

Treasury
Customs and Excise Division

Notice 279F

Firearms

Movement of Firearms and Offensive Weapons

The Import Into, and Export From the Isle of Man



October 2007
(updated to 9 May 2017)



Isle of Man
Government

Reilrys Ellan Vannin

Index

Important Note

This Guide is not intended as an authoritative statement of the law. It is intended as a guide to the law, rules and principles relating to the import and export of firearms, ammunition and offensive weapons. It does not deal with military import or exports, or the requirements of import or export licensing controls for such movements.

You should check with Police and Customs and Excise in advance, and with any carrier you intend using, that what you intend to do is permitted and the proper procedures to adopt.

In the Isle of Man, domestic firearms control is the responsibility of the Isle of Man Constabulary, and when taking or sending weapons or ammunition between the Island, UK and Ireland you should contact the Constabulary.

Any loss of a firearm or ammunition should be reported as soon as possible to the Constabulary.

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1 Introduction

The import and export, sale, possession and use of firearms is tightly controlled both in the UK and the Isle of Man. There can be severe penalties for those contravening the rules, and in today's heightened security environment failure to follow the relevant procedures can result in unnecessary difficulties: such as security alerts, delays to transportation, and seizure or destruction of the goods.

This Notice sets out what requirements are imposed or enforced by Customs and Excise, and provides guidance on the correct procedures to take when bringing weapons, ammunition etc to the Island, importing them by post, or taking or sending them from the Island.

You should also be alert to the possibility that replica or imitation firearms can give rise to false alarms.

Domestic controls of firearms and ammunition in the Isle of Man is the responsibility of the Police force. Any movement of weapons or ammunition between the Island, UK and Ireland is the responsibility of the Police and the Firearms Officer should be contacted for advice etc. More information is available online at <http://iompolice.im/advice/guidance-on-firearms>

Any loss of a weapon or ammunition should be reported as soon as possible to the Police and, if lost in the course of import or export, to Customs and Excise.

2 General prohibitions

The following may not be imported -

		Into the UK	Into the Isle of Man
1	Shortened ("sawn off") shotguns with pump action or semi-automatic Being smooth-barrel guns (not being an air weapon) with a barrel less than 24 inches long, or with an overall length of less than 40 inches, except for those chambered for 0.22 inch rimfire cartridges. In measuring length, any detachable, retractable or moveable butt-stock is ignored.	✓	✓
2	Automatic weapons Being any weapon designed or adapted so that two or more missiles can be fired without repeated pressure on the trigger.	✓	✓
3	Self-loading rifles ("semi-automatic") Any self-loading or pump action rifle, other than 0.22 inch rimfire.	✓	✓
4	Any firearm with a barrel of less than 30 cm, or with an overall length of less than 60 cm (excluding air weapons, muzzle-loading guns and signalling apparatus)	✓	See note
5	Disguised firearms, including disguised air weapons - such as "walking stick" shotguns	✓	See note
6	Any smooth-bore revolver gun - except for a muzzle-loading gun or 9 mm rimfire	✓	✓

		Into the UK	Into the Isle of Man
7	Any air weapon using a self-contained gas cartridge system For example, a Brocock	✓	See note
8	Any weapon designed or adapted for the discharge of any noxious liquid, gas or other thing Including "tasers", electric shock batons, CS gas guns and dart guns used by veterinary practitioners	✓	✓
9	Any rocket launcher or mortar - except for use in line throwing, pyrotechnic purposes or as signalling apparatus	✓	✓
10	Any bullet designed to explode on or immediately after impact ¹	✓	✓
11	Any bullet designed or adapted to contain any noxious liquid, gas or other thing	✓	✓
12	Any armour-piercing or incendiary bullets	✓	✓
13	Expanding ("dum-dum") bullets	<i>Permitted on a Part 1 Firearm Certificate for deer stalking in the UK</i>	<i>Allowed in the Island for vermin control, target shooting and destruction of animals</i>
14	Any grenade, bomb etc designed for use with a firearm, or any military rocket or ammunition designed to explode on or immediately after impact, and any launcher for the same	✓	✓
15	Handguns - including self-loading revolvers and single-shot (except long-barrelled)	✓	See note

Note

Where the above Table indicates that bringing a particular type of firearm into the Isle of Man is not prohibited you will still require a Firearms Certificate, Regulated Weapon Certificate or Visitors Permit for the weapon.

1 In the UK, a prohibition on any ammunition which is designed to be used with a pistol and incorporates a missile designed or adapted to expand on impact.

3 Northern Ireland

The law in Northern Ireland is substantially different from that in the rest of the UK, and questions concerning the possession, use, and the movement of firearms, to or from there should be addressed to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

4 Exceptions

Exceptions to the various prohibitions and restrictions may be allowed in certain circumstances, such as -

- British and visiting military;
- for use in film, TV and theatre productions;
- weapons for animal slaughter.

5 Imitation firearms

The importation, sale etc of certain realistic imitation firearms has been made illegal in the UK. However, similar legislation has not been enacted in the Isle of Man.

It is an offence to possess such an object with intent to cause fear of violence, or to carry it in public without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.

There is no general import prohibition on toy or replica guns, or on "airsoft" or BB-type guns (see below for more detail).

In the UK, a new section 4A inserted into the Firearms Act 1968 with effect from 2 May 2017 made it an offence for anyone other than a registered firearms dealer to have in his or her possession or under his or her control an article that is capable of being used (whether by itself or with other articles) to convert an imitation firearm into a firearm, and the person intends to use the article (whether by itself or with other articles) to convert an imitation firearm into a firearm.

6 The European Firearms Pass

Temporary transfers of personal firearms in the EU may take place using a European Firearms Pass. However, the Isle of Man is not covered by the relevant Directive that deals with the Pass, and therefore transfers to and from an EU Member State do not require and would not be covered by such a Pass.

