

General

The Violent Crime Reduction Bill became Law at the end of June 2006. The first part to take effect is that which raises from 17 to 18 years, the age at which a person may buy or be sold an air weapon, or ammunition for an air weapon.

Implementation of the part relating to trade in air weapons will be delayed until Rules have been made and practical arrangements are finalised. **Until then, some of the detail will remain uncertain.**

This briefing note is concerned only with low powered air weapons which generate a muzzle energy in excess of one joule (0.7375 foot pounds) but not exceeding 8.13 joules (6 foot pounds) for an air pistol or 16.27 joules (12 foot pounds in any other case). Soft air guns are not considered, nor are *high powered* air weapons that are above the set limit.

Component parts of those air weapons - that is such pressure bearing parts as the barrel, cylinder or air reservoir and piston, (but not screws, springs, stocks and other parts that are not pressure bearing) must be regarded as if they were air weapons in their own right.

Registered Firearms Dealers

From the date on which the Rules take effect, only registered firearms dealers (RFDs) will be permitted to *sell or transfer* air weapons *by way of trade or business*. *Transfer* includes letting on hire, giving, lending or parting with possession.

Air weapons repairers will not be required to be RFDs, but the complexity of the law about transfers of air weapons to individuals linked with the fact that most repairers sell at least a small number of air weapons means that most would be wise to become RFDs.

Selling air weapon ammunition will not be restricted to RFDs.

Existing RFDs will continue to sell air weapons with no change other than a need to keep records of airgun sales and a requirement for face-to-face transactions where airguns are sold.

Sales in Person

A further restriction will require that all sales be in person. This will apply where a person *sells* an air weapon *by way of trade or business* to another person in Great Britain who is not registered as a firearms dealer. It does not apply to transfers so that airguns that have been repaired need not be returned in person, but can be sent by carrier. The restriction does not apply to sales that are completed outside Great Britain, for example where air weapons are sold by a person in another country by mail order or via the internet and then posted to someone in Great Britain.

Where this section applies, the buyer and the seller or his representative (the seller's servant, another RFD or his servant) must be present in person so that the final transfer of possession is *face to face*.