

Manual on the movement (into/out of the state) of firearms, ammunition, offensive weapons, explosives, explosive substances and military goods.

Document last reviewed April 2024

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1. Introduction

This manual provides a guide for staff when dealing with the movement of firearms, ammunition, offensive weapons, explosives, explosive substances and military goods.

For the purposes of this manual, the term 'movement' is defined as both intra-Community transfers and imports from and exports to third countries.

This manual explains the various licensing requirements for these goods. Assuming the necessary documentation is produced, the normal customs rules apply in relation to imports/exports from/to third countries (i.e. payment of duty and VAT at import and presentation of a customs declaration where necessary).

2. Restrictions and Prohibitions

The movement of certain categories of offensive weapons is prohibited and there are restrictions in place in respect of the movement of firearms, ammunition, explosives, explosive substances and military goods.

Details of these restrictions are set out in [Annex 1](#) of this manual. [Annex 2](#) sets out definitions of firearms, ammunition, offensive weapons, explosives, explosive substances and military goods.

Where the Department of Defence (DoD) moves goods for its own purposes, DoD issues its own licence, which is presented to Customs upon arrival of the goods.

Persons who are in the process of taking up permanent residence in the State may not import firearms or ammunition for the first six months of their residence and thereafter are subject to all the same requirements as an Irish Resident.

3. Derogations

Firearms, ammunition, explosives, explosive substances and military goods held on board a ship as part of the equipment of a ship are exempt from these restrictions. It is mandatory, however, that full particulars of these firearms, ammunition, explosives, explosives substances and military goods are included in the record of surplus stores on board the ship. Firearms and military goods may be brought ashore for repair under a permit issued by An Garda Síochána and this permit should be noted by Customs with:

- the description of the firearm and/or military goods
- the date of bringing ashore
- the date of return to the holder and,
- particulars of the landing and the subsequent return of the firearm and/or military goods should be noted in the record of surplus stores.

The movement out of the State of firearms, ammunition, humane killers, explosives, explosive substances and military goods by DoD or An Garda Síochána is also exempt from licence and certificate requirements. Specific arrangements are also in place to cover importations of firearms by An Garda Síochána.

In general, genuine antique firearms may be imported and exported without a licence. Firearms manufactured before c. 1898 with an ignition system that does not utilise cased ammunition are regarded as antique. Where there are doubts as to whether a firearm is an antique the matter should be referred to the Department of Justice (DoJ), Justice Service Delivery - Firearms & Explosives Licensing email firearms@justice.ie , Ph 01-859 2288. The firearm should be detained pending such clarification.

4. Action required

The following material is either exempt from or not required to be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2014

[...]

- It should be ensured that the goods are accompanied by the appropriate documentation required under Annex 1.
- When firearms, ammunition, explosives, explosive substances, pyrotechnic devices or military goods are moved as cargo, it should be confirmed that the correct licence code (1L32) and licence number has been inserted in Data Element 12.03 of the Customs Export Declaration or Data Element 02/03 of the Customs Import Declaration;
- The details of the firearm or humane killer (make, serial number etc.) should be checked to ensure that it compares in all respects to the details on any of the required documentation;
- The quantity of ammunition, explosives, explosive substances or military goods should be checked to ensure it does not exceed the quantity shown;
- It should be established that the person moving the firearms, ammunition, explosives, explosive substances or military goods is the person named on the documentation. A registered firearms dealer may act as an intermediary to move firearms for the holder of a firearms certificate.

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[...]

5. Detentions and seizures

6. Health and safety

The following material is either exempt from or not required to be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

[...]

Firearms, ammunition, offensive weapons, explosives, explosive substances, pyrotechnic devices and military goods should be handled as little as possible and with extreme caution.

The following material is either exempt from or not required to be published under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

[...]

8. Enquiries concerning this manual

Further queries can be directed to the Prohibitions and Restrictions Unit at:

Email: rcpr@revenue.ie

A more recent version of this manual is available.

