

Penalties

You will have to be responsible about how you use your airgun, otherwise you could face stiff penalties.

- If you carry an airgun or even possess it without a lawful purpose, you could be fined \$4000 and/or imprisoned for up to 3 years.
- Careless use of an airgun may bring a fine of \$4000 and /or up to 3 years in prison.
- Firing an airgun in a way that may endanger, annoy or frighten anyone or harm property could mean you are fined \$3000 and/or are imprisoned for up to 3 months.
- For unlawfully pointing an airgun at someone, you could be fined \$1000 and/or spend up to 3 years in prison.
- If you sell or supply an airgun to an unlicensed person under 18, you could be fined \$1000 and /or imprisoned for up to 3 months. This could happen when an adult buys a child an airgun as a gift.

The 7 Basic Rules of Firearm Safety

1. **Treat every firearm as loaded**
2. **Always point firearms in a safe direction**
3. **Load a firearm only when ready to fire**
4. **Identify your target**
5. **Check your firing zone**
6. **Store firearms and ammunition safely**
7. **Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms**

Further Information

For more information concerning airguns and other firearms, please visit the New Zealand Police website:

www.police.govt.nz

- on the **services** menu, under **firearms**.



Beginning with Airguns



Special Message to Parents

Some parents may be dismayed when their child wants an airgun, but airgun ownership can have a positive role in developing safe practice with firearms.

An air rifle is preferable to an air pistol. It is an ideal first gun; a training firearm that a young person can learn to handle responsibly and safely.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council offers a free firearm safety lecture. You should contact your local Police Arms Officer for further details.

What is an Airgun?

Under the Arms Act 1983, "airgun" includes air rifles, air pistols, BB guns, soft air pellet guns and paintball guns. Essentially, any weapon that has a gas or compressed air firing mechanism is classed as an airgun.

Use of Airguns

- Anyone 18 years of age or older can possess and use an airgun.
- People under 18 years of age may use an airgun if:
 - They hold a New Zealand firearms licence* OR
 - They are under the IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION of a firearms licence holder or a person 18 years of age or older.
- Anyone under 16 years of age must always be under the IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION of a firearms licence holder or a person 18 years of age or older.

*Note: You must be 16 years of age or older to apply for a New Zealand firearms licence.

"IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION" means that the licensed or older person is within reach and in control of the person using the airgun. The person providing the supervision cannot be in possession or control of another firearm or airgun.

Young Airgun Owners

If you are 16 or 17 you can see the Arms Officer at a Police station about getting a licence. The Arms Officer will give you a free copy of the Arms Code, which is a book about firearm safety.

You will be asked to give the names of 2 people, one a close relative. The Police will ask these people if you are a suitable person to use and possess firearms.

You will also be asked to attend a firearms safety lecture. These lectures are run by instructors from the Mountain Safety Council. Then you sit a written test and, if you pass, the instructor will issue you a certificate. The results of your test will be passed on to the Arms Officer.

If the Arms Officer considers you a fit and proper person they will issue you with your firearms licence.

Care Needed

These are all airguns but look like real firearms.



They should never be used in situations where they might be mistaken for real firearms.

Safe Storage of Airguns

IMPORTANT

An airgun can cause serious injury if used incorrectly.

When you are not using your airgun, it should be locked away in a safe place inaccessible to children.

Fully Automatic Airguns

Police have warned people who own fully automatic airguns they are breaking the law unless they have a firearms licence with a Restricted Weapons endorsement. Although the guns are only air powered, their firing mechanism means they are restricted weapons.

They fire hundreds of rounds a minute and some will punch a hole in a piece of gib-board in a few seconds.

They are definitely not toys.

If owners modify their weapons to make them semi-automatic, they would not need to take any further action - but if the weapon remains fully automatic, then it is a Restricted Weapon, which means they have to get a firearms licence with the correct endorsement and have secure storage facilities.

Paintball Airguns

Police do not advocate shooting at any person with an airgun. However, in the case of paintball marker games where the object may be to shoot your opponents, strict safety guidelines must be adhered to.

Organised games and competitions are available in New Zealand, usually at commercial game fields. The operators of these fields adhere to a voluntary code of practice, including the application of strict safety measures.

More information is available from the New Zealand Paintball Players Association Incorporated.

E-mail: info@paintball.gen.nz

Set up a Range

To get the most fun out of your airgun, in a safe and responsible way, set up a properly constructed range in your backyard or basement. Your range must have a backstop like a solid fence or wall and no one should be able to walk between the target and your airgun while you are shooting.

There should be a "pellet trap", such as a cardboard box full of sand, with the target fixed to it.

Thought should be given to where the pellet will go if it misses the target or ricochets off paths, walls and other hard surfaces.