

## **Weapons Act**

**No. 16, 25 March 1998 Entered into force on 1 September 1998.** Amended by Act No. 82/1998 (entered into force 1 October 1998), Act No. 19/1999 (entered into force 24 March 1999), Act No. 24/2007 (entered into force 29 March 2007) and Act No. 124/2008 (entered into force 1 October 2008).

### **Chapter I – Scope of the Act**

**Article 1** “Weapon” in this Act refers to any device or substance which may be used to kill or cause damage to the health of a human or animal temporarily or permanently, provided that there is reason, in the given circumstances, to assume that the device or substance is intended for such purpose. “Firearm” in this Act refers to any weapon or device which, by means of explosive force, compressed air or other comparable means, can be used to project bullets, shot or other projectiles. “Ammunition” in this Act refers to any kind of shell or projectile designed to be discharged from firearms. “Explosive” in this Act refers to a solid or liquid chemical or compound which has the characteristic of having the capacity to explode on impact, pressure or heat, as well as firelighters, such as detonators and fuses. “Fireworks” in this Act refers to rockets, smoke bombs and firecrackers and various forms of pyrotechnic devices The Minister may, by the issue of a government regulation, decide in further detail than in the second to fifth paragraphs above what constitutes a firearm, ammunition, explosives or fireworks and provide further for their classification.

**Article 2** The provisions of this Act apply to: a. firearms; b. ammunition; c. explosives; d. fireworks; e. other weapons, such as brass knuckles, bows, bludgeons and blades for striking, piercing or slashing, electrical weapons, gas weapons and tear gas substances; f. substances and devices which, under the definition in Article 1, do not constitute firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks, but have the same characteristics and functions; and g. replicas of the weapons referred to items a-f. The provisions of this Act also apply to individual components of the substances and devices specified in the first paragraph, such as a bolt housing, barrel, detonators and powder. The Minister shall establish further provisions in a government regulation on the handling and use of weapons specified in the first and second paragraphs. The regulation may, *inter alia*, provide for the prohibition of specific weapons.

### **Article 3**

This Act does not apply to weapons, devices and substances pursuant to the first and second paragraphs which are owned by the Coast Guard, police, prisons or foreign police officers or security guards operating under the control of the police. The Minister shall establish separate rules on such weapons devices and substances. The provisions of the Act do not apply to the following devices and substances, but the Minister may establish special rules relating to them: 1) a. nail guns and nailers intended for use in the construction industry; b. line throwing

guns and their ammunition, signal guns or other similar firearms and rockets which are used exclusively in rescue operations; c. weapons and devices which are used solely for the killing of animals in certified abattoirs; d. other devices and substances which cause insignificant danger, as decided by the Minister.

*1)Reg. 464/2000.*

## **Chapter II. Manufacture, importation, exportation and trading**

**Article 4** The manufacture of firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks on a commercial basis is prohibited except with the permission of the [chief of police].1) Before permission is granted, a report shall be obtained from ... 1) the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health and the head of the Fire Department or other authorities responsible for fire safety. Permission under the first paragraph shall be granted only to a natural person possessing a firearms permit and demonstrating competence in other respects to engage in the manufacture. A registered company or firm may be granted permission pursuant to the first paragraph, provided that such company or firm designates one or more employees who fulfil the conditions of the second paragraph to undertake the manufacture. The holder of a firearms permit may, with the permission of the chief of police, load cartridges for personal use in the firearms for which he or she holds a permit, provided that the use of such ammunition is permitted in Iceland. The conditions for such permission is that the chief of police must regard the applicant as possessing sufficient expertise to load cartridges and handle loading equipment, the applicant must have held a firearms permit for a minimum of one year and attended a training course in handloading; the chief of police shall approve the syllabus and arrangements of such training courses. The permit shall specify the quantity of powder, detonators and cartridges that the holder is allowed to purchase. The Minister shall establish further provisions in a government regulation on the rights and obligations of manufacturers under this Article, including provisions on the manufacture itself, the equipment of the manufacturing premises and required safety rules. Before the regulation is issued consultations shall be held with the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health and the Iceland Fire Authority.

