

USAFE-U.K. Quick Reference

Guide: Firearms in the U.K.

According to USAFEI 51-710, Paragraph 4.1.1, "...It is not recommended that privately owned firearms be imported into the United Kingdom."

BLUF: THERE IS NO CONSTITUTIONAL OR LEGAL RIGHT TO "KEEP AND BEAR ARMS" IN THE U.K.

The importation, attempted importation, possession or attempted possession of the following firearms is illegal in the U.K.¹:

- **ANY HANDGUNS**
- **PUMP-ACTION OR SEMI-AUTO SHOTGUNS (CAPABLE OF HOLDING MORE THAN TWO SHELLS)**
- **ANY AUTOMATIC AND SEMI-AUTO RIFLES**

Any attempt to import firearms in your personal property shipments (hold baggage or household goods) **without first obtaining a Firearm or Shotgun Certificate** will result in the seizure of the firearms, criminal investigation by U.K. and U.S. law enforcement authorities and potential prosecution under U.K. or U.S. law. The seized items may be confiscated and destroyed. Additionally, shipment of ammunition in personal property shipments arranged by the DoD is prohibited.

¹ Many types of knives, including most folding knives, and swords are subject to similar prohibitions. Ask your sponsor for further information.



What is required to possess firearms in the U.K.?

You must obtain a Firearm or Shotgun Certificate from U.K. police authorities prior to possessing any firearm, including bolt-action, pump-action, lever-action or breech-loading single- or double-barreled rifles or shotguns. This process involves:

- Extensive Background Check, including a physical and mental health declaration supported by a *U.K.-licensed* general practitioner
- Interviewing TWO *U.K.* residents who: have known the applicant for at least TWO years (no family members), can vouch for the applicant's character, and are known by local authorities as possessing good character (Only one U.K. resident interview is required for a Shotgun Certificate)
- Commander's (or sponsor's commander's) written permission to possess a firearm in the U.K.
- Approved requests are subject to random police inspections of the firearm and safe storage container.

If you are unable to obtain a Firearm or Shotgun Certificate, you must dispose of your firearm **AT YOUR EXPENSE** (if it is not destroyed by U.K. authorities first). These expenses may include: the costs of obtaining a U.S. firearms import license; processing the firearm through a licensed U.S. firearms importer; and insured and expedited shipping rates.

For more information, visit the U.K. Government's website.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/firearms-licensing-police-guidance>

Contact Email:

public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk



I am in possession of a firearm and received a Consecutive Overseas Tour (COT) to the U.K.

If you receive a COT and currently possess a firearm, you must obtain a U.K. Firearm or Shotgun Certificate before attempting to import your firearm into the U.K. Otherwise, you must lawfully dispose of the firearm at your current location, or contact the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to submit an application to import the firearm into the U.S. **Processing an application to import a firearm into the U.S. may take six weeks or more.** The application process does not guarantee approval. Review the ATF website for specific instructions on the application and process:

<http://www.atf.gov/content/firearms/firearms-industry/guides/import-requirements-for-firearms-and-ammunition> – ATF Website

USAFE-U.K. Recommends...

LEAVE YOUR FIREARMS IN THE U.S. The importation of firearms into the U.K. is legally challenging and rarely approved for persons who have not resided in the U.K. for at least two years. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SHIP A FIREARM OR SHOTGUN WITH YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY WITHOUT A VALID U.K. FIREARM OR SHOTGUN CERTIFICATE.** Your personal property shipments will be inspected by the U.K. Border Agency upon arrival. Moving company employees are required to report to the police all firearms found in shipments. Even if you declared the firearms, you may be charged with a crime under U.K. law. U.K. and U.S. authorities will investigate the matter, which may lead to your prosecution under U.K. law or the UCMJ, and adverse administrative action, including separation, employment termination, and/or debarment from U.S. Force installations in the U.K.

Additional Resources

USAFEI 51-710

<https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/usafe/publication/usafei51-710/usafei51-710.pdf>

Foreign Clearance Guide

<https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>

U.K. Home Office Guide on Firearms

Licensing Law

The U.K. Home Office Guide provides very detailed information on obtaining a license for firearms in the U.K.:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518193/Guidance_on_Firearms_Licensing_Law_April_2016_v20.pdf

Personal Property Consignment

Instruction Guide - U.K. General

Instructions

U.K. Country Instructions are available in DPS, or from your local Personal Property Office. A summary of contents is included on the rear of DD Form 1434 United Kingdom (U.K.) Customs Declaration for the Importation of Personal Effects of U.S. Forces/Civilian Personnel on Duty in the U.K.