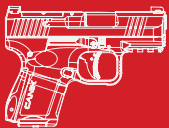
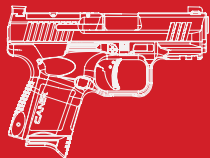
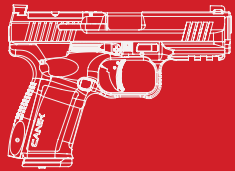
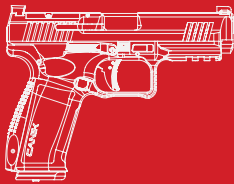
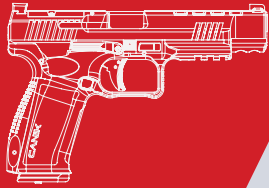


OWNING A FIREARM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Owning a firearm in South Africa has many benefits, but also comes with great responsibilities.



This is a complete guide to legally obtaining firearm competency and a firearm licence(s) in South Africa. To legally obtain a firearm in South Africa, a person first needs to hold a licence to possess a firearm – whether for self-defence, hunting or sports shooting.

South Africa's current firearms regulatory framework consists of the Firearms Control Act of 2000 (FCA) and subsidiary legislation. A separate licence must be issued for every firearm and applicants must obtain a competency certificate for the relevant firearm first. This means that separate applications for firearm licences must be done for every firearm that you wish to obtain.

In this guide we will outline all the necessary steps that you need to follow to obtain a firearm license in South Africa, and also give you the supporting documents required.



A GUIDE OWNING A FIREARM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Getting firearm competency training and certificate.

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STEP 2

Renewing your firearm license.



STEP 1: HOW TO GET FIREARM COMPETENCY AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE

The process starts at a firearm training centre and not with the South African Police Service and the application process consists of two phases.

- Establishing whether the applicant is competent to own and operate a handgun and entails successful completion of the prescribed training at an accredited training institution to obtain a training proficiency certificate.
- A potential firearm owner must successfully pass the prescribed test to prove his/her knowledge of the Firearms Control Act of 2000 (FCA) as well as the prescribed training and practical test regarding the safe and efficient handling of a handgun at an accredited training provider.
- This entails a compulsory unit standard, generally known as Knowledge of the Act, and the unit standard for the kind of fire arm, in this case "Handle and use a handgun" (SAQA US 119649)

WHAT IS A COMPETENCY CERTIFICATE AND WHO CAN OBTAIN IT?

To obtain a firearm competency certificate, the candidate must:

- Be a citizen or permanent resident of South Africa Be at least twenty-one years old
- Be a "fit and proper person" for the specific licence Be stable and not have a tendency for violence Not have a substance-abuse problem
- Have no conviction within the five years preceding the application for crimes related to violence, dishonesty, recklessness or instability
- Not "become or been declared unfit to possess a firearm" within the five years preceding the application
- Have completed the required tests on understanding the FCA, the training and test for the safe and effective use of a firearm, and all applicable training and tests for the specific licence.

QUICK STEPS

Find your nearest firearm training centre and make an appointment.

Choose whether you want to operate a handgun, shotgun or rifle and start the training course for your choice of firearm.

Receive your proficiency certificate from the accredited training centre. This certificate does not lapse. You will need this certificate for the application of a competency certificate, and it serves as proof that you indeed successfully completed the prescribed theoretical and practical assessments.

Only once the training certificate has been received, the applicant may approach the police station to apply for the competency certificate to own a firearm.



RESOURCES:

Accredited training institutions (competency training)
Firearms Control Act of 2000 (FCA)
SAQA US 119649
www.firearms.co.za

STEP 2: APPLYING FOR A COMPETENCY CERTIFICATE FROM SAPS

Upon receipt of the training certificate from an accredited training provider or the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) the applicant can apply for a competency certificate.

- Once an applicant has completed the competency training and received a certificate from an accredited training provider, you must apply for a competency certificate at the SAPS.
- The person must apply to the SAPS for the competency certificate by completing the SAPS 517 (Application for a competency certificate) form.
- The application and supporting documentation must be submitted to the designated DFO situated in the area where you ordinarily reside.
- The police will then interview your friends and/or family to ascertain whether you are competent to own a firearm and will register your application with the provincial police headquarters from where it is referred to the Central Firearms Register.
- An applicant's background and possible criminal record will be monitored to ascertain whether you should be allowed to operate a firearm before a panel will approve or deny the application based on information gathered.
- The competency certificate remains valid for the period of validity as determined in the Firearms Control Act, 2000, in respect of the licence for a firearm and must indicate whether it relates to: **Possession of a firearm, Trading in firearms, Manufacturing of firearms and Conducting business as a gunsmith.**

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

Firearm for the purpose of self-defence: A person may only possess one firearm for the purpose of self-defence and the licence is valid for five years from the date of issue. A person may only possess one restricted firearm for the same purpose, with the relevant licence issued only valid for two years.

Firearm for the purpose of hunting/sport shooting: A person may possess four firearms for the purpose of occasional hunting or sports shooting, but if a person is in possession of a firearm licence for self-defence, you may only apply for three firearm licences for this purpose since ownership may not exceed four firearms.

Dedicated Hunting/Sport shooting

Firearm safe: On successful application, you have to install a firearm safe according to SABS standards within 14 days. An inspection of your premises will ascertain whether you have met the requirements before you may take the firearm in possession.

Under 21: If an applicant is under the age of 21 years, compelling reasons which require you to obtain a competency certificate must be submitted. A sworn affidavit from a parent or guardian.