9. Annex 1 – Legal Requirements

Firearms Dealer											
	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non – EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(2) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non – Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
1. Importing from another EU Member State		X	X								Both requirements are fulfilled through a single document issued by DoJ
2. Importing from outside the EU					X						
3. Exporting to another EU Member State						X		X			
4. Exporting outside the EU							X See 4d Control of Exports (Goods And Technology) Order 2009 S.I. No. 305 of 2009	X			

Individuals moving firearms/ammunition within EU											
	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued BY DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non - EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(2) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
1. Irish Resident importing firearms or ammunition from another EU Member State	X		X								Ammunition may only be imported in quantity as specified on certificate
2. Irish Resident exporting firearms or ammunition to another EU Member State	X					X		In the absence of a firearms certificate this authorisation is required instead			Ammunition may only be exported in quantity as specified on certificate
3. Irish Resident exporting humane killers to another EU Member State								X			

Individuals importing from/exporting firearms/ammunition to outside EU											
	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non - EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(2) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
1. Irish Resident importing firearms or ammunition from outside the EU	X										Ammunition may only be imported in quantity as specified on certificate
2. Irish Resident exporting firearms or ammunition to outside the EU	X						X See 4d Control of Exports (Goods And Technology) Order 2009 S.I. No. 305 of 2009	In the absence of a firearms certificate this authorisation is required instead			Ammunition may only be exported in quantity as specified on certificate

Temporary movement of individuals with firearms for sporting or recreational purposes

	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non – EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(2) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
1. EU Resident (excluding Irish Residents) shooting in Ireland for a period of 1 year or less									X	X	
2. Non-EU Resident shooting in Ireland for a period of 1 year or less										X	
3. Irish Resident temporarily shooting in another EU Member State	X								X		
4. Irish Resident temporarily shooting outside the EU for a period of 6 months or less	X										
5. Irish Resident shooting outside the EU for a period of 6 months or more	X						X				

Transit of individuals with firearms through the State to other countries

	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued BY DoJ	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non - EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Article 11(2) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
EU resident (excluding Irish Residents) transiting through this State to another State				X					X		
Non-EU residents transiting through this State to another State				X							

Movement of explosives and explosive substances											
	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued BY DoJ	Article 11 Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ Note: a transfer document is required for transit through the State	Non - EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
Importing from another EU Member State		X	X								Both requirements are fulfilled through a single document issued by DoJ
Importing from outside the EU		X									
Exporting to another EU Member State or to outside the EU		X					X				

Movement of military goods											
	Firearms Cert as issued by An Garda Síochána	Import Licence issued DOD	Article 11(4) Transfer Document issued by DoJ	Transit Through the State Licence issued by DoJ	Non - EU Import Licence issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DoJ	Export Licence issued by DETE	Authorisation for Export or Removal issued by An Garda Síochána	European Firearms Pass as issued by An Garda Síochána or other EU Member State	Non - Residents Firearms Certificate as issued by An Garda Síochána	Comment
Importing from another EU Member State or from outside the EU		X									
Exporting to another EU Member State or to outside the EU							X				

10. Annex 2 – Definitions

1. Firearm means:

- (a) A lethal firearm or other lethal weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged;
- (b) An air gun (including an air rifle and air pistol) with a muzzle energy greater than one joule or any other weapon incorporating a barrel from which any projectile can be discharged with such a muzzle energy;
- (c) A crossbow;
- (d) Any type of stun gun or other weapon for causing any shock or other disablement to a person by means of electricity or any other kind of energy emission;
- (e) A prohibited weapon, meaning and including any weapon of whatever description designed for the discharge of any noxious liquid, noxious gas or other noxious thing, and also any ammunition (whether for any such weapon or any other weapon) which contains or is designed or adapted to contain any noxious liquid, noxious gas or other noxious thing,
- (f) Any article which would be a firearm under any of the foregoing paragraphs or paragraph (h) but for the fact that, owing to the lack of a necessary component part or parts, or to any other defect or condition, it is incapable of discharging a shot, bullet or other missile or projectile or of causing a shock or other disablement, as the case may be;
- (g) Except where the context otherwise requires, any component part of any article referred to in any of the foregoing paragraphs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following articles shall be deemed to be such component parts:
 - (i) Telescope sights with a light beam, or telescope sights with an electronic light amplification device or an infra-red device, designed to be fitted to a firearm specified in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (e),
 - (ii) A silencer designed to be fitted to a firearm specified in paragraph (a), (b) or (e), and
 - (iii) Any object:
 - (I) Manufactured for use as a component in connection with the operation of a firearm, and
 - (II) Without which it could not function as originally designed,
- (h) A device capable of discharging blank ammunition and to be used as a starting gun or blank firing gun and includes a restricted firearm unless otherwise provided or the context otherwise requires.