Other EU legislation -

- the 1991 EU Firearms Directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of firearms, and
- the 1993 Explosives Directive, which includes provisions regarding the movement of ammunition within the EU,

also does not apply in the Isle of Man.

The Pass is a sort of "passport" for a licensed weapon, introduced in 1993. It can cover any shotgun or section 1 firearm. Its expiry date cannot be any later than the expiry date of any certificate, licence or permit for the weapon itself.

In the UK, Passes are obtained from the local police Firearms Licensing Officers.

A Pass does not cover ammunition. However, the Explosives Directive allows that a weapon listed on a Pass may travel with suitable ammunition. The quantity is covered by the visitors permit.

A Pass is obtained in advance and sent to the State(s) the weapons-holder intends visiting. It contains details of the weapon(s), any licence(s) or certificate(s), as well as details of the licence-holder. The authorities in the State(s) to be visited endorse and return the Pass.

Visitors still also hold any relevant temporary visitors' permit, and the Pass is not a substitute for any valid permit, licence or certificate otherwise required. For example, in the UK a visitor would still be required to obtain a British Visitors Permit. If the visitor acquires a new weapon during his visit then both a Pass and a Transfer Licence must be obtained in order to take it home - in addition, of course, to any certificate or licence required in their home State.

A Pass cannot be used for the permanent export of a weapon - this requires an export licence or Transfer Licence.

All weapons must be declared to Customs and to any travel company, airline, ferry company etc.

7 Other UK controls

Handguns are prohibited in the UK (but see paragraph 12A below re imports of handguns into the Isle of Man).

Imitation and replica firearms which are readily convertible into real or operating firearms are treated as "section 1" firearms, so are treated in the same way as, for example, prohibited handguns. The Firearms Act 1982, which deals with such weapons, applies to an imitation firearm if -

- a. it has the appearance of being a "section 1" firearm; and
- b. it is so constructed or adapted so as to be readily convertible into a firearm to which section 1 applies.

Some blank-firing guns require firearms certificates. These are real "section 1" firearms such as rifles and handguns; shotguns and smooth-bore muskets; and convertible imitation firearms. Such weapons are of a type that might often be used in film, TV or theatre productions.

Blank ammunition can only be purchased by holders of the relevant firearms certificate. An exception exists for ammunition of not more than 1 inch diameter.

Unproved firearms may not be imported, unless they are personal imports for that person's own personal use (but the exemption applies only whilst they remain his or her property). "Proofing" involves testing and certifying the barrel of the firearm, and may be done by an appropriate UK or overseas body.

Dealing in unproved firearms is an offence, as would be enlarging the bore beyond certain defined limits or otherwise weakening the barrel or action of the firearm.

Air weapons are not affected by the proofing requirements.

8 Isle of Man law and controls

The Isle of Man Constabulary provides comprehensive information on the licensing of firearms and regulated weapons at <http://iompolice.im/advice/guidance-on-firearms>

The relevant law in the Isle of Man includes the Firearms Acts of 1947 and 1968, the Air Guns and Shot Guns Etc Act 1968, and the Shotguns, Air Weapons and Crossbows Act 1994.

The 1994 Act introduced controls on air weapons and crossbows with a draw weight of more than 1.4 kg, which are known as “regulated weapons”.

Holders of weapons must possess the relevant firearms or shotgun certificate.

Holders of all air weapons and crossbows with a draw weight above 1.4 kg must possess a “Regulated Weapon Certificate”.

Non-residents would not be eligible for a firearms certificate on the Island, and Registered Firearms Dealers may not act as holders or repositories for owners of section 1 handguns who reside in the UK.

No individual licence or certificate is required for a person to fire a weapon in a controlled environment, such as a gun club. A visitor can therefore visit a Manx club and use a weapon there. However, some persons are barred by law from using guns, even in a club - such as those who have served a prison sentence of 3 years or more. Club weapons cannot be removed from the premises.

Certificates for handguns are only issued to members of clubs and the clubs themselves, except in the case of owners of collectors’ pieces.

Visitors to the Island must obtain a visitor’s permit from the police in advance if they wish to bring any weapon subject to control into the Island.

A person visiting, or intending to visit, the Island can obtain a temporary firearms permit if they satisfy the Chief Constable that they have a good reason for possessing the firearms and ammunition and would not be a danger to the public; and—

- they hold a firearms certificate or the equivalent in the country they are normally resident; or
- they would otherwise be deemed suitable by the Chief Constable to hold a certificate under section 2 of the Firearms Act 1947.

Those travelling to or from the Island must declare any firearm or regulated weapon they have with them in advance to the Isle of Man Steam Packet. The necessary form is provided online at

<http://iompolice.im/advice/guidance-on-firearms> Note that foot passengers with such a firearm or regulated weapon will not be accepted for travel.

Island residents are also eligible for such a temporary firearms permit if they have similar good reasons, would not be a danger to the public, and are deemed suitable by the Chief Constable.

9 Importing firearms (from outside the UK)

The import of all types of weapons is subject to import licensing and control. The controls on imports from EU Member States differs from those for non-EU countries. Licences for the

import of a firearm into the UK also cover imports into the Isle of Man (and the UK and Island are regarded as one for this purpose). However, a local certificate or visitor's permit would also be required, and any handgun or other prohibited weapon transiting the UK must be carried by an authorised carrier.

Import licences may be required to import firearms, component parts of firearms, ammunition and any accessory to any such firearm or other weapon designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon to which Chapter 93 of the Tariff applies. The Tariff is the published UK Integrated Trade tariff published by HMRC.

An import licence is required to import prohibited firearms and ammunition into the UK, regardless of where they come from. The relevant licence to import such weapons and ammunition into the UK is issued by the Home Office.

