



Policy Directive

PERSONAL PROTECTION WEAPON POLICY

Policy Identification Number	09/2006
Protective Marking	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED
Policy Ownership:	
Department	Service Improvement Department
Branch	Firearms and Explosives Branch
Author	C142618
Policy Approved By:	
Service Executive	
Department or Branch Head	Deputy Head of Department
Date Of Approval	14 April 2015
Date First Issued:	1 December 2005
Version Number	3
This Version Issued:	7 May 2015
Review Date:	3 years from issue date

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) The Chief Constable is responsible for the administration of the firearms licensing system in Northern Ireland. This function is carried out on his behalf by Firearms and Explosives Branch, Service Improvement Department.
- (2) The licensing of firearms for the purpose of personal protection is a unique situation in Northern Ireland. To qualify for the grant of a personal protection weapon (PPW) an individual is required to meet certain conditions to satisfy the need for a PPW and the requirements of the Firearms (NI) Order 2004 (the Order).
- (3) The Policy provides the basis for decision-making by police staff in Firearms and Explosives Branch, who have delegated authority under Article 79 for the authorisation of applications for the grant of a Firearm Certificate for a PPW

2. INTRODUCTION

(1) Summary

- (a) For the purposes of this Policy an applicant for a PPW will be deemed to have 'good reason' if it is established that:
 - (b) There is a specific threat against the individual which creates a real and immediate risk verified by a specialist police report; or
 - (c) In exceptional circumstances, a verifiable level of risk is established by other information and
 - (d) The possession of a firearm is a reasonable, proportionate and necessary measure to protect the life of the applicant.
- (e) In addition to satisfying good reason primacy exists in the decision-making process to the requirements of Article 5(2) (a) of the Order in that the applicant must be considered a fit person to be entrusted with a firearm.

(2) Application

This policy applies to any person who in accordance with the Order is required to have a Firearm Certificate to legally possess a firearm and ammunition for personal protection purposes.

(3) Legal Basis

The Firearms (NI) Order 2004.

The Police (NI) Act 2000. The protection of life and property Section 32 (1).

3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

Risks

The application of the Policy will on occasions lead to the refusal or revocation of a firearm certificate for the possession of a firearm for personal protection purposes. This may result in the policy being challenged by way of appeal to the Secretary of State and possible Judicial Review

4. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/CODE OF ETHICS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- (1) This Policy and all documents referenced at Section 5 below are deemed to be Human Rights compliant. The European Convention rights enforceable under HRA 1998, which are most likely to be relevant to this guidance are the following:
 - (a) Article 2 Right to life
 - (b) Article 8 Right to respect for private and family life
- (2) This Policy has been screened for Section 75 considerations and complies with the PSNI Code of Ethics.
- (3) This Policy is suitable for public disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5. FURTHER PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

SP 5/15 Personal Protection Weapons

PD 01/11 Management Of Intelligence

The Firearms (NI) Order 2004

Guidance on NI Firearm Controls

6. REVIEW

- (1) This Policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner to reflect changes if necessary.
- (2) Miscellaneous: Should anyone wish to express dissatisfaction with any part of the operation of the process outlined in this guidance, in the first instance, this should be raised with Emma Newell, Firearms and Explosives Branch.