2. Ammunition:

Ammunition (except where used in relation to a prohibited weapon) means ammunition for a firearm and includes:

- (a) grenades, bombs and other similar missiles, whether or not capable of being used with a firearm;
- (b) Any ingredient or component part of any such ammunition or missile;
- (c) Restricted ammunition, unless the context otherwise requires.

3. Offensive Weapons:

- (a) A flick-knife, which is: -
 - (i) A knife that opens when hand pressure is applied to a button, spring, lever or other device in or attached to the handle, or
 - (ii) A knife that has a blade, which is released from the handle or sheath by the force of gravity or the application of centrifugal force. When released it is locked in an open position by means of a button, spring, lever or other device;
- (b) A knuckle-duster, which is: -
 - (i) A band of metal or other hard material worn on one or more fingers, and designed to cause injury, or
 - (ii) Any weapon incorporating a knuckle-duster;
- (c) A swordstick or dagger cane is a hollow walking stick or cane containing a blade, which may be used as a sword or dagger;
- (d) A sword umbrella is an umbrella containing a blade, which may be used as a sword;
- (e) Any weapon from which one or more sharp spikes protrude that is worn attached to the foot, ankle, arm, hand or wrist (sometimes known as a footclaw or as a handclaw);
- (f) The weapon, sometimes known as a belt buckle knife, being a buckle, which incorporates or conceals a knife;
- (g) The weapon, sometimes known as a push dagger, being a knife the handle of which fits within a clenched fist with a blade protruding from between two fingers;
- (h) The weapon, sometimes known as a hollow kubotan, being a cylindrical container containing a number of sharp spikes;
- (i) The weapon, sometimes known as a shuriken, shaken or death star, being a hard-non-flexible plate having three or more sharp radiating points and designed to be thrown;

- (j) The weapon, sometimes known as a balisong or butterfly knife, being a blade enclosed by its handle, which is designed to split down the middle, without the operation of a spring or other mechanical means, to reveal the blade;
- (k) The weapon, sometimes known as a telescopic truncheon or telescopic billy, being a truncheon, which extends automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in or attached to its handle;
- (l) The weapon, sometimes known as a blowpipe or blow gun, being a hollow tube out of which hard pellets or darts are shot by the use of human breath;
- (m) The weapon, sometimes known as a kusari Gama, being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a sickle;
- (n) The weapon, sometimes known as a kyoketsu shoge, being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a hooked knife;
- (o) The weapon, sometimes known as a manrikigusari or kusari, being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at each end to a hard weight or handgrip;
- (p) The weapon, sometimes known as a sap glove, being a glove into which metal or some other hard material has been inserted or to which metal or such material has been attached;
- (q) The broad knife known as a machete or matchete
- (r) The sword sometimes known as samurai or katana, other than such a sword—
 - (i) made before 1954, or
 - (ii) made at any other time according to traditional methods of making swords by hand

5. Explosives and Explosive Substances:

Under S.I. No 423 of 2016 (Placing on market and supervision of explosives for civil uses);

Explosives means:

the materials and articles considered to be explosives in the United Nations recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods and falling within Class 1 of those recommendations;

Explosive substance means:

a solid or liquid substance, or

a mixture of solids or liquid substances or both, which is capable by chemical reaction in itself of producing gas at such a temperature and pressure and at such a speed as could cause damage to surroundings.

