

Changes to the Arms Act which may affect you

New changes to the Arms Act have started to come into effect. Because our records show you are or have been a firearms licence holder, Police is reaching out to you to share information on the changes and how they may impact you.

The changes will impact on firearms licence holders to a lesser or greater extent depending on your individual activities. The changes give greater transparency to what will be considered when a person applies for a licence.

The changes are coming into effect in stages, with the immediate changes summarised below. More information on these and later changes can be found on the [Police website](#). The website is the main source of information for people. It also holds frequently asked questions and will be regularly updated. We encourage you to visit the website to look at the changes in more detail.

Summary of the immediate changes

- People seeking a firearms licence for the first time will be eligible for a five year licence only. Others who may have let their licence expire or surrendered their licence or had it revoked are also eligible for a five year licence. At the end of the five year licence and if they have retained their fit and proper status they then will be eligible to apply for a ten year licence.
- A small group of [additional firearms are now prohibited](#), including those short (pistol-length) semi-automatic rifles that had been defined as pistols because of their shorter lengths, and centrefire pump-action rifles with a detachable magazine or a non-detachable magazine capable of holding more than 10 cartridges. There are also new requirements for [lawful possession of a pistol carbine conversion kit](#) (which converts a pistol into a shoulder-fired firearm).

An amnesty is in place against criminal prosecution for possession of the above noted items. Regulations will be developed to enable a new buy-back and this will be well publicised when dates are confirmed. We ask that if you have one of the prohibited items or a pistol carbine conversion kit, that you please safely and securely store these items.

You can visit the website to find out if you are eligible to apply for an [endorsement](#) and [permit to possess](#) to retain and use these items.

- Endorsements for wild animal and animal pest controllers will have a maximum duration of 2 years and 6 months.
- Additional exemptions have been created for those who own or manage an agricultural business and there is a real possibility the commercial viability of the business would be detrimentally affected by wild animals or animal pests and they can only be controlled through the use of prohibited firearms.
- Visitors to New Zealand will no longer be able to buy and take ownership of a firearm for use during their visit (they can buy and export only). However, visitors can import their own firearm, and lease, hire or borrow another firearm.
- New and updated offences and penalties.
- A Minister of Police's advisory group comprised of both firearm-owning and non-firearm-owning people must now be established to provide ongoing advice to the Minister.
- The Arms Act is set to be reviewed again in 2025.

Note on future changes

More changes will be coming into force from December 2020, from June 2021, from June 2022, and from June 2023. More detailed information on those changes will be put on the Police website in due course.

We encourage you to please visit the [website](#) for more information, including [questions and answers](#). If you can't find the information you are looking for on our website, you can call 0800 311 311.

Kind regards

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Business Lead: Firearms Transformation Programme

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