Guidance on commercial imports of handguns into the Isle of Man from outside the EU can be found in paragraph 12A below.

If travelling with a firearm, the importer must go to the Red Point or Red Point telephone at the port or airport of arrival to make a declaration. Pre-warning that port or airport of arrival may help to reduce the time needed to establish the importer's identity and that needed to clear the import.

If the importer is arriving with a newly-acquired firearm, they must check the airline or ferry company's policy for the transport of such items, that they are in full compliance with the laws of the country where they are purchasing the firearms (and any through which they may travel) regarding possession, transit and export; and have with them their domestic (e.g. Isle of Man) authority to possess the firearm (in addition to any import licence etc).

If the item is being shipped or posted from a non-EU country it must bear a declaration that clearly identifies the contents.

10 Imports by private individuals from outside the EU

Guidance on commercial imports of handguns into the Isle of Man from outside the EU can be found in paragraph 12A below. These would normally require an import licence. Such a licence is obtained from the Department for International Trade (DIT) in the UK (see Notice 279 MAN).

However, personal imports, forming part of a private individual's personal effects during a transfer of residence to the Island may be imported on production of a valid firearms certificate or licence in lieu of an import licence. A visitor's or temporary permit would **not** be acceptable.

Island residents returning from a competition or holiday may also produce a valid firearms certificate or licence in lieu of an import licence.

Persons visiting the Island may produce a visitor's or temporary permit in lieu of an import licence.

In the Island a regulated weapon also requires a visitor's or temporary permit where appropriate.

The above procedures are a concession based on a similar set of waivers for such imports from EU Member States. It would not apply to prohibited weapons.

Imports of a prohibited weapon would require an import licence, plus a valid Isle of Man certificate, licence, permit or other lawful authority.

Imports without a valid certificate, licence or permit would be detained pending production of one.

A visitor's or temporary permit does not authorise the holder to buy or acquire a firearm in the Island.

Even where a valid certificate or licence is produced the importer must expect that Customs and Excise may choose to verify the certificate, licence or permit before releasing the weapon. It will also notify the police, and will require details of where the weapon is to be kept.

Antique weapons over 100 years old do not require an import licence. However, they would require production of a valid Isle of Man certificate, licence or permit.

No import licence is required for shotgun cartridges containing 5 or more shot none of which exceeds 9 mm in diameter and blank cartridges for smooth-bore weapons not exceeding 25 mm in diameter similarly do not require an import licence, but would be subject to a requirement for any relevant local certificate, licence or permit.

Imports of prohibited weapons that transit the UK must be transported by an authorised carrier.

11 Imports by other than private individuals from outside the EU

Guidance on commercial imports of handguns into the Isle of Man from outside the EU can be found in paragraph 12A below. Firearms that do not qualify for the concessions for private individuals must be accompanied by a full import licence.

Note that from 1 April 2014 import licensing controls were extended to firearms imported other than under Chapter 93 of the UK Tariff (which specifically deals with firearms and ammunition).

Import licences are required for lethal weapons and their component parts (except wooden stocks), silencers and flash suppressors, grenades, bombs and other like missiles; and any ammunition. This requirement applies to both serviceable and convertible firearms, gas weapons, gas sprays, tazers and other electric shock weapons etc.

Antique weapons do not require an import licence: but any manufactured after 31 December 1899 would require one. However, they would require production of a valid Isle of Man certificate, licence or permit.

No import licence is required for shotgun cartridges containing 5 or more shot none of which exceeds 9 mm in diameter and blank cartridges for smooth-bore weapons not exceeding 25 mm diameter similarly do not require an import licence, but would be subject to a requirement for any relevant local certificate, licence or permit.

CO² weapons and air weapons and ammunition for them is not subject to control if they are not regulated weapons.

Movements of prohibited weapons through the UK must be carried out by an authorised carrier.

A full import entry would be required for any goods subject to import licensing control; with merchandise in baggage (MIB) and postal imports subject to the same controls.

In practice, any firearms, components or ammunition would only be released by Customs and Excise upon production of both the import licence and any locally required certificate, licence,

permit or other lawful authority. Customs and Excise will notify the police of any licensed import, and of any import of other weapons, components or ammunition. Imports without a valid import licence, and those without any necessary local certificate, licence etc would be detained.

12 Imports from the EU

As the Isle of Man does not issue European Firearms Passes and is not party to that procedure, visitors to the Island are required to produce both a valid licence or certificate from their home State and a Visitors Permit issued by the police in the Island.

A visitor's or temporary permit do **not** authorise the holder to buy or acquire a firearm in the Island.

In the Island, possession of a regulated weapon also requires a visitor's or temporary permit where appropriate.

Permanent or commercial imports would require a Transfer Licence issued by the Member State from where the firearm originated, plus a valid Isle of Man certificate or licence covering the weapon.

If the weapon was a prohibited weapon in the UK and it was coming through the UK then an import licence from the UK would also be required for its introduction into the UK. In addition, it must be remembered that only authorised carriers are permitted to transport prohibited weapons in the UK.

Personal imports, forming a part of private individual's personal effects during a transfer of residence to the Island may produce a valid firearms certificate or licence in lieu of an import licence.

Movements of military goods require full Community Transit (CT) accompanying documentation. This procedure permits the tracking of the goods' movement, and verification of their safe arrival at their destination. If you think you may be affected by this requirement you should contact Customs and Excise for more information.

Antique weapons over 100 years old do not require an import licence. However, they would require production of a valid Isle of Man certificate, licence or permit.

No import licence is required for shotgun cartridges containing 5 or more shot none of which exceeds 9 mm in diameter and blank cartridges for smooth-bore weapons not exceeding 25 mm diameter similarly do not require an import licence, but would be subject to a requirement for any relevant local certificate, licence or permit.