*1)L. 24/2007, 11. gr.*

**Article 5** The importation of firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks [on a commercial basis is prohibited except with the permission of the Chief of Police of the metropolitan area of Reykjavík].1) Permits for trading in firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks under Article 7 include permission to import the same products. ... 1) Before permission is granted for the import of firearms, a report shall be obtained from ... 1) the Fire Department or other authorities responsible for fire safety. If permission is sought for the importation of explosives a report shall be obtained from the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health in Iceland as well. [The chief of police]1) is permitted to grant to persons holding a firearms permit permission to import firearms and ammunition for their own use pursuant to further provisions issued by the Minister in a government regulation.

The importation or manufacture of firearms which do not carry a manufacturer's serial number is prohibited. [The chief of police]1) is permitted to waive this condition when a firearm has an obvious collection value. The importation or manufacture of the following is prohibited: a. automatic or semi-automatic handguns; b. automatic or semi-automatic rifles; c. automatic shotguns; d. semi-automatic or manually loaded multicartridge shotguns with chambers for more than two cartridges, unless the weapon has been modified to comply with these conditions; The importation of weapon replicas is prohibited if there is reason to believe that they may be difficult to distinguish from the original weapons. The importation, manufacture or possession of particularly dangerous types of weapons, or parts of such weapons, which are specifically intended for use in warfare, and ammunition, fireworks or explosive of such nature, is prohibited. Notwithstanding the provisions of the first through sixth paragraphs it is permitted, with the permission of [the Chief of Police of the metropolitan area of Reykjavík, having obtained the comments of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police],1) to manufacture weapons for export. [The Chief of Police of the metropolitan area of Reykjavík, having obtained the comments of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police], may also permit the importation of such weapons if they have obvious collection value owing to their age or connection with Icelandic history. [The same applies if such weapons are specifically designed and demonstrably intended for sports activities pursuant to Article 17.]2) The Minister shall issue a government regulation with further provisions on the arrangements of importation pursuant to this Article, e.g. as regards the confirmation by the chief of police of invoices prior to customs clearance and the importation of the substances and devices specified in the third through sixth paragraphs and their replicas. The regulation may also provide in further detail for the substances and devices that may be imported to Iceland and their testing, labelling and quality control.

1)Act 24/2007, Art. 12. 2)Act 19/1999, Art. 1.

**Article 6** [The exportation of weapons, ammunition, explosives or fireworks is prohibited except with the permission of the chief of police, provided that confirmation has been obtained from the competent authorities as regards permission for their importation. This provision is applicable only in the case of permanent exportation.]1) No permission needs to be obtained in respect of the said devices and substances which are exported in ships or aircraft if the goods constitute the necessary equipment of the ship or aircraft.

1)Act 24/2007, Art. 13.

**Article 7** Trading in firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks is prohibited except with the permission of the [chief of police].1) Permission pursuant to the first paragraph may be granted only to a natural person possessing a commercial licence and a firearms permit or expert knowledge of the goods in question pursuant to further rules established by the Minister.

Permission pursuant to the first paragraph may be granted to a registered firm or company which possesses a commercial licence, provided that the firm or company designates an

individual who meets the conditions of the second paragraph to supervise the day-to-day trading and assume

responsibility for the safeguarding of the goods together with the managers of the firm or company. [In special cases non-governmental organisations may be granted permission to retail fireworks.]<sup>1)</sup> Permission under the first paragraph shall be granted only to persons who possess adequate housing to store the goods in question. The Minister shall issue a regulation providing for such housing and the safeguarding of the goods. Before permission is granted pursuant to the first paragraph, a report shall be obtained from ... 1) the competent Fire Department or other authorities responsible for fire safety. Permission pursuant to the first paragraph shall not be granted for a period of over five years, or less if warranted in the opinion of the [chief of police].<sup>1)</sup>

*1)Act 24/2007, Art. 14.*

**Article 8** [The chief of police]<sup>1)</sup> is permitted to grant permission for the operation of a weapons rental service subject to compliance with the provisions of the second, third, fifth, sixth and seventh paragraphs of Article 7. The Minister shall issue a regulation on the operation of weapons rental services providing, *inter alia*, in further detail for the conditions to be met by the rental agents and customers and for the business activity in other respects.

