



THE VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION ACT 2006 (SPECIFICATION FOR IMITATION FIREARMS) REGULATIONS 2011

Introduction

The underlying purpose of these regulations is to prevent imitation firearms from being converted into functioning firearms.

The Firearms Act 1982 contains controls on the conversion of imitation firearms. If they are readily convertible into a live firearm, they are treated in law as if they were a real firearm and must be held on a firearm certificate or, in the case of handguns, are prohibited.

'Readily convertible' is defined in the Act as being capable of conversion without any special skill and using tools which are in common use for home maintenance. In recent years this definition has been overtaken by the availability of specialist tools on the high street and through the internet.

Following concerns from the Association of Chief Police Officers that imitation firearms were increasingly being converted and used in crime, and to address the issue of 'readily convertible', section 39 of the 2006 Act was introduced. It makes it an offence to manufacture or import an imitation firearm which does not conform to specifications made by the Secretary of State. There is also a provision to specify a body to certify that an imitation firearm so conforms. Section 39 commenced on 1 October 2007 and these regulations finalise the Section's implementation.

NB: To date no certifying body has been appointed and BASC will advise change by revising this fact sheet once more detail is known

This specification is for blank firing revolvers

- An imitation revolver must incorporate an inclusion cast into the dummy barrel and a separate inclusion cast into the cylinder which extends to fully obstruct all the dummy chambers;
- The inclusions must be wholly made of a material which is at least as resistant to being cut, drilled, bored, ground (or any similar process) as sintered tungsten carbide in the range 1550-2000 HV 30;
- The inclusions should be permanent and incapable of being knocked out without destroying the chamber or barrel;
- The barrel inclusion must wholly block the dummy barrel and part of it must be incorporated into the rear of the dummy barrel;
- The barrel inclusion must be intended to prevent removal of the dummy barrel, unless the frame of the firearm is rendered useless as a result, or its integrity so compromised that it cannot be used to form the basis of a firearm without significant repair or addition;

- The inclusions must be intended to prevent the creation of a hole through the dummy barrel or chamber along their axis; and
- The revolver must vent the gasses produced on discharge at not less than 80 degrees from the axis of the dummy barrel.

Specification for other blank firing imitations

This specification is for blank firing imitations (other than revolvers or imitation firearms where the blank cartridges are loaded vertically at 90 degrees to the dummy barrel and which fire, and vent, the gases produced on discharge, in the same direction) must conform to the following specification.

- The imitation firearm must incorporate an inclusion;
- The inclusion must be wholly made of a material which is at least as resistant to being cut, drilled, bored, ground (or any similar process) as sintered tungsten carbide in the range 1550-2000 HV 30**(a)** ;
- The inclusion must wholly block the barrel and should be permanent and incapable of being knocked out without destroying the chamber or barrel;
- Part of the inclusion must be incorporated into the rear of the dummy barrel; and
- The inclusion must be intended to prevent—
 - (i) The creation of a hole through the dummy barrel along its axis; and
 - (ii) The removal of a dummy barrel, unless the frame and chamber area of the firearm is rendered useless as a result, or its integrity so compromised that it cannot be used to form the basis of a firearm without significant repair or addition.

Exceptions

Imitation firearms that fire blank cartridges which are loaded vertically at 90 degrees to the dummy barrel and which fire, and vent the gases produced on discharge, in the same direction are exempt from the regulations. Their design is deemed sufficient not to warrant any further provisions as they are extremely difficult to convert to fire live ammunition.

The offence in section 39(2)(d) of the 2006 Act (bringing into Great Britain an imitation firearm which does not conform to the specifications) shall not apply to persons whose conduct in bringing into Great Britain an imitation firearm, or causing an imitation firearm to be brought into Great Britain, was for the purpose only of making the imitation firearm in question available for one or more of the purposes set out in section 37(2) of the 2006 Act. Those purposes are as follows;

1. The purposes of a museum or gallery;

(a) This refers to the "Vickers hardness test" which is a method used to measure the hardness of materials. The test can be used for all metals. The unit of hardness given by the test is known as the Vickers Pyramid Number (HV).

2. The purposes of theatrical performances and of rehearsals for such performances;
3. The production of films (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (c. 48) - see section 5B of that Act);
4. The production of television programmes (within the meaning of the Communications Act 2003 (c. 21) - see section 405(1) of that Act);
5. The organisation and holding of historical re-enactments organised and held by persons specified or described for the purposes of this section by regulations made by the Secretary of State;
6. The purposes of functions that a person has in his capacity as a person in the service of Her Majesty.

Definitions

“blank-firing imitation firearm” means an imitation firearm capable of firing a blank cartridge;

“inclusion” means part of an imitation firearm incorporated into the firearm during manufacture for the purpose of preventing an imitation firearm being modified for use as a firearm;

“revolver” means a firearm that has a cylinder (containing multiple chambers) that revolves to align each chamber in turn with the firing mechanism and the barrel.

References

The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Specification for Imitation Firearms) Regulations 2011 -

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1754/pdfs/uksi_20111754_en.pdf

Explanatory note for the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (Specification for Imitation Firearms) Regulations 2011 -

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1754/pdfs/uksiem_20111754_en.pdf

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