Imports without a valid certificate, licence or permit would be detained pending production of one.

Even where a valid certificate or licence is produced the importer must expect that Customs and Excise may choose to verify the certificate, licence or permit before releasing the weapon. It will also notify the police, and will require details of where the weapon is to be kept.

Licensing requirements in the EU are supplemented by the Weapons Information Exchange Systems (WIES) which records each Transfer Licence, with details of the State of origin, destination and transit. In dealer-to-dealer transfers the transferor has to declare to the national authority details of each consignment, that authority then notifies the States of transit and destination.

Imports by Registered Firearms Dealers (RFD) may be by means of an Open Transfer Licence

(OTL) which permit imports of section 1 and section 2 firearms, which includes shotguns, and have a duration of up to 3 years. This would allow despatch from a Member State to the Island without a specific import licence. The supplying dealer must hold a copy of the OTL, and a copy must accompany each consignment. The recipient must be authorised to hold the type of firearm involved.

12A Import derogation for handguns imported into the Isle of Man

Section 5 Handguns derogation - Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man

The Department for International Trade provides the following guidance on the "section 5 handguns derogation" for imports into the Isle of Man.

Although most handguns are prohibited weapons in mainland Britain, this is not the case in the Isle of Man. The personal import requirements apply to individuals who are based in the Isle of Man who want to import a handgun.

Commercial imports of handguns consigned to the Isle of Man from outside of the EU and be imported into the UK/Isle of Man with a valid import licence. For the purposes of these arrangements the Isle of Man is regarded as if it were a part of the UK. The ultimate destination of the handgun(s) must be in the Isle of Man.

Handguns imported into the Isle of Man requires a transfer licence if being shipped to a EU Member State other than the UK. The transfer licence must accompany the handguns throughout the transit to the final destination. You do not need an import licence in addition to the transfer licence. If any part of the journey is through Great Britain a Section 5 authorised carrier must be used.

Similar arrangements apply in respect of Northern Ireland.

13 Postal imports

If a firearm or ammunition arrives in the post from outside the EU a Notice of Arrival is sent to the addressee, together with an import entry form for completion.

The weapon would be released only when the completed import entry, together with any necessary import licence, local licence or certificate, and/or visitors permit is produced and verified.

If no licence etc is produced within 28 days a reminder is sent. If no licence etc is produced within a further 28 days the goods may be seized.

14 Disguised weapons

Weapons that have been disguised as another object (e.g. a pistol or air weapon made to appear like a mobile telephone) are generally prohibited.

15 Air weapons

See also the Table on page 4 regarding general prohibitions.

A low-powered air weapon would not require a licence to import into the UK or the Isle of Man. "Low-powered" would mean one with a muzzle energy below 6 ft/lb (8.13 joules) for a pistol, or 12 ft/lb (16.27 joules) for any other type.

High-powered air weapons would be subject to import licensing and police controls.

Self-contained gas cartridge guns (e.g. a Brocock) are prohibited weapons in the UK and

would require the relevant certificate or permit to have in the Isle of Man. Anyone anticipating importing such a weapon into the UK or the Isle of Man would require an import licence.

In the Isle of Man, all air weapons have to be licensed as regulated weapons.

16 BB guns

A BB gun is one that fires ball bearings and uses inert gases, springs or battery power to fire what are typically 6mm plastic ball bearings. These would normally have a muzzle energy below 1 joule and so would not normally be subject to firearms licensing and control. However, they may be subject to restrictions under the law relating to "realistic imitation firearms".

17 Airsoft guns

Airsoft or Softair guns are imitation weapons that use inert gases, springs or battery power to fire their ammunition, usually steel ball bearings of 0.177 (4.5 mm) calibre. These would normally have a muzzle energy below 1 joule. Many, if not all, such products are subject to restrictions as "realistic imitation firearms". In the UK, arrangements have been made by the Association of British Airsoft to confirm individual purchasers are members of genuine skirmishing clubs or sites, and so may be exempt from import and sale controls imposed in the UK under the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

The importation of such weapons into the Isle of Man is not prohibited. However, anyone considering importing one should bear in mind that any importation which involves the weapon entering the UK en route to the Island would mean that UK law would apply, and hence any licensing or other restrictions would apply. This would include, for example, weapons imported by courier services such as Federal Express or DHL, where the packages are customs cleared in the UK before onward transmission to the Isle of Man.

If you anticipate importing such weapons into the Isle of Man only, you should contact Customs and Excise or the Police for further advice.

If the weapon has a muzzle energy above 1 joule that they would be considered to be a "firearm" in the Isle of Man and would require a Regulated Weapon Certificate.

In the UK, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 provided a new definition of airsoft guns with effect from 2 May 2017 (see Glossary for details).

Note that an airsoft weapon designed or adapted to discharge other missiles, such as darts, are not regarded as being airsoft weapons, and may be treated as being firearms.

18 Taking weapons off the Island

If you take a weapon to the UK you must obtain a British Visitors Permit from the local police force. You should also take your Manx licence or certificate with you. Certain prohibited weapons, such as handguns, may not be taken to the UK; and if they are transported through the UK this is only permitted by using authorised carriers.

A British Visitors Permit (BVP) is required in the UK in addition to any European Firearms Pass that may be held. It is a temporary permit with a maximum duration of 12 months. There are two types - a shotgun permit and a firearms permit. An application for a BVP must come from a sponsor in the UK and addressed to the relevant Chief Constable. Group applications may be made by companies, estates etc. It does not authorise the holder to buy or acquire a firearm in the UK.

Visitors to Northern Ireland require additional approval from the Chief Constable of the Police Service there. This applies not only to handguns, shotguns, rifles etc, but also to air weapons. Particulars of any weapon and ammunition must be provided at least one month in advance and a Certificate of Approval obtained.

