

Firearms Safety



OUTDOOR SAFETY

NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL

FIREARMS

New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) is a leading authority for outdoor safety information and training in New Zealand.

MSC's volunteer firearms instructors are approved by NZ Police to deliver firearm safety training and administer the Firearm Safety Test to new firearms licence applicants.

FIREARMS LICENCING

- All those who possess a firearm need a Firearms Licence.
- Application for a Firearms Licence must be made at the nearest Police Station.
- 16 years is the minimum age to apply for a licence.
- A first time licence applicant must undertake training in safe handling, storage and use of firearms as outlined in the Arms Code.

On completion of this training, the licence applicant is required to sit the Firearms Safety Test.

- Police will carry out inquiries to determine if the applicant is fit and proper to possess firearms.

For more details, refer to the NZ Police 'Arms Code.'

JOIN A CLUB

It's best to join a club when getting involved in shooting activities.

There are clubs for:

- Hunting
- Pistol shooting
- Clay target shooting
- Smallbore rifle shooting
- Fullbore rifle shooting, and others.

See useful contacts on the back page of this pamphlet.

Safety

THE NZ FIREARMS SAFETY CODE

The following seven rules are part of the NZ Arms Code and must be followed:

1 **Treat every firearm as loaded**

Check every firearm yourself. Pass or accept a firearm only if it has the action open and is not loaded. If it belongs to someone else, ask them to show you that it is empty.



2 **Always point firearms in a safe direction**

This rule can be easily broken so extra care is necessary particularly when moving firearms, e.g. when you are:

- ⊕ Crossing a fence
- ⊕ Placing a firearm in a vehicle
- ⊕ Unloading a firearm from a vehicle
- ⊕ Preparing a firearm for use, e.g. loading or unloading a firearm.

3 **Load a firearm only when ready to fire**

Only load a firearm when you intend to fire, and only in an area where it can be safely and legally discharged.

4

Identify your target beyond all doubt

Never fire unless you are absolutely certain that your target is not a person. Do not fire at movement, colour, shape or sound only. If in doubt, don't shoot.

5

Check your firing zone

You must think about what you could hit in the area between you and your target, and in the area beyond the target. Remember that when you follow a moving target with your firearm, your firing zone changes rapidly. When shooting near thick bush or scrub, extra care should be taken as you may not be able to see all of your firing zone.

6

Store firearms and ammunition safely

When not in use, lock away the unloaded firearm, bolt and ammunition separately. If you possess a semi-automatic or lever-action firearm, you need to use a trigger lock. Firearms must be safe and secure whether you're at home or in the field.



7

Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms

Alcohol and some drugs, even if prescribed, dull and slow your mental and physical reactions. This is dangerous because you must be able to think clearly when handling firearms.

REMEMBER

- ⊕ Have your firearm checked regularly by a gunsmith who knows about the firearms you own.
- ⊕ Don't rely on safety catches - they are subject to wear and may not work properly.
- ⊕ Make sure there is nothing obstructing the barrel of your firearm before you fire.
- ⊕ Learn basic bush skills such as navigation, first aid, river crossing and survival if you're going hunting.
- ⊕ Get permission before shooting on any land.
- ⊕ Protect your hearing with proper ear muffs or ear plugs, and protect your eyes with safety glasses when shooting.

THE ARMS CODE

For more comprehensive information on owning a firearm, refer to the Arms Code.

The Arms Code is a firearms safety manual compiled by NZ Police with the assistance of MSC. It is essential reading for all firearm owners and users, and includes information on choosing a firearm, firearm types, correct ammunition, applying for a licence, buying and selling, safe storage, and the basic rules of firearms safety.

You can download the Arms Code from the NZ Police website at www.police.govt.nz/services/firearms. It is also available free from MSC and all police stations.

RESOURCES

MANUALS

- Arms Code
- New Zealand Firearms Handbook
- HUNTS Manual (Hunter National Training Scheme)
- Bushcraft Manual
- Outdoor First Aid Manual
- Outdoor Safety – Risk Management
- NZ Bow Hunting Manual

PAMPHLETS

- Going Bush? – tramping safety
- Survival
- Radio Communications
- Hypothermia
- River Safety (WSNZ)
- Mountain Radio Service – contacts
- Let it Breathe – camping appliance safety

VIDEOS/DVDS

- On Target – safe and successful hunting in NZ
- Do You Need to Cross? – river safety
- Found Alive – bush survival
- It Was Just a Tramp in the Bush - Bushcraft

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

- Firearms Safety Hologram Cards
- Firearms Safety Code Poster

USEFUL CONTACTS

- www.police.govt.nz – New Zealand Police
- www.nzshootingfed.org.nz – NZ Shooting Federation
- www.nranz.com – National Rifle Association of NZ
- www.nzclaytarget.org.nz – NZ Clay Target Association
- www.pistolnz.org.nz – NZ Pistol Association
- www.targets shootingnz.co.nz – Target Shooting NZ
- www.deerstalkers.org.nz – NZ Deerstalkers' Association



For resources and further information contact:

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