

FIREARMS CLUBS

This guide is provided to assist firearms clubs to understand the key legislative changes contained in the *Firearms Act 2015* and *Firearms Regulations 2017* commencing on 1 July 2017. This guide should be read in conjunction with all the provisions of the new legislation as it does not detail all legislative changes or legislation that has not changed.

You can find further information on the operation and effect of this legislation by accessing the various guides located on the SAPOL website at www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons

Recognition of firearms clubs

The *Firearms Act 2015* does not require the recognition of firearms clubs to be approved and gazetted by the Minister for Police. The Registrar of Firearms now may, on application, declare a firearms club to be a recognised firearms club by publishing such a notice in the Government Gazette. This 'red tape' reduction measure will simplify the process of recognition.

For a club to be recognised, it will be required to have at least five members and hold at least four meetings in a 12-month period. Some clubs maintain a small membership base. Firearms Branch will work closely with clubs in these circumstances and consider all options available within legislation.

Acceptance of new members

There has been an overhaul of the legislated process for acceptance of new members by firearms clubs (that are shooting clubs) to simplify and reduce the burden on club administration. The major changes include: other than for membership applicants who hold a category H licence or intend to use a category H firearm in the course of club membership, clubs are only required to check the probity of applicants with the Registrar where:

- the applicant does not hold a current firearms licence, or
- the applicant has not been issued with a written notification to undertake required training within the preceding 60 days, or
- the applicant does not hold a notice issued by the Registrar within the preceding 60 days stating their fitness and propriety for membership.

Approval of grounds of recognised firearms clubs

Approvals remain subject to basic conditions. The main changes are:

- Where clubs have a company licence, they will be able to have secondary nominees appointed.
- Club activities must be supervised by a nominee (principal or secondary), a member of the controlling body of the club or an authorised club member.
- Clubs must report an incident involving the use of a firearm which affects or threatens a person's safety to the Registrar as soon as reasonably practicable and provide a written report of the incident within seven days.
- At any reasonable time the Registrar, a police officer or other authorised person can enter club grounds to inspect the grounds, any firearms on the grounds or any club records that are required to be kept.

Breach of conditions of approval of grounds of recognised firearms clubs

It is now an offence for a club to breach a condition of the club grounds approval. Offences carry a maximum penalty of \$5000 or an expiation notice fine of \$1250. Regulations 71 to 76 of the *Firearms Regulations 2017* contain various expiation fees for breaches of club offences. These offences are still capable of being prosecuted, but they are now also capable of being dealt with by way of expiation.

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Club Chits

Firearms Branch has initiated a policy change with regard to Club Chits. Clubs/individuals are only required to submit Club Chits for category C or H club use. There is no requirement to submit chits for A or B category activities.

Where can I find more information?

The information provided in this document is for general guidance only. Applicants and licensees should familiarise themselves with the *Firearms Act 2015* and the *Firearms Regulation 2017* which are available at www.legislation.sa.gov.au A suite of information guides on the legislative changes is provided on SAPOL's website at www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/firearms-and-weapons

For further information, contact Firearms Branch via sapol.firearmsbranch@police.sa.gov.au or by telephone 7322 3346.