Dealers and individuals wishing to sell or transfer ammunition or firearms to someone in Northern Ireland must have approval from the Chief Constables in both the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland.

The Isle of Man does not issue European Firearms Passes.

If you are taking your weapon to another Member State of the EU you should obtain the necessary visitors permit from the authorities there, and take both this and your Manx licence or certificate.

All weapons being removed from the Island to a country other than the UK must be declared to Customs and Excise; and declared to any travel company, ferry company, airline etc. It should similarly be declared to Border Force in the UK (or Customs in Ireland) if removed via the UK or Ireland.

If you are taking weapons or ammunition to the UK or Ireland you should contact the Isle of Man Constabulary for advice.

Those travelling to or from the Island must declare any firearm or regulated weapon they have with them in advance to the Isle of Man Steam Packet. The necessary form is provided online at <http://iompolice.im/advice/guidance-on-firearms> Note that foot passengers with such a firearm or regulated weapon will not be accepted for travel.

If travelling to a non-EU destination you should check with the relevant embassy or high commission for the necessary requirements regarding import licences, visitors permits etc.

In all cases, you are advised to take your Manx licence or certificate with you, as you would have to produce this upon your return to the Island.

19 Export of firearms to places outside the UK (and movements between other third countries)

All firearms, component parts (except wooden stocks), ammunition etc are subject to export licensing control.

Export licences are not required for movements between the Isle of Man and the UK. However, exports from the Isle of Man or the UK to the Channel Islands are subject to licensing controls.

Goods removed from the Freeport or a customs warehouse must be covered by an export licence, even if they were deposited there purely for export or re-export, or by an import licence endorsed as being valid for re-exportation.

Antiques and collectors' pieces are covered by Open General Export Licences and may not require individual, specific export licences.

A waiver exists for personal exports of a weapon covered by a valid British (including Isle of Man) firearm or shotgun licence or certificate to a destination outside the EU. A similar waiver exists for a visitor returning to a destination outside the EU from the Isle of Man and who is in possession of a valid Visitors Permit.

Permanent exports by individuals to any destination in an EU Member State would normally require an export licence (s Standard Individual Export Licence).

Military goods moving in the EU are subject to full Community Transit (CT) control, unless covered by special bilateral, or multi-lateral international arrangements.

Firearms are described by control entries ML1 and ML2 of Schedule 1 to the Export of Goods, Transfer of Technology and Provision of Technical Assistance Order 2003 ("the 2003 Order"). Schedule 1 is commonly called "The Military List"; and covers military, security and para-military goods, software and technology and arms, ammunition and related material. Firearms are controlled under Schedule 1 even when, as with shotguns and rifles, they may be designed for use in sport.

Any exemption for the export outside the EU of a licensed firearm by the holder of a valid licence or certificate, related ammunition and non-electronic image enhancement (sights) exported as personal effects for personal use overseas would not apply where the destination is Iran or a place specified under the 2003 Order.

Businesses exporting firearms, whether to a destination in the EU or outside the EU, would require an export licence. Special arrangements exist for Registered Firearms Dealers.

Please contact Customs and Excise if you intend exporting firearms, ammunition or components. You should also see Notice 279 MAN, which explains export licensing requirements and trade control licences (for "trafficking and brokering" activities).

In certain circumstances, the movement of weapons, ammunition and other equipment between two third countries would require a licence from the UK or the Isle of Man, even where such goods are exported from, destined for, or connected to the UK or Isle of Man - if part of any activity connected with the movement takes place in the UK or the Island. For example, the shipment of automatic rifles from South Africa to India, with the shipment being arranged by an Isle of Man company. Please see Notice 279 MAN and/or contact Customs and Excise for more information.

Exports to the Channel Islands require import licences issued by the authorities there, unless the importer holds a Police Firearms Certificate or a Police Temporary Permit (visitor's permit). Contact the local Police Firearms Licensing Unit.

20 Registered Firearms Dealer (Dealer to Dealer) OIEL

An Open Individual Export Licence (OIEL) is available from the Treasury for the export by an individual exporter to a specified destination and/or a specified end-user or consignee, usually without any restriction on the quantity involved.

Registered Firearms Dealer (Dealer to Dealer) OIEL authorise Registered Firearms Dealers (RFD) to export certain categories of firearms and ammunition to registered firearms dealers in EU Member States (other than the UK), provided the RFD holds the relevant valid documentation and supplies copies of this to the firearms licensing officer at Police Headquarters at least 2 working days before each shipment. The firearms covered include air weapons, deactivated weapons, replica weapons, shotguns, veterinary or tranquillising weapons, and ammunition and components for these weapons.

21 Other matters

(a) Authorised carriers

The Royal Mail can carry any non-prohibited weapon (due to an exemption under Post Office regulations).

A carrier or warehousekeeper does not require a licence if they are holding a weapon in the normal course of their business.

However, UK law requires sales, transfers etc to be carried out in person, if not involving a dealer. Therefore a weapon could not be posted to or from someone in the UK unless they were a registered firearms dealer.

Movements of prohibited weapons in the UK are only permitted by "authorised carriers", these being dealers, manufacturers, and certain hauliers and airlines etc. It is not permitted for private individuals to transport such weapons.

(b) Sanctions and arms embargoes

All arms embargoes imposed under UN or EU sanctions regimes, or as matters of national policy, include the export of firearms.

For details of current arms embargoes please contact Customs and Excise.

Exports of weapons to many African states are subject to prohibitions or restrictions. Restrictions, for example, exist on the export of light weapons to many West African states under the ECOWAS moratorium. Another example of restrictions is that accompanied sporting firearms may be temporarily exported to Tanzania and Uganda provided that they return within 3 months of being exported and certain other conditions are met.