*1)Act 24/2007, Art. 15.*

**Article 9** Shop owners, importers or manufacturers of firearms, ammunition, explosives and fireworks shall keep a ledger of bought and sold firearms and ammunition. They shall provide the competent chief of police, on request, with detailed information on sold goods and unsold inventory. A chief of police may, at any time and without specific authorisation, call for access to premises where firearms, ammunition, fireworks or explosives are manufactured or where stocks of such goods are stored.

**Article 10** A person who has obtained permission to trade in firearms, ammunition, explosives or fireworks, or permission to operate a weapons rental service, shall not sell or otherwise deliver such goods to persons other than persons who present a certificate proving that they are permitted to buy or take delivery of the goods. Delivering to a buyer ammunition for weapons other than for which he or she has a permit according to certificates presented pursuant to the first paragraph is prohibited. The same applies to the purchase of powder and supplies necessary for the handloading of ammunition pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 2. The Minister may, by a government regulation, impose limits on the quantity of ammunition that an individual is permitted to buy.

**Article 11** Persons possessing a permit to trade in firearms, ammunition or explosives, or to operate a firearms rental service, and persons possessing a permit for exhibitions and collections pursuant to Article 15 are not permitted to use the goods in question except with the permission of the competent police chief.

### **Chapter III. Handling of firearms and ammunition**

## **Article 12**

The ownership or use of firearms without a firearms permit is prohibited. The permit is granted by the chief of police in the district where the applicant is domiciled. The chief of police may grant exemptions from the condition of possessing a firearms permit for persons who are training with a certified shooting club in a certified target practice area. Firearms permits shall be in writing. The permit shall specify the name, ID number and address of the holder. The permit shall include a recent photograph of the holder. The permit shall also specify in detail the types of firearms that the holder is permitted to use. The firearms permit shall list all the firearms in the possession of the holder, their type, kind of bolt, calibre, maximum number of cartridges and manufacturer's serial number. The chief of police may establish special conditions for a permit if necessary. A firearms permit shall not be issued for a period of more than 10 years, and for a shorter period if necessary. On the renewal of a firearms permit, a chief of police is permitted to verify the competence of the permit holder if necessary.

**Article 13** Permits may be granted for firearms for hunting, sports under Article 17, employment under Article 14 and exhibition and collection under Article 15. Applicants shall specify for what purpose an application for a permit is being submitted. The conditions for the possession of a firearms permit are the following: a. Applicants shall have reached the age of twenty and be legally competent to manage their affairs. A regulation may provide for exemption from the age limit for sports shooting under Article 17. b. Applicants shall not have violated any provisions of the Penal Code, the Act on alcohol control, the Act on controlled substances, the Act on the protection and hunting of wild birds and wild mammals or this Act. c. Applicants shall possess adequate knowledge of handling firearms, they shall be mentally sound and in other respects qualified to handle firearms. A police chief may issue a permit for a firearm even if the party in question has violated the provisions of the acts of law listed in subsection (b) of the first paragraph if the violation is minor or if it was committed a long time ago. However, two years from the commission of a violation, a chief of police may grant a permit to an applicant provided that the sentence did not exceed a fine or [six months' imprisonment]<sup>1)</sup> and involved neither assault nor a violent crime, a violation of the Act on controlled substances, repeated drinking violations or violations of the Act on the protection and hunting of wild birds and wild animals, or this Act. Persons applying for a permit to own a firearm shall attend a training course in the handling and use of firearms. [The cost of training and tests shall be paid by means of a charge decided by the Minister on the recommendation of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police. The Minister shall provide in a government regulation for such training and testing, including course fees and examination fees.]<sup>2)</sup> A chief of police may grant to a person domiciled abroad a temporary firearms permit, provided that the person in question fulfils the applicable conditions of the first paragraph. The Minister shall issue further provisions concerning temporary firearms permits in a government regulation.

