

GUIDELINES FOR FIREARMS CERTIFICATE RENEWALS

Recent changes to the law mean that you no longer require a club official to act as a referee to renew a firearm certificate conditioned for target shooting. Both your referees must be persons of good character who live in Great Britain, have known you personally for at least 2 years and are not in the prohibited groups of family, firearms dealers or police. The requirement for one referee to be a club member and the other a non-shooter has been removed. Therefore, while the NRA will continue to provide advice on applications and renewals, it will no longer participate in the actual FAC issue or renewal process – I am now in the group prohibited from being a referee by virtue of being a firearms dealer.

IF YOUR CERTIFICATE IS ABOUT TO (OR WORSE, HAS) RUN OUT, PLEASE TELEPHONE ME IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSURE ABOUT WHAT YOU MUST DO TO KEEP YOURSELF WITHIN THE LAW – 01483 797777 EXT 154

Amendments to the Firearms Rules bring new application forms into effect from 1 December 2013. Applications on the old forms are valid until 1 January 2014. As well as changing the forms and application process (see below), there are some changes to the responsibilities of a FAC holder. The statutory conditions on your FAC will now require you to report the theft, loss, destruction or deactivation of a firearm or ammunition to your issuing authority.

Although the new application form (Form 201) is 13 pages long, it is actually simpler than the old one. Nevertheless, please read the Notes at the end of the form first! It serves as a combined form for four purposes – grant or renewal of a firearm and / or shotgun certificate. Tick the relevant boxes at the top of page 1. There is a separate much simpler form (Form 202) to apply for a variation of a firearm certificate. The separate referees' form (Form 125) has been abolished; your referees sign once on the main form to certify that they know of no reason your application should not be granted. They are also required to sign and date one of the four photographs you will submit, but there is no longer a requirement for a specific form of words on the back of the photograph. Your choice of referees is wider. See my first paragraph above. Because the forms are designed to be distributed electronically and printed as a set of A4 sheets, there is a requirement for the applicant to certify each page with their name, signature and date. The limit on ammunition quantities to be purchased has been abolished; there is simply a limit on the amount of ammunition of each calibre that you may possess. The one element of the new form that is not as clear as it might be is in the section where you list the firearms you wish authorisation to purchase or acquire. This section refers to Note 8, which requires you (as was the case with the old form) to support your 'good reason' with the name and address of a landowner who has given permission for you to shoot over their land or the contact details of a Home Office Approved club that you belong to.

If you are applying for a coterminous shotgun certificate, the process has been greatly simplified. You only need to fill in one form, the signature of the first referee covers both the firearm and shotgun applications, it is confirmed that only four

photographs are needed, and there are no limits on who may be a referee other than that they must be of good character, must live in Great Britain and must not be in the prohibited groups of family, firearms dealers or police employees.

The new variation form is much simpler. In three pages it asks who you are, which firearms you have disposed of and how, which firearms you wish to acquire and why, and what changes you want to your authorised ammunition holdings.

One bizarre anomaly seems to be that you are required to return the current certificate when renewing a shotgun certificate or varying a firearm certificate, but not when renewing a firearm certificate. I hope to provide an update on this after contact with the other NGBs and the Home Office.

You can download the new application form at:

<http://www.nra.org.uk/common/files/rangeoffice/FACorSGCApplicationForm201.pdf>

and the new variation form at:

<http://www.nra.org.uk/common/files/rangeoffice/FACVariationForm202.pdf>

Yours

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