



CHANGING ADDRESS

This fact sheet gives advice on what a Firearm or Shotgun certificate holder needs to do for a permanent change of address.

What you need to know

Every Firearm and Shotgun Certificate carries the following statutory condition.

(iii) the holder of the certificate must, without undue delay, inform the chief officer of police by whom the certificate was granted of any change in his/her permanent address;

It is an offence to fail to abide by any condition on a certificate.

When should I notify my change of address?

The most important words are “without undue delay”. These words do not impose a fixed timescale whereby notification has to take place; rather they accept that everybody’s circumstances are different and that some moves take longer than others to complete.

A reasonable interpretation would be that when someone has unpacked their things, settled themselves into their new home and installed their security measures then they should tell the Chief Officer who issued the certificate that they have moved.

How do I send details of my change of address?

This can be done by email to the email address in the firearms licensing section on that police force’s website. Alternatively, many police firearms licensing websites now have an online form which the certificate holder can complete to notify their change of address.

If notification is made by conventional mail, then use the “Signed For” option. In every case, keep a copy of the notification and any proof of posting etc. In the case of an email, ask for a Read Receipt.

Remember, you always notify the force that issued your certificate, even if you have moved to a new police force area.

Do I need to send my certificate with the notification of my change of address?

You do not have to send your old certificate in with the notification.

BASC's advice is that you should not, as you will need it to demonstrate lawful possession of the firearms/shotguns and to purchase ammunition. A certificate is still valid even though the holder has moved address.

What happens next?

In due course the Licensing Department will send a Firearms Enquiry Officer (FEO) to your new address to check that your security measures are adequate, sited in an appropriate place and properly installed. (If you have any doubts about where to site a cabinet, Sections 18 and Appendix 7 of the Home Office Guide on Firearms Licensing Law contain good advice as does the Firearms Security Handbook 2020).

The FEO will probably want to check that the serial numbers on your firearms match those on the National Firearms Licensing System.

You do not have to complete a new application form if you move police areas.

What if I'm asked to surrender my old certificate?

You may be asked to give up your old certificate.

BASC's advice is that you should not do so until you have received a new one with your updated address on it. Firearms licensing is currently subject to long delays in all processes, and you will need it to demonstrate lawful possession of the firearms/shotguns and to purchase ammunition.

Do I need to inform of a temporary change of address?

It is important to note that the Chief Officer does not have to be informed of any temporary change of address, e.g. a move to short term rental accommodation whilst building work is taking place. Similarly, someone working away from home on a fixed contract or living in student accommodation during term time would not have to notify a change of address either.

A reasonable test to apply is whether or not the person living away intends to return and can do so whenever he/she pleases.

Notifying the Chief Officer of a permanent change of address is very important aspect of the licensing audit trail. Anyone who fails to do so, or takes an unnecessary amount of time to do so, commits a criminal offence and can expect to be punished either by prosecution or certificate revocation. Forgetfulness is not a defence; neither is distraction nor inertia.

Useful Links

[Firearms Security Handbook, 2020](#)

[Home Office Guidance on Firearms Licensing Law, 2021](#)

BASC members can receive further advice by contacting our Firearms Department on 01244 573 010.