Pyrotechnic article* means any article containing explosive substances or an explosive mixture of substances designed to produce heat, light, sound, gas or smoke or a combination of such effects through self-sustained exothermic chemical reactions

Pyrotechnic substance means a substance or a mixture of substances designed to produce an effect by heat, light, sound, gas or smoke or a combination of these as the result of non-detonative self sustaining exothermic chemical reactions.

*Note that Pyrotechnic articles are not subject to [S.I. No.174 of 2016](#), and therefore do not require a transfer document. They do however require an import licence issued by DoJ.

In addition to the above, Certain Ammonium Nitrates, Sodium Chlorate, Nitro-Benzene, Potassium Nitrate and Sodium Nitrate have been deemed **as explosives under Explosives Act 1875 and, [S.I.No.191 of 1972](#), [S.I. No. 233 of 1972](#), and [S.I. No.273 of 1986](#).

**Note that substances deemed to be explosives are not subject to S.I. 423 of 2016, and therefore do not require a transfer document. They do however require an import licence issued from the DoJ.

6. Military Goods:

Military goods are defined as listed in Control of Exports (Goods and Technology) Order 2009 S.I. No. 305 of 2009

Under the [Control of Exports \(Goods And Technology\) Order 2009 S.I. No. 305 of 2009](#) military explosives are solid, liquid or gaseous substances or mixtures of substances which, in their application as primary, booster, or main charges in warheads, demolition and other military applications, are required to detonate.

11. Annex 3 – Related Documents and Instructions

1. Firearms, Ammunition, Humane Killers and Offensive Weapons:

[Prohibitions and Restrictions Unit](#)

[Firearms Act 1925](#)

[Firearms Act 1964](#)

[Firearms Act 1971](#)

[Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990](#)

[Firearms \(Firearms Certificates for Non- Residents\) Act 2000](#)

[SI No 66 of 1991: Firearms and Offensive Weapons 1991](#)

[Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons;](#)

[S.I. No. 362 of 1993: European Communities \(Acquisition and Possession of Weapons and Ammunition\) Regulations 1993](#)

[Control of Export Act 2008](#)

[Control of Exports \(Goods and Technology Order 2009 SI NO 305 of 2009](#)

[Criminal Justice Act 2006](#)

[Criminal Justice Act 2007](#)

[Criminal Justice \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 2009](#)

[SI No. 338 of 2009 Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act 1990 \(Offensive Weapons\) \(Amendment\) Order 2009\)](#)

[Directive 2008/51/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons](#)

[SI 493 of 2010 European Communities \(Acquisition and Possession of Weapons and Ammunition\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

2. Explosives and Explosive Substances:

[Prohibitions and Restrictions Unit](#)

[Explosives Act 1875](#)

[Explosive Substances Act 1883;](#)

[S.I.No.191 of 1972: Explosives\(Ammonium Nitrate and Sodium Chlorate](#)

[SI.No 233 of 1972:Explosives \(Ammonium Nitrate and Sodium Chlorate](#)

[S.I. No.273 of 1986: Explosives \(Potassium Nitrate and Sodium Nitrate\) Order, 1986;](#)

[S.I.No.449of 1994; Import of Explosives Order,1994](#)

[Directive 2013/29/EU on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of pyrotechnic articles](#)

[Directive 2014/28/EU on the harmonisation of the laws of the member states relating to the making available on the market and supervision of explosives for civil uses](#)

[S.I. No. 174/2015 - European Union \(Making Available on the Market of Pyrotechnic Articles\) Regulations 2015..](#)

[S.I. 423/2016 - European Union\(Making Available on the Market and Supervision of Explosives for Civil Uses\) Regulations 2016](#)

[Control of Exports Order 2009 \(SI 305 of 2009\)](#)

3. Military Goods

Verification Certificate in certain circumstances;

[Control of Exports \(Goods and Technology Order 2009 SI NO 305 of 2009](#)