

About the new firearms safety programme

Police are improving firearms safety training by introducing a practical training component in addition to the theory test. The practical training is designed to teach you how to handle and use firearms safely. The requirement to pass the theory test isn't changing, however the way you sit the test is.

Who's affected by these changes

If you're...	then you..
applying for your first licence and you haven't attended the old firearms safety course or the Whakatūpato programme	need to complete the new firearms safety programme.
applying for your first licence and you have successfully completed the old firearms safety course or the Whakatūpato programme	don't need to complete the new firearms safety programme.
an existing or previous licence holder applying for a new firearms licence	will (as now) be directed by Police to either complete the firearms safety test (in the application form) when you're interviewed, or to undertake the firearms safety programme.

Note: Police will send you a letter confirming that you can undertake the firearms safety programme, which you need to take with you to sit the theory test and attend the practical training.

Why we're making these changes

Safety is critical when storing, handling or using a firearm. The firearms safety programme will ensure you have a strong understanding of the Arms Code, particularly the seven basic rules of firearms safety, and your legal obligations. It will also provide you with an opportunity to practice the safe handling and use of a firearm.



Firearms theory test (available from 1 July)

The firearms theory test is a computer-based multi-choice test that requires you to show that you understand how to safely store, handle and use firearms.

To pass, you must get at least 28 of the 30 questions correct. Seven of the questions relate to the seven basic rules of firearms safety and you need to answer all of these correctly. You'll find all of the information you need to know in the 2013 Arms Code.

It's not hard to pass the firearms theory test if you study the Arms Code thoroughly, not just read it once. We also encourage you to complete our quiz to check your understanding of the Arms Code. The Arms Code quiz will be available on the Police website in early July.

Where to sit the firearms theory test

You can sit the firearms theory test at Automobile Association (AA) driver licensing outlets, (including all AA Centres, AA Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agents and the AA's Rural Mobile Units), as well as Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ) branches that offer driver licensing throughout the country.

What happens when you pass the firearms theory test

When you pass the firearms theory test, you will be able to book on, and attend, the firearms practical training course.



Firearms practical training (available from 1 August)

The firearms practical training course is a two hour session delivered by firearms instructors from the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council at venues across the country.

The course will provide you with hands-on experience in safe handling and use of a firearm.

You'll be able to view a schedule of courses and locations, and book online later in July, to attend a session that's convenient for you.

During the course, you'll have an opportunity to practice:

- safety precautions and general handling skills with different types of firearms
- safe carriage of firearms, including checking the firearm is safe and placing or removing it from a rifle carry bag, transit case or a vehicle
- states of readiness (load, action, instant, unload).

Note: There is no live firing of firearms in this course. Your firearms instructor will provide deactivated firearms. Do **not** take a firearm with you.

What happens when you complete the practical training

Police will contact you to arrange a time to interview you and check your firearms security. We'll also arrange to interview your referees.

How the application process will work from 1 July



You...
complete your application form and pay the firearms licence application fee, then submit your application to Police



Police...
conduct an initial background check



Police...
interview you and check your security arrangements. We also interview your referees and complete any remaining enquiries



Police...
decide whether to approve your firearms licence application



If your licence is approved



You...
receive your firearms licence card

If you need to complete the firearms safety programme. See the table above for a guide on who needs to complete the firearms safety programme.



You...
sit the theory test and, when you pass, attend the practical training



When you complete the firearms safety programme

If you need help...

Please let the Arms Officer in the police district nearest to you know if you need help to complete the firearms theory test or practical training for any reason. They can discuss the options available with you.

More information

More information about the firearms safety programme, the theory test and practical training, as well as a quiz to check your understanding of the Arms Code, will be available on the Police website in early July.

You'll also find the Arms Code and the application form for a New Zealand firearms licence on the Police website, or you can obtain a copy from your nearest Arms Office once you have applied for a licence.

Note: The cost of doing the firearms theory test and practical training is currently provided for in the licence application fee.