

How to apply for a firearm or shotgun certificate

If you want to own a firearm or shotgun, you need to apply for a certificate

This means you'll need to

- complete an [application form](#) or use the online [application service](#)
- pay the [application fee](#)

If you already have a certificate, but it has expired, you must apply for a new certificate.

You can also use this application process to renew an existing certificate.

Which certificate do you need?

The characteristics of a gun, not its name, define the certificate.

Gun type	Characteristics	Firearm certificate	Shotgun certificate
Firearm	Rifled barrel, firing ammunition	✓	
Shotgun or musket	Smooth bore, firing cartridges or blanks		✓
Multi-shot shotgun	Capable of holding more than three cartridges	✓	
Air rifle	Kinetic energy in excess of 12ft/lbs	✓	

There are some circumstances in which you can shoot without a certificate.

[Find out more about UK firearms licensing laws.](#)

Who can apply?

There are [age restrictions](#) for firearm and shotgun certificates. Please check these before starting your application.

Prison or suspended sentence

You can apply for a certificate five years after your release date if

- your prison sentence (or suspended sentence) was equal to three months, or was more than three months and less than three years in length
- You can apply for a certificate five years from the second day after being sentenced if:
- your prison sentence was suspended and was equal to three months, or was more than three months and less than three years in length
- You cannot apply for a certificate if:
- your prison sentence (or suspended sentence) was three years or more

What you need to apply

Before you start your application, there are some things you'll need to prepare in advance

Photo

You'll need to provide a passport-style photo of yourself which must

- show your true likeness
- show your full face without a head covering (unless for religious or medical reasons)
- have a plain cream or grey background (without objects or people in the background)
- You must:
- look straight at the camera
- have a neutral expression with your eyes open and mouth closed
- not wear sunglasses or tinted glasses
- not have 'red eye'
- A digital photo must be used for online applications.
- Your digital photo must:
- be in .jpg or .jpeg format
- be no larger than 1MB file size

Referees

You need details of two referees. You'll need to provide their

- date of birth
- place of birth
- occupation
- contact details

Before you apply

- read the application [guidance notes](#) for the rules on who can act as your referee
- share the [guidance for referees](#) with your chosen referees

Your details

You need to provide your own contact details, including

- email address
- phone number
- work contact details (if not unemployed or retired)
- previous addresses if you haven't lived at your current address for more than five years

For information on how we handle data, read the application [guidance notes](#)

Health and medical information

You'll need to provide the following information

- details of any relevant conditions you need to disclose (you'll find a list of those in the guidance notes)
- your GP name, practice address, postcode, email and phone number
- any previous GP or practice information (within the last 10 years)
- if there have been times when you haven't been registered with a GP or practice in the UK, we'll need to know about this and will ask why this was and if there is any information you can give us about this, for example, if you're in the armed services and were posted abroad
- your completed [GP proforma](#) - you'll need to download this and have your GP fill it in. Then submit it as part of your application. If submitting online, it should be in PDF or .jpeg format

Firearms and ammunition details

If you're applying for a firearms certificate, we'll ask you for

- calibre
- type
- good reason for having
- calibre and quantity of ammunition
- how and where the firearm(s) will be stored

Details of previous offences

We'll ask you for details of any

- convictions
- written cautions
- out of court disposals
- bindovers
- reprimands
- fixed penalty notices (including speeding, but not including parking offences)

We'll ask for the date (month and year).

For more information, read the application [guidance notes](#).

Details of people who have access to your firearms

We'll ask you for details of anyone who could have access to where you'll store your firearm or shotgun. For example, housemates or relatives. You will need to fill in a [household occupancy form](#).

On this you'll need to provide

- their name/s
- previous names
- date of birth
- place of birth
- relationship to you

Where you'll use your firearm

We'll ask you for the details of any private land or registered club where you'll be using your firearm.

On private land you'll need to provide

- landowner contact details
- description of the land, including size
- reason you wish to shoot on the land
- information on whether the land has been authorised by the police

At a shooting club you'll need to provide

- the club name
- details of the nominated officer
- Home Office approval number
- Copy of existing certificate

If you're renewing, you'll need to provide a copy of all pages of your current certificate(s), including table one and two.

Apply or renew

Use our [application service](#) to get started. It will tell you how to apply, how much you'll need to pay and how long it will take to get a certificate.

After you apply

If you've submitted your application online, you can download a copy for your own records.

We'll carry out background checks. This includes contacting referees and, if relevant, your GP.

We'll also assess your suitability to receive a certificate. [As part of the assessment, a firearms enquiry officer \(FEO\) will interview you at your home address.](#) Once we've reached a decision on your application, we'll contact you to let you know the outcome.