(c) Antique weapons and those classified as cultural goods

Imports of firearms (or associated components) manufactured on or before 31 December 1899 do not require an import licence to import them into the UK or the Isle of Man. The onus is on the importer to satisfy the authorities of the true date of manufacture.

The question of whether such a firearm requires a licence to be owned is a separate question - one that does not require an import licence may still require a firearms certificate, permit or licence.

Exports of firearms and their components over certain ages and/or values may be subject to export licensing requirements as "cultural goods", this being in addition to any requirement for an export licence as a weapon. Please see Notice 279C MAN and Notice 279 MAN for more information.

(d) Deactivated firearms

Any deactivated weapon must be fully deactivated and incapable of being converted for firing.

Any importation must be accompanied by the appropriate import licence. Any import into the UK must also be accompanied by a EU Deactivation Certificate as well as an import licence from DIT.

In the UK, section 8A of the Firearms Act 1968 (inserted by the Policing and Crime Act 2017) makes it an offence for a person who owns or claims to own a defectively deactivated weapon to make the weapon available for sale or as a gift to another person, or to sell it or give it (as a gift) to another person¹.

1 In the case of a weapon rendered incapable before 8 April 2016 an exception may apply if the weapon is made available for sale or as a gift, or (as the case may be) sold or given, by or on behalf of a museum in respect of which a museum firearms licence is in force to another museum in respect of which such a licence is in force.

(e) “Obsolete calibre” firearms and ammunition

In 2002 the Home Office compiled a list of firearms and ammunition which does not require any form of licence or certificate in the UK to allow their possession because that calibre of weapon or ammunition no longer exists. Any ammunition on that list does not need an import licence. However, you should still contact the Police if you intend bringing such ammunition to the Island.

In the case of firearms on the Home Office list, if they are not classified as antique weapons, an import licence is still required.

(f) Component parts

Component parts of firearms are subject to control under domestic firearms legislation. Component parts of prohibited weapons would probably also require an import licence.

“Relevant component parts” can be regarded as prohibited in the UK - see the definition of “firearm” in the Glossary.

(g) Offensive weapons

In addition to firearms and air weapons, other “weapons” are subject to controls. Under both UK and Isle of Man law the following are classified as firearms -

- stun guns
- electric shock batons
- CS gas sprays
- gas pistols and revolvers
- self-defence sprays
- replica guns etc capable of firing gas cartridges

Other weapons as classified as “offensive weapons” and may not be imported, bought, sold etc. In the Isle of Man, orders are made under the Criminal Justice Act 1991 to prohibit such weapons.

Currently, the following weapons are prohibited -

- knuckleduster
- swordstick
- handclaw
- belt buckle knife
- push dagger
- hollow kubotan
- footclaw
- shuriken, shaken or death star
- balisong or butterfly knife
- telescopic truncheon
- blowpipe or blow gun

-
- kusari gama
 - kyoketsu shoge
 - marikigusari or kusari

From April 2008 the UK added "Samurai swords" to its list of offensive weapons.

(h) Crossbows

All crossbows must be licensed as regulated weapons in the Island, unless they have a draw weight of less than 1.4kg.

Anyone wishing to bring a crossbow to the Island must apply for a Visitor's Regulated Weapon Permit.

Glossary and contact details

Airsoft guns	<p>In the Isle of Man, airsoft or softair guns with a muzzle energy above 1 joule are considered to be a “firearm” and require a Regulated Weapon Certificate.</p> <p>In the UK, section 57A of the Firearms Act 1968 defines an airsoft gun as -</p> <p>a barrelled weapon of any description which -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) is designed to discharge only a small plastic missile (whether or not it is also capable of discharging any other kind of missile), and(b) is not capable of discharging a missile (of any kind) with kinetic energy at the muzzle of the weapon that exceeds the permitted level. <p>A “small plastic missile” means a missile that is made wholly or partly from plastics, is spherical, and does not exceed 8 millimetres in diameter.</p> <p>The permitted kinetic energy level is -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) in the case of a weapon which is capable of discharging two or more missiles successively without repeated pressure on the trigger, 1.3 joules; or(b) in any other case, 2.5 joules.
Antique firearms	<p>There is no precise definition. However, modern copies or reproductions cannot be antiques. Excluded would be anything since World War 2, and anything capable of firing a modern, centre-fire cartridge.</p> <p>Weapons over 100 years old, unless capable of firing a modern, centre-firing cartridge would probably be seen as antique. No import licence is required to import a firearm manufactured on or before 31 December 1899 from a place outside the UK and Isle of Man. It is the importer who has to prove the date of manufacture. The date of first manufacture of the type of firearm is not the date of manufacture for the purposes of licensing.</p> <p>No ammunition can be regarded as antique.</p>
Authorised carrier	Person or company authorised in Great Britain to carry and transport prohibited weapons under the Firearms Act.
Bonded carrier	See above.
Component parts	This term is not defined in firearms legislation. However, Customs and Excise will regard component parts for import licensing purposes as being those major parts which are necessary to the action of the weapon, such as trigger mechanisms and barrels but not screws, springs, nuts and bolts which may be used for other purposes. The term may be held to include the barrel, chamber, cylinder, frame, body or receiver, breech, block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the charge at the rear of the chamber, and any other part of a firearm upon which pressure caused by firing the weapon impinges directly.

Deactivated firearms Firearms converted so that they can no longer discharge any shot, bullet or other missile. Must be intended to be permanent and be incapable of being reactivated without specialist tools or skills.

If carried out in the UK since 1989 it will generally be proof-marked and be accompanied by a certificate of deactivation.

