

WVRPC: Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why must WVRPC act as one of my referees on renewal of my Firearms Certificate if I have nominated WVRPC as my "Primary" or Main Club?

On your renewal form (*Firearms Form 101*), you will see on the back page under *Note to Part E: Referees*, that if the application is for *renewal*, then one of the referees **MUST** be an official of the Home Office Approved club named on your FAC. If WVRPC is your primary club, then the Club Secretary/Police Liaison Officer, as nowadays is preferred by most Police Forces, should complete this reference for you and send it direct to the Police. Someone who has known you personally for at least two years and is **NOT** a member of a shooting club should complete your other referee form. They should complete their referee form and sign one of the photographs, then your referee should send these direct to the Police Firearms Licensing Department address shown on the letter sent to you by the Police when they sent you your renewal paperwork.

2) Why should I ensure that I always complete the Signing-in book when I attend WVRPC to use the ranges?

In order to continue to keep your Firearms Certificate, you need to show "Good Reason" for using each of your firearms listed on your FAC. Where good reason is given as Target Shooting and WVRPC is your Primary (Main) Club, when FAC renewal time looms, WVRPC, via our Police Liaison Officer, must certify to the Police the number of times in the last 12 months you have used each of those firearms. The only way we can do this is by checking on your Signing-in record, with each of your firearms identified. If you do not sign in, we have no record of your shooting attendance! To put it bluntly, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that we have up-to-date shooting records for you. If you have not shot as a member of WVRPC during the last 12 months, you will be included on the "nil shooting returns list" which WVRPC by law must return to the Police each year.

3) How often do I have to use each firearm?

"Good Reason" means that you must show that you use each of your firearms at least once a year. It is recommended that you keep a full record of your shooting, getting a club official at each of your listed clubs to sign each entry to certify that usage; this helps greatly when it comes to renewal time. You may not use all your firearms at all of your listed clubs: a personal record enables you to show the Firearms Enquiry Officer when he visits you which firearms you have used, where and when. The law says that it is YOUR responsibility to keep those records. In practice, many clubs keep shooting records on the club premises, which may be inspected by members or club officials as required.

Police forces consider that use of each firearm at least 3 times a year is adequate for justifying Good Reason, as detailed in "Firearms Law: Guidance to the Police". If you have been ill or have been away on business, etc, the Police should take this into consideration when considering "Good Reason".

4) I belong to a non-Home Office Approved club: what are the potential problems?

To qualify to hold/maintain a Firearms Certificate for Target Shooting, "Good Reason" requires you to be a member of a Home Office Approved club. You therefore **MUST** belong primarily to a Home Office Approved club: you may then belong, in addition, to a non-approved club. Non-approved clubs do not have any of the privileges of approved clubs and shooting records at such clubs are not normally accepted when applying for FAC renewal.

5) *I am also a member of other shooting clubs: what do I need to do at FAC renewal time*

If WVRPC is nominated as your Primary Club, WVRPC should complete one referee form (the Club form) as explained above. If one of your other clubs is listed as your Primary Club, they normally would complete the Club referee form.

6) *Am I limited to shooting at my nominated Home Office Approved Club, as listed on my FAC?*

My Firearms Certificate refers to being authorised to shoot at the club referred to on the Conditions stated on my Firearms Certificate. Where else can I shoot legally?

The law requires you to nominate a Home Office Approved club as your "Primary" or main club and this is detailed on your FAC. However, Firearms Law, Guidance to the Police, Section 13.43 states that "The applicant is not confined to shooting only under the auspices of that club ...". You must have a Home Office Approved club as your primary or main club and then you may shoot at other clubs or independently, as you like.

7) *What is Expanding Ammunition*

Expanding (hollow-point) ammunition is defined as a round which is specifically designed to expand in a controlled manner on contact with the target. While a non hollow-point round expands on contact, it is not specifically designed to do so in a controlled manner. Expanding ammunition is normally only authorised for hunting or vermin shooting. This covers both small-bore (.22) and full-bore calibres. Expanding (hollow-point) rounds are not allowed for target competition shooting, but you may use expanding ammunition at targets for zeroing and adjustments. Some police forces require that you list separately the target (solid point) and hollow-point ammunition of the same calibre, while other forces are happy to list "target and/or hollow-point" up to the maximum allowable for that calibre. Note that the .22 target ammunition that has a very small hole in the nose as part of the manufacturing process is NOT counted as "hollow-point".

8) *Ammunition and Home-loading Storage Requirements*

Black Powder shall now be stored in a plywood box of at least 19mm thick plywood, with divisions between each compartment of 6mm plywood, and, optionally with intumescent foam between each compartment. Each compartment should contain no more than 550 grams of powder and should have at least 30% free area in each compartment. While manufacturers continue to supply powders in 1 kg containers, this is acceptable. Normal smokeless powders do NOT have to be stored in such containers, once H & SE realised that smokeless powder is safe!

The law will probably shortly be amended so that you must be a holder of a Firearms Certificate in order to buy primers and reloading presses. This means effectively that you will need to show your FAC when buying, just like when you buy shotgun ammunition, you need to have a Shotgun Certificate. The change in law will not be expected to affect you buying cases, powder or bullets, nor will primers, etc be entered on your FAC.

9) *What is the law relating to Club Free Firearms Certificates*

Home Office Approved clubs may, by law, possess a free Firearms Certificate for club use. Excluded from the Club FACs are Long-range Pistols, Long-barrelled Revolvers and Section 1 Shotguns: these 3 categories are not covered by Home office Approval. Home Office

Approval covers the three categories: Small-bore Rifle; Full-bore Rifle and Muzzle-loading Pistol, for which clubs may hold a free FAC.

Where authorised in writing by the club FAC holder, a full club member may have in his possession club-owned firearms for storage or transportation, such as when the authorised FAC holder is unavailable, such as when he is on holiday or otherwise "indisposed". That authorised person must already have his own current FAC. The person holding the letter of authority should also have a photocopy of the club FAC in his possession. Small-bore clubs may take advantage of NSRA's "Exemption Certificate" issued annually by NSRA on request on receipt of a payment to NSRA.

10) *What is the minimum age for shooting club membership*

Looking at firearms, (not shotguns), there is no legal minimum age for a junior to be a member of a Home Office Approved club. It depends entirely on the club itself and its rules/constitution. For WVRPC, minimum age is 15.

Under 14, a young person is not allowed, by law, to handle or be given or possess a firearm or ammunition, or hold a Firearms Certificate. However, under the direct supervision of an "authorised person" of over 21, they may use firearms and ammunition either on an approved range, or over land authorised for deer or vermin shooting. Under 14, they may not have an FAC, but under certain circumstances, i.e. when regularly shooting competitions, the parent may hold an FAC on behalf of the child, with both parent and child named on it and both of them vetted for the FAC. The child still cannot handle the firearm except on a range or approved land as above. Wey Valley R & PC have further rules regarding coaching of those under 18 and also rules regarding the relationship of a coach or instructor to the person being instructed.

Often, children will start at an airgun club or the airgun section of a Home Office approved club and then work up to FAC firearms when big enough and old enough.

For full details of the law, refer to "Firearms Law Guidance to the Police 2002", section 7.8 to 7.14. If you do not have a copy, you can either buy a hard copy from the Stationery Office (look on their website under Firearms Law guidance...) at £9.95 + postage, from NSRA or you can download free (about 250 pages) from our website at www.weyvalleyrpc.org.uk along with various other useful forms.