

Storing and selling shooting supplies safely



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What you need to do

Are you planning to sell explosive shooting supplies (eg ammunition, capped cartridge cases, primers and percussion caps, and shooters' powders)? This leaflet has been written to help you protect the safety of your staff and customers and comply with the law.

You must do a risk assessment. This means thinking about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm.

The main questions you need to ask yourself about how shooting supplies being stored and sold on retail premises can harm people are:

- How could a fire start?
- How could it spread?
- What do I need to do to protect people if there is a fire?

The actions you need to take are actions to:

- prevent a fire starting;
- stop it spreading;
- protect people in the event of a fire.

A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees and others, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have covered all you need to. For example, a fire could be started by a cigarette so you will need to take steps to stop people smoking anywhere near the shooting supplies.

There is a checklist to help you carry out your risk assessment. It can be downloaded from the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg477ch.pdf.

Preventing a fire

Do:

- Do exclude sources of ignition, eg sources of heat or electrical energy.
- Do stop people smoking anywhere near the explosive shooting supplies.
- Do restrict entry to the store where the explosive shooting supplies are kept.
- Do keep shooting supplies away from heaters.
- Do follow your supplier's advice on returning unsold items.

Don't:

- Don't store shooting supplies with corrosive or caustic substances such as drain cleaners, paint strippers and wood preservatives.
- Don't keep shooting supplies near fertilisers and products containing peroxides (eg fibreglass hardeners).
- Don't let the shooting supplies become wet or damp.

Stopping a fire spreading

Do:

- Do keep ammunition, capped cartridge cases, primers and percussion caps in either closed transport packaging or closed retail packaging.
- Do keep shooters' powder in a 'blackpowder box' or in a separate store.
- Do use suitable storage and display cabinets.
- Do leave ammunition, capped cartridge cases, primers and percussion caps in their closed transport packaging until you are ready to move them to display cabinets or give them to your customers.
- Do avoid handling explosive shooting supplies unnecessarily.

Don't:

- Don't store explosive shooting supplies near articles that could catch fire easily (eg white spirits or clothing) or that could cause the fire to spread to the shooting supplies (eg pallets, cardboard boxes and paper).
- Don't store in or near parked vehicles.

Protecting people in the event of a fire

Do:

- Do ensure that all explosive shooting supplies in the shop sales area are kept in a suitable display cabinet.
- Do ensure all escape routes and fire exits are clear and fire exit doors unlocked.
- Do ensure that your fire detection and alarm system is tested and working properly.
- Do ensure that everyone understands that the first priority is to ensure that staff and customers leave the shop as quickly and safely as possible.
- Do carefully consider and manage the amount of stock in the shop sales area.
- Do position transport containers or other stores well away from any neighbouring premises.

Don't:

- Don't keep shooters' powders in the sales area.
- Don't store or display shooting supplies anywhere near an escape route or fire exit.
- Don't store an excessive amount of supplies, either in the shop or in the stockroom.
- Don't store more than you are allowed to under your licence.

Please note you may have to take special precautions if you share a building with flats or maisonettes. Contact your licensing authority for more information.

Summary of the main legal requirements

The main regulations that are particularly relevant to the storage of shooting supplies are as follows:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require you to carry out a risk assessment but if you have fewer than five employees, you don't have to write anything down.
- The Explosives Regulations 2014 require that you take appropriate measures to prevent fire or explosion, to limit the extent of fire or explosion and to protect people from the effects of fire or explosion.
- The Explosives Regulations also require anyone storing more than:
 - 15 kg of shooters' powder and 15 kg of percussion caps or small arms ammunition; or
 - 10 kg of shooters' powder, 5 kg of a combination of shooters' powders and HT3 or HT4 explosives that are not relevant explosives, and 15 kg of percussion caps or small arms ammunition,to obtain a licence from the relevant licensing authority (see 'Contacts' for further information).
- The Explosives Regulations require anyone storing explosives to maintain separation distances. However, you will not be required to maintain separation distances of greater than 0 m if you store no more than:
 - 30 kg of shooters' powder in the 'blackpowder box';
 - 300 grams of percussion caps that have been classified 1.4S or 1.4B for transport;
 - 250 kg of small arms ammunition.
- In addition, there are also general duties under both health and safety at work law and fire safety law (see www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox).

More information on the 'blackpowder box' can be found in Appendix 7 of HSE's *Explosives Regulations 2014. Safety provisions. Guidance on Regulations* (L150 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l150.htm).

Contacts

If you are only storing shotgun cartridges and are not a registered firearms dealer you should apply to your local authority for a licence if you need one. In the metropolitan counties, ie West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Tyne and Wear, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, the fire service is responsible for licensing and enforcement of the regulations on storage.

In other areas, the licensing and enforcement authority is normally the trading standards department of your local authority. It is also responsible for licensing the sale of most pyrotechnic articles (including fireworks).

You can find the contact details for your local trading standards department at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk.

If you are a registered firearms dealer, are storing shooters' powder, percussion caps, ammunition regulated or prohibited by the Firearms Acts 1968 to 1997 or are storing relevant explosives you should contact your local police Explosives Liaison Officer (www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/elo.htm).

Useful websites

HSE Explosives pages: www.hse.gov.uk/explosives

The Confederation of British Industry's Explosives Industry Group: www.eig.org.uk

The Gun Trade Association www.gtald.co.uk

The British Shooting Sports Council www.bssc.org.uk

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation www.basc.org.uk/

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

This leaflet is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg477.htm.

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