



N.A.R.G.C. & AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA STRIKE NEW ACCORD



Following recent talks at Garda Headquarters, the NARGC and An Garda Síochána have brokered a new accord that will pave the way for NARGC Members to overcome their Firearms Licensing issues in a speedy and resolute manner that will bring clarity to any difficulty or issue encountered in the process of acquiring or renewing or substituting a firearm licence.

In the past, many issues arose between the Gardai and the NARGC which eventually led to a complete breakdown in communication between the two bodies. This new development is intended to restore and foster a good working relationship that is in the interests of both organisations.

From time to time, NARGC Members cite various difficulties encountered at local level in the process of dealing with An Garda Síochána in the matter of firearms licensing. This has caused much frustration and in some cases even hardship to individual members, the accumulative consequence of which is often resentment. This is neither desirable nor helpful.

The NARGC has resolved that the National Fund Administrator, Mr. Chris Gavican, will be the Liaison Officer between the NARGC and the Gardai and so any Fund Member who has an issue or complaint and having fully exhausted local enquiries obviously, should contact Chris, who will issue a Questionnaire to ascertain the background to the complaint and will, thereafter, follow up on matters directly with Garda Headquarters to achieve an outcome. This new arrangement takes immediate effect.

When engaging with Garda Stations locally, it is never really satisfactory to simply push your papers through the letter box of a Garda Station in hopeful expectation that everything is in order. It is much more beneficial to directly engage with an Officer who may browse through the paperwork and highlight any evident shortcomings or documentary requirements. Always remember the name of the Garda you have dealt with and if you do not recognise him/her by name, ask for that information. The granting of a firearms licence is serious business and firearms licenses are not issued willy nilly. Therefore the application process is thorough and of course you must meet the criteria set down in order to acquire a firearms licence. By way of a reminder, these criteria are:-

- a) You must have a good **REASON** for having the firearm
- b) You must not pose a **DANGER** to public safety, security or the peace
- c) You must have **SECURE STORAGE**
- d) You must not be a **DISENTITLED PERSON**

It is worth spending a moment to consider these elements and what they mean.

By '*good reason for having the firearm*' is meant that you must have a specific purpose for it, i.e. rough shooting, sporting shooting (shooting clays) or, if it's a rifle, rabbit shooting or fox shooting or deer stalking, depending on the calibre.

By '*not posing a danger to public safety, security or the peace*' is meant that you must be a person of good character, sound mind and generally considered as somebody who behaves with the constraints of normal behaviour.



Pictured following their meeting at Garda Headquarters are (l. to r.) Mr. Chris Gavican, NARGC National Administrator, Mr. Matt Nyland, Garda Chief Superintendent, Mr. Paul Greene, Garda Inspector and Mr. Michael Fenlon, National Chairman NARGC. Pictured below is Mr John Butler, NARGC Exec. Member, who also engaged in the talks.



Having '*proper secure storage*' means that, depending on the number of firearms you hold or intend to hold at any one address and also being cognisant of other firearms held at that address by a parent or other siblings, you must be in accord with Statutory Instrument 307 of 2009 which states:-

NUMBER OF FIREARMS (Kept in the same place)	STORAGE REQUIREMENTS
1 Shotgun (i.e. non Restricted type)	- No safe required but disassemble the shotgun and affix a trigger lock.
Up to 3 firearms (or 1 Restricted Firearm)	- A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 is required.
Up to an incl. 5 firearms (or 2 Restricted Firearms)	- A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 is required plus your house or the room where the gun safe is located or the Gun Safe itself must be alarmed.
6 firearms or more (or 3 Restricted Firearms)	- A Gun Safe to standard BS.7558 plus a monitored Alarm System is required.

Section 8 of the Firearms Act 1925 (as amended) covers the area of disqualification. This Section sets out the categories of persons who are '*disqualified to hold a firearms certificate*'. That is to say persons who may not under any circumstances be granted a firearms certificate.

These include persons who:-

- are under the age of sixteen years
- are of intemperate habits
- persons who are of unsound mind
- persons who have been convicted for various offences and who have received custodial sentences within the previous seven (7) years and
- persons who are under the supervision of the Gardai or persons who are bound by a Court Order to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour, a condition of which is that such person will not have in his/her possession any firearm or ammunition.

The NARGC delegation also made reference to the delays and difficulties sometimes encountered when making a firearm substitution, especially when it relates to a 'like for like' firearm. The Gardai said they will look to simplify this process in the period ahead but equally stated that firearm substitutions cause something of a nightmare for the Gardai with some owners making multiple changes during the currency of a firearms certificate. One factor that would greatly help all concerned is to **avoid firearm substitutions near the expiry date of a licence**. In this regard we ask members not to apply to substitute during the last **3 months** of a firearms certificate, so as to ease the administrative burden. Wait until the new licence issues and then apply to make the necessary amendments.

Finally, we remind you of the contact details for the National Fund Office which are thus:-

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