In 2016, EU Regulation 2015/2403 came into force classifying deactivated firearms. Arms falling outside of the scope of the EU Regulation should continue to be deactivated in accordance with "Specifications for the adaptation of shotgun magazines and the deactivation of firearms, revised 2010". Arms deactivated prior to the introduction of the EU Regulation submitted for re-certification can still be issued with a UK-valid only certificate. It must be noted that should the arm subsequently be sold, exported or fall within the remit of the EU Regulation in any way, it must be brought up to the specification of the EU Regulation.

Firearm In Isle of Man law, the Firearms Act 1947 defines a firearm as being (except where otherwise expressly provided) ... any lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged and includes any prohibited weapon, whether it is such a lethal weapon as aforesaid or not, any component part of any such lethal or prohibited weapon, and any accessory to any such weapon designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon.

The Police and Crime Act 2017 amended the definition of a "firearm" in UK law with effect from 2 May 2017. A firearm is defined in section 57 of the Firearms Act 1968 as -

- (a) a lethal barrelled weapon (and "lethal barrelled weapon" means a barrelled weapon of any description from which a shot, bullet or other missile, with kinetic energy of more than one joule at the muzzle of the weapon, can be discharged);
- (b) a prohibited weapon;
- (c) a relevant component part in relation to a lethal barrelled weapon or a prohibited weapon (each of the following items is a relevant component part in relation to a lethal barrelled weapon or a prohibited weapon: a barrel, chamber or cylinder; a frame, body or receiver; or a breech block, bolt or other mechanism for containing the pressure of discharge at the rear of a chamber - but only where the item is capable of being used as a part of a lethal barrelled weapon or a prohibited weapon);
- (d) an accessory to a lethal barrelled weapon or a prohibited weapon where the accessory is designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing the weapon;

But excluding "airsoft" guns (see above).

Imitation firearms	<p>This term may be used for something which is not a toy, but which -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) has an appearance that is so realistic as to make it indistinguishable, for all practical purposes, from a real firearm; and (b) is neither a deactivated firearm nor itself an antique. <p>In the UK controls on the import, sale etc of such "weapons" have been introduced in the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.</p>
Part 1 firearm	<p>In the Isle of Man, firearms that must be held on a Firearms Certificate, as opposed to a Regulated Weapons Certificate. Includes high-power air weapons, all handguns, all rifles, all shotguns with a magazine holding more than 2 rounds.</p>
Proofing	<p>The compulsory testing of shotguns and other small arms to ensure their safety.</p>
Realistic imitation firearm	<p>Or "RIF" - prohibited in the UK under the Violent Crime Reductions Act 2007. See page 6.</p>
Regulated weapon	<p>In the Isle of Man,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an air weapon or crossbow with a draw weight of more than 1.4 kg; or (b) a shotgun being a smooth-bore gun which is not an air weapon, with with a barrel of at least 24 inches, and no magazine or a non-detachable one incapable of holding more than 2 rounds.
Regulated Weapon Certificate (RWC)	<p>Type of licence issued in the Isle of Man for a regulated weapon.</p>
Section 1 firearm	<p>Firearms that in the UK must be held on a Firearms Certificate, as opposed to a Shotgun Certificate. Includes high-power air weapons, all handguns, all rifles, all shotguns with a magazine holding more than 2 rounds.</p>
Section 2 firearm	<p>In the UK, a smooth-bore gun which is not an air weapon, with a barrel of at least 24 inches, and no magazine or a non-detachable one incapable of holding more than 2 rounds (ie a shotgun).</p>

Temporary firearm permit A temporary permit issued to a person visiting, or intending to visit, the Island can obtain a temporary firearms permit if they satisfy the Chief Constable that they have a good reason for possessing the firearms and ammunition and would not be a danger to the public; and—

- they hold a firearms certificate or the equivalent in the country they are normally resident; or
- they would otherwise be deemed suitable by the Chief Constable to hold a certificate under section 2 of the Firearms Act 1947.

Island residents are also eligible for such a temporary firearms permit if they have similar good reasons, would not be a danger to the public, and are deemed suitable by the Chief Constable.

A Visitor's Regulated Weapon Permit is also available.

Transfer Licence A licence provided for under the 1991 EU Directive on the movement of firearms within the EU and designed to cover commercial movements (including imports and exports between Member States).

Isle of Man Constabulary	Guidance on firearms and regulated weapons licensing and control; and applications for licences, regulated weapons certificates and visitor's permits.
	Firearms Licensing Department Police Headquarters Tromode Road Douglas Isle of Man, IM2 5PA
	Tel: (01624) 631379
Department for International Trade	Import Licensing Branch ILB Enquiry Point Tel: 01642 364333/334 Fax: 01642 364269 enquiries.ilb@trade.gsi.gov.uk https://www.ilb.trade.gov.uk/icms/fox/live/IMP_LOGIN/login https://www.ilb.trade.gov.uk/docs/DoINeedAnImportLicence.pdf
Police Service of Northern Ireland	Firearms Licensing and Explosives Branch, 42 Montgomery Road Belfast, BT6 9LD
	Tel: 028-9065-0222 Fax: 028-9070-0946 firearms@psni.pnn.police.uk http://www.psni.police.uk/firearms
British International Freight Association (for details of authorised carriers)	Redfern House Browells Lane Feltham Middlesex, TW13 7EP Tel: 0208-844-2266 Fax: 0208-890-5546 bifa@bifa.org http://www.bifa.org/Content/Home.aspx
British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Marford Mill Rossett Wrexham, LL12 0HL Shotgun, firearm and airgun issues Tel: 01244 573010 https://basc.org.uk/firearms/ https://basc.org.uk/firearms/contact-the-firearms-dept/