*1)Ac 82/1998, Art. 242. 2)Act 124/2008, Art. 1.*

**Article 14** A chief of police may grant to an association, organisation or individual a permit to possess firearms if such a party requires such a permit to conduct professional activities. In such cases, an individual shall be designated to take responsibility for the safeguarding of the firearms and necessary ammunition.

...1)

*1)Act 24/2007, Art. 16.*

**Article 15** [A chief of police] may permit an individual, association and public museum to own and preserve weapons of obvious collection value owing to age, connection with Icelandic history or other reasons. The Minister shall issue further provisions on these matters in a government regulation. The same parties may be granted a permit to own and preserve a limited amount of ammunition for the weapons in question, provided that the ammunition has obvious collection value. The use of the weapons under the first paragraph, and the purchase of ammunition for them, is prohibited except with the permission of the [chief of police].1). These weapons shall be listed separately in the register of firearms.

*1)Act 24/2007, Art. 17.*

**Article 16** A firearm which forms part of an estate on the death of the owner shall within twelve months of the death of the permit holder, be disposed of to a person holding a permit to own such a firearm. In the case of a firearm of obvious antiquarian or sentimental value, this condition may be waived, provided that the firearm is rendered inoperative.

**Article 17** A club which has shooting as its object shall apply for a permit from the [chief of police]. ... 1) The Minister shall issue further provisions on such permits in a government regulation. The Minister shall provide in further detail in a government regulation for firearms permits for individuals for the pursuit of shooting and for permits to shooting clubs to own firearms.

*1)Act 24/2007, Art. 18. 2)Reg. 787/1998, cf. 433/2007, 846/2007 and 847/2007.*

**Article 18** A special register of firearms shall be kept for the country as a whole. Chiefs of police shall enter in the register information on firearms permits granted pursuant to rules set by the Minister in a government regulation. All modifications of firearms pursuant to Article 38 shall be entered in the firearms register. Furthermore, all disappeared firearms shall be entered in the register.

**Article 19** The owner of a firearm is not permitted to sell, bequeath or transfer in any other manner a firearm into the ownership of another person unless the person in question can show that he or she has a permit from the chief of police to own it or use it. The owner of a firearm may lend it for temporary use by a person holding a permit to use the same kind of firearm. The Minister shall issue further provisions on such use in a government regulation.

**Article 20** Any person carrying or using a firearm shall carry a firearms permit and present it to the police on request. If a person does not present a firearms permit, the police may

confiscate the weapon temporarily until the person in question presents a certificate that he or she is permitted to use the weapon. If the person in question has the weapon on loan or hire, the person shall present the written permission of the owner of the weapon as proof.

**Article 21** A person carrying or using a firearm shall exercise extreme care at all times. Carrying firearms in public is prohibited. On carrying and transporting firearms between locations the firearms shall be unloaded and encased. Carrying concealed weapons on one's person is prohibited. The use of firearms while under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants is prohibited.

If there is reason to believe that a person has violated the above provisions the police may bring him or her in for medical tests, including blood and urine tests, in which case such person is required to undergo any treatment regarded as necessary by a health care professional for the test. Firing a shot on a road, across a road, from a vehicle, in public or in other places where danger might ensue is prohibited, except as urgently necessary.

Firing a shot on another person's property or firing a shot across another person's property without the permission of the owner or occupant is prohibited except as otherwise provided by law. Legal action in respect of violations of this paragraph shall be instigated only at the request of the injured party.

