with the Arms Act 1983, financial position, medical and psychiatric history, and criminal history or affiliation.

Dealers are required to hold a firearms licence. This indicates they are fit and proper to possess firearms.

Dealers wishing to sell pistols and restricted weapons require an endorsement under section 29(2)(f) of the Arms Act 1983. Those wishing to sell MSSA's require an endorsement under section 30B of the Arms Act 1983. These endorsements are produced on a separate licence card.

Referees for a dealers licence, and the dealers endorsement should be interviewed for the purpose of determining their suitability to hold a dealers licence (i.e. business acumen) and their suitability to possess pistols, restricted weapons and MSSA's.

**Interviewing member's comments**

Summarise your opinion as to the credibility of the referee.

## 10. Security

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Vetting Guide.

Security is a key to crime prevention. It must be inspected as part of the vetting process, and certified as having been inspected. Declarations from the applicant, without inspection, are not acceptable.

If firearms are to be kept at another location (e.g. bach, crib, holiday home, farmhouse, or with other firearms licence holder), that security is to be inspected prior to issuing the licence.

Regulation 19 defines the security requirement for firearms (other than pistols, restricted weapons and MSSA's). The inspection is to assess if the security meets the regulations – there is no authority for licensing staff to limit, or redefine the regulations.

Applicants should be encouraged to secure firearms out of sight and, if possible, incomplete (the bolt, foreword or some other part removed).

A suitably sized padlock locked in the trigger guard behind the trigger, can be an effective means of rendering a firearm incapable of discharge.

Rack...

"Rack" might include the firearm being chained to a hot water cylinder, padlocked to a fixed eyebolt or securely chained to the rafter of a house.

## 12. Firearms held

Page 19 of the  
Vetting Guide.

Even those firearms not held pursuant to permit to procure, or other requirement to advise Police might be listed here and should be encouraged by licensing staff (However, applicants cannot be forced to do this unless provided for in legislation).

Police experience indicates that this provides a handy reference, for both Police and the applicant, in case of theft or other incident involving the firearm(s).

For the renewal of licenses; the applicant needs to assure Police that the security they have is adequate for the the number and type of firearms they possess at the the time of renewing their licence. They can only do this by allowing Police to inspect and record the firearms in their possession.

## 14. Theoretical test

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Vetting Guide.

First time applicants are to complete the NZ Mountain Safety Council training and testing.

Those applying to renew the 10 year photo ID firearms licence will, in the first instance, complete the safety test on the reverse of the application form (this is to be administered by the licensing staff member – "vettor"). If the applicant has already completed the test, the licensing staff member should work through each question ensuring the applicant can answer the question and understands them. This test must be completed with no less than 8 out of 10 correct answers – any less than this and the applicant must complete the MSC training and test prior to receiving a licence.

## Firearm Safety Test Answer Sheet

- Test from the form 'Application for a New Zealand Firearms Licence' (POL67/J).
- The correct answers are indicated by: ☒

1. Before accepting a firearm from another person, the safe shooter will first
  - A ask the person to point the muzzle in a safe direction, close the action and squeeze the trigger.
  - B check the safety catch has been applied.
  - ☒ C ask the person to open the action and demonstrate that it is not loaded.
2. The phrase 'with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction' is best interpreted as 'the muzzle pointing'
  - A upwards.
  - B downwards.
  - ☒ C in a direction where no person is likely to get shot.
3. To reduce the risk of being shot accidentally while hunting, especially in dimly lit conditions, it is advisable for the shooter to
  - A keep to open areas where other hunters can easily identify them.
  - B not carry anything that could be mistaken for part of a game animal.
  - ☒ C wear brightly coloured gear.
  - D only make sounds and movements that are obviously human.
4. A safe shooter is someone who has
  - A the best equipment.
  - B the most powerful firearm.
  - ☒ C the correct shooting habits and attitude toward safety.
5. In which of the following situations should a shot not be fired?
  - A in darkness.
  - B when companions are ahead of you.
  - C a hut is beyond the target.
  - ☒ D all of these.
6. Which is the safe way to tell if a firearm is loaded?
  - ☒ A point the muzzle in a safe direction, open the action and inspect the chamber and magazine.
  - B point the muzzle in a safe direction and squeeze the trigger.
  - C work the action rapidly several times and leave open.
7. If alcohol is to be drunk when firearms are present, when is it appropriate to do so?
  - A immediately before leaving on a hunting trip.
  - B to celebrate the bagging of a game animal in the field.
  - ☒ C after firearms have been safely stored away.
8. Before a firearm is stored away, which of the following should be done?
  - A check there are no rounds in the chamber and magazine.
  - B remove bolt and magazine (where possible) and store these separately.
  - C secure the firearms against children and theft.
  - ☒ D all of the above.
9. Should a hunter fall or trip when in the field, their first responsibility is to
  - ☒ A control the muzzle direction of their firearm.
  - B warn their companions by shouting to them.
  - C make sure the sights are not damaged by contact with the ground.
10. While hunting, which of the following would be safe to shoot at?
  - A an object that was making the relevant sounds and movements.
  - B a target that was the right colour and shaped like an animal.
  - ☒ C an animal that had been observed clearly and was undoubtedly the game sought.