Summary of Import/Export Requirements

		Documents required		
IOM resident	Taking weapon to UK (as visitor) ²	IOM Permit or RWC	BVP	
	Taking weapon to Northern Ireland ²	IOM Permit or RWC	BVP	Approval Chief Constable, PSNI
	Taking weapon to Channel Isles	IOM Permit or RWC	Certificate, Temporary Permit or import licence from Channel Island Police	BVP if in transit through UK ²
	Taking weapon to EU	IOM permit or RWC	Visitors Permit	BVP in in transit through UK ²
	Taking weapon to non-EU	IOM Permit or RWC	Check with foreign embassy	BVP if in transit through UK ²
	Exporting weapon to EU ²	Export licence	Check with foreign embassy	
	Exporting weapon to non-EU ²	IOM Permit or RWC ¹	Check with foreign embassy	
	Bringing weapon from UK	IOM Permit or RWC	BVP if in transit through UK ²	
	Bringing weapon from EU	IOM Permit or RWC	BVP if in transit through UK ²	Import licence if prohibited weapon ¹⁰
	Bringing weapon from non-EU	IOM Permit or RWC	BVP if in transit through UK ²	Import licence if prohibited weapon ¹⁰
	Buying weapon from UK ²	IOM Permit or RWC	Check with supplier	
	Importing weapon from EU ²	IOM Permit or RWC	Transfer Licence ³	
	Importing weapon from non-EU	IOM Permit or RWC if personal effects and moving home	OR	IOM Permit or RWC and import licence if not personal effects and moving home

IOM dealer	Selling to UK (by post/carrier) ²	Check with customer	Customer needs permit or dealers' licence	
	Exporting to EU ²	Export licence	Import licence ⁴	Transfer licence ⁸
	Exporting to Channel Islands	Export licence	Import licence from Channel Islands ²	
	Exporting to non-EU ²	Export licence	Check with embassy	
	Buying from UK ²	Dealers' licence		
	Importing from EU	Dealers' licence	Transfer Licence ³	
	Importing from non-EU	Dealers' licence	Import Licence ⁹	
Visitors	From UK	Visitor's or temporary permit		
	From EU ⁵	Visitor's or temporary permit	EFP if in transit through UK ²	
	From non-EU	Visitor's or temporary permit	Import licence if prohibited weapon ^{2 and 9}	
	Buying weapon to take to UK	Cannot buy or acquire in IOM ⁶		
	Buying weapon to take to EU	Cannot buy or acquire in IOM ⁶		
	Buying weapon to take to non-EU	Cannot buy or acquire in IOM ⁷		
	Returning to UK	UK certificate or licence		
	Returning to EU	National certificate or licence	EFP if in transit through UK ²	Visitors Permit ⁸
	Returning to non-EU	National certificate or licence	Visitors Permit ⁸	BVP if in transit through UK ²

Notes

- 1 If you hold a personal licence/certificate for weapon the requirement for an export licence is waived.
- 2 Prohibited weapons moving in/through UK must be transported by authorised carrier. Check with intended carrier or airline.
- 3 Transfer Licence issued in Member State of supplier.
- 4 If required by Member State of destination. Check with authorities in that State and customer.
- 5 European Firearms Pass not required in Isle of Man.

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- 6 Dealer/supplier would have to arrange supply to customer in the UK.
 - 7 Dealer/supplier to arrange export licence etc.
 - 8 Used to support reason for travel with weapon.
 - 9 Obtained from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.
 - 10 An import licence is required for a prohibited weapon if it transits the UK.
 - 11 Those travelling to or from the Island must declare any firearm or regulated weapon they have with them in advance to the Isle of Man Steam Packet. The necessary form is provided online at <http://iompolice.im/advice/guidance-on-firearms> Note that foot passengers with such a firearm or regulated weapon will not be accepted for travel.

Amendments made to this Notice

7 April 2008	Terms “realistic imitation firearms” and “RIF” added on page 6 and in Glossary. Export requirements section updated and expanded. References to sanctions regime and arms embargoes, and the possible need for a cultural export licence added. Endnote section detailing amendments made to this Notice added. Offensive weapons section updated to refer to UK adding of samurai swords to its list of offensive weapons.
29 January 2009	List of prohibited imports replaced. Contact details updated in Glossary, and contact details for British Association for Shooting and Conservation added. Glossary entries re Part 1, Section 1 and Section 2 Firearms and Regulated Weapon amended.
2 September 2009	Details of Registered Firearms Dealer OIEL added.
16 October 2009	References to BERR replaced by references to BIS.
16 April 2010	Links for BIS, PSNI, BIFA and BASC updated.
13 July 2011	Updated references to BIS and Isle of Man temporary firearms permits inserted.
18 December 2012	Various amendments made concerning trade control licences, “obsolete calibre” firearms and ammunition and component parts.
7 April 2014	“Imports by other than private individuals from outside the EU” amended to reflect changes to import licensing requirements w.e.f. 1 April 2014.
8 May 2014	Insertions on disguised weapons, BB guns and airsoft guns. The information on antique weapons was replaced.
11 March 2015	Entry on importing firearms on page 8 expanded.
6 June 2016	Notice updated with information from IOM Constabulary; added information re crossbows and updated information in Glossary on deactivated firearms. Note on page 2 amended and paragraphs numbered
8 September 2016	References to BIS replaced by BEIS, and mention made of imports of deactivated firearms import requirements
27 October 2016	Links for British Association for Shooting and Conservation and Department for International Trade updated. Telephone number for IOM Police Firearms Licensing updated.
10 November 2016	Wording in paragraph 21(g) amended to provide greater clarity.
9 May 2017	Various amendments made to text and Glossary as a consequence to the coming into force of certain provisions contained in the Policing and Crime Act 2017 (of Parliament), and UK guidance on the imports of handguns into the Island inserted.

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Isle of Man
Government

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