Validity of competency certificates: Applicants should note that if a licence is issued in respect of self-defence, the competency certificate will be valid for five years but if the licence is issued for hunting/sport shooting, the validity of the competency certificate is now 10 years.

QUICK STEPS

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED - Competency Certificate

- Copy of ID document x 2
- Colour passport photo x 2
- Copy of your training certificate in with your training results
- Cash for payment – R70 at the time of writing this article
- Testimonial from friends and/or family x 2
- Competency application form
- Proof of residence not older than 3 months



RESOURCES:

SAPS 517 (Application for a competency certificate) form.

STEP 3: APPLYING FOR A NEW FIREARM LICENCE

- Download and complete the SAPS 271 application form and complete the form in black ink.
- It is important to write clearly and mark the relevant blocks with an X.
- All relevant sections of the form must be completed, and all the required fields filled out.
- Download the official SAPS Checklist for new applications to see that you comply with what is requested.
- Additional to motivate your application:
 - Download the SAPS crime stats for your area if you apply to possess firearm for self-protection.
 - You may also add information on security facilities at your dwelling, such as alarm, walls or electric fence around the property, likely crime in your area, and details about any other firearm training that you may have received.
- Applicants should not attach any original documents to an application as you may need them again. The DFO will certify all copies attached to your application when showing the originals.
- Also make a copy of your full application so that you can furnish a duplicate if the original gets lost.
- Submit the set of documents to the DFO and make sure to obtain a receipt proving that you have paid the relevant amounts (R140 at the time of writing this article). This also proves that you have handed in your application.

QUICK STEPS

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED - Firearm License Application

ALL ORIGINALS MUST BE SHOWN WHEN DOING YOUR APPLICATION AT THE DFO AND YOU WILL NEED COPIES OF:

- Identity document (2x copies).
- Competency certificate obtained.
- Proficiency training certificates issued by your accredited training provider.
- Electricity account not older than three months as proof of residence.
- Passport photographs of yourself, not older than 3 months (x 2).
- Proof of current paid-up membership of all accredited associations and/or shooting clubs if relevant.
- Dedicated status certificates (either as hunter or as sports-person or both) if relevant.
- Endorsement for the handgun and its features for your purpose
- In the case of an application for a hunting firearm: an invitation or statement from a game ranch owner that you may hunt on his farm, or that you do so regularly.
- A complete motivation stating the purpose and need for the firearm you want the licence for.
- A completed safe-form.
- Letter of character from spouse/family member/friend/colleague/neighbour Endorsement confirming the applicability of the calibre and handgun for the stated purpose it will be used.
- Relevant invoice to confirm purchase of the specific handgun being applied for if it is for a new one.
- Payment: R140 at the time of publishing.



RESOURCES:

APS 271 Application form
Safe-form
SAPS Checklist
SAPS crime stats

STEP 2: WHEN AND HOW TO RENEW YOUR GUN LICENCE

- In South Africa the validity of a firearm licence varies between two and ten years depending on the type of licence.
- All firearm licences and permits, which are issued in terms of the Firearms Control Act of 2000 (FCA), must be renewed within a prescribed period to determine if a person still complies with the provisions of the act and the Firearms Regulations of 2004, in order to warrant effective control and responsible firearm and ammunition ownership.
- A gun owner is obliged to renew his firearm licence at least 90 days before the expiry date.
- A licence or permit remains valid until the status of the application has been decided once the application for the renewal has been lodged within the prescribed period.
- Application for the renewal of a licence or permit will only be granted if the applicant proves that they have continued to comply with the requirements for the licence in terms of the FCA by being in possession of a relevant and valid competency certificate.

AT THE STATION, THE DFO WILL DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Take a full set of your fingerprints on the SAPS 91(a) form (only for a competency certificate).
- Issue you with a remittance advice and direct you to the financial office at the police station to pay the prescribed fee. You will be issued with a receipt as proof of payment, which you must submit to the DFO to ensure that the processing of the application will continue.
- You will receive a signed acknowledgement of receipt (SAPS 523) as proof that you have applied for a renewal of a licence to possess a firearm.
- To apply for the renewal of a competency certificate, one must complete an Application for Renewal of a Competency certificate form and submit the application form and the following supporting documentation to the DFO at the police station in the town or city where you reside:
 - A certified copy of your official identification document or passport.
 - A certified copy of your permanent residence permit if you are a non-South African citizen.
 - Certified copies of the front and back of your current competency certificate which is to be renewed.
 - Two passport-size colour photographs (with a neutral background) that were taken within the previous three months.
 - Certified proof of residence.
 - Two testimonials attesting your character, with the signature of the deponent • Any other supporting documents that may be required.
- The original firearm licence, permit or authorisation for a firearm you wish to renew.

QUICK STEPS

To apply for a renewal of the firearm licence, a person must complete an Application for the Renewal of a firearm licence, permit, certificate or authorisation form and take the relevant documentation to the DFO at a police station nearest to where you reside.

ALL ORIGINALS MUST BE SHOWN WHEN DOING YOUR APPLICATION AT THE DFO AND YOU WILL NEED COPIES OF:
These documents include the following:

- Your identity document or certified copy of permanent residence for a non- South African citizen.
- The original firearm licence, permit or authorisation for the firearm that you wish to renew.
- Two recent (not older than three months) passport-size colour photographs.
- The obtained competency certificate.
- An SAPS 518(a) form with the relevant sections completed.

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RESOURCES:

SAPS 517 (Application for a competency certificate) form.