

Safety and security advice for Firearms or Shotgun Holders



This page provides advice and guidance for firearms or shotgun holders. Following each step at all times will help to ensure your safety and everyone else's.

Shotguns and Firearms

- **Keep your weapon locked up.** In a secure cabinet, preferably hidden in a larger storage area to prevent, children or unauthorised users from mishandling your gun. Never store a weapon in a loaded condition.
- **Keep your ammunition safe.** In a secure cupboard and out of reach of children. Firearms ammunition must be locked away separately to the gun.
- **Before you use your gun.** Keep it in its container until you are ready to use it. Carry the gun to the location in its slip so that if it rains, there is somewhere dry to stow it. Open the gun as you take it out of the container, that way it can immediately be seen to be unloaded and the barrel(s) clear. Keep the gun broken until just before you are ready to fire it.
- **Never point a gun at anybody.** Regardless of whether it is loaded or not, do not point a gun at people. It will only frighten them and can you be absolutely sure it is not loaded?
- **Never trust the safety catch.** It could be faulty and at best is only a second line of defence.
- **Don't load a weapon unless you are expecting to make a shot.** Only shoot when you are sure of your target and you are sure it is safe to do so.
- **Never leave a gun unattended.** Even if it is unloaded, it must never be unattended.
- **Never carry a gun:**
 1. Cradled in your arms
 2. Over your shoulder with the barrels pointing behind
 3. With the safety catch off
 4. With your finger on the trigger
 5. Pointing the barrels sideways into hedgerows, woodland or any direction common sense tells you could be dangerous.



Closing the gate on rural crime



Shotguns

In addition to the points above, it is of paramount importance that shotguns are always stored and used in a safe manner:

- Always prove that a shotgun is unloaded as soon as you handle it
- Always prove that a shotgun is empty, before handing it to someone else, by offering it to him or her with the breech open
- Never load your shotgun indoors
- Never allow unauthorised persons access to your shotgun
- Never stand a shotgun in such a position that it can fall or be knocked over

To safely **transport** a shotgun:

- Always keep your shotgun in its case or cover while transporting it
- Never transport a loaded shotgun
- If staying away from home overnight, your shotgun should be stored, preferably with a Registered Firearms Dealer or in a secure cabinet of another suitable certificate holder
- If it is absolutely necessary to leave your shotgun in a vehicle, it must be stored out of sight, preferably in the locked boot. Consider taking a small part of the weapon, such as the fore-end, with you and always ensure that you lock the vehicle securely
- If this is to be a regular habit, have a lockable metal storage case welded inside the vehicle's boot.

Firearms

Shooters who use their firearms for hunting, deer stalking and vermin control, must ensure that they are using their firearms within the authorisation limits of their firearm certificates. Importantly, this includes where you are permitted to shoot.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the land you are shooting on is authorised on your firearm certificate, or deemed suitable by the Chief Officer of Police for that area.

Remember, unlike a shotgun, you cannot lend or borrow firearms. Normally you must hold the authority for a particular weapon, on your firearm certificate, in order to have it in your possession.