**Article 22** It is prohibited to supply ammunition to a person other than the person in whose name the firearm is registered for which the ammunition is intended, provided that such person presents a permit for the firearm. The Minister may establish further provisions on the supply of ammunition in a government regulation, including the prohibition of specific types of ammunition.

**Article 23** The owner or custodian of a firearm and ammunition shall ensure their custody so that they cannot be accessed by unauthorised parties. When firearms are not in use, the firearms, on the one hand, and ammunition, on the other hand, shall be stored in separate locked cabinets. The Minister shall issue further instructions concerning the storage of firearms and ammunition. Among other things, conditions may be set for specific means of storage of firearms when a specified number of firearms has been reached.

**Article 24** Shooting clubs and other parties are prohibited from organising shooting competitions or shooting practice in areas other than areas where the chief of police has permitted such activities. The Minister shall establish further provisions in a government regulation concerning the arrangements and equipment of shooting ranges, including provisions on the storage of firearms and ammunition. Consultations shall be held with the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health in Iceland and the Iceland Fire Authority before such rules are established. Before granting permission under the first paragraph the chief of police shall obtain the views of the local government authorities, the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health in Iceland and the Iceland Fire Authority.

**Article 25** If a firearm is damaged beyond repair or destroyed, it shall be deregistered. If a firearm is lost or stolen, the owner shall promptly notify the police and the loss shall be entered in the register of firearms.

#### **Chapter IV. Handling of explosives**

**Article 26** Buying explosives without the permission of the chief of police is prohibited. The permission is granted by the police chief in the district where the applicant is domiciled. If the applicant is a legal person the chief of police shall grant the permission in the location of the applicant's establishment. Permission to buy explosives may be granted only to a person who demonstrates a need for the explosives. Permission under this Article shall be granted for a specific type and quantity of explosives. The owner of the explosives shall guarantee their safeguarding and ensure that they are kept out of the reach of unauthorised parties. When a legal person is granted permission under the first paragraph, the legal person shall normally designate a specific person or specific persons to undertake the safeguarding of the explosives. A person granted a permit to buy explosives is not allowed to transfer the permit to another person except with the permission of the chief of police.

**Article 27** Only persons licensed by the chief of police are permitted to handle explosives and engage in blasting work. The licence is granted by the chief of police in the district where the applicant is domiciled and is effective for a term of five years from the date of issue. A licence under the first paragraph may be granted only to a person who, in the opinion of the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health in Iceland, possesses sufficient knowledge of handling explosives pursuant to further provisions issued by the Minister in a government regulation. A person handling and using explosives shall always exercise due care.

**Article 28** Explosives shall be stored in special explosive storages. The Minister shall issue provisions in a government regulation<sup>1)</sup> on the storage, transport and handling of explosives. Prior to the issue of such a regulation, recommendations should be obtained from the Iceland Fire Authority and the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health in Iceland.

*1)Reg. 684/1999, cf. reg. 161/2007..*

**Article 29** If explosives, or articles purporting to contain explosives, are found cast ashore or unattended, the finder, property owner or occupant shall promptly notify the chief of police of the find.

#### **Chapter V. Handling of other weapons**

**Article 30** Carrying a weapon in public is prohibited. Blades may be carried in places where such carriage is reasonable and normal, e.g. at work or in hunting or in other circumstances where no danger will ensue. The importation, manufacture, acquisition or possession of the following is prohibited: a. a bladed weapon if the blade is over 12 cm, provided that the blade is not intended for domestic or professional use; b. a switchblade, folding dagger, sliding knife, sliding dagger, piercing weapons or other similar weapons; c. bludgeons, such as brass knuckles, maces, blackjacks, clubs which are not intended for use in sports or other similar weapons, as well as electric shock weapons; d. swords which are a combination of striking

and cutting weapons; e. throwing stars, throwing knives or other similar weapons; f. crossbows, longbows, slings or other similar weapons, and arrowheads. However, bows intended for archery practice or competition are excluded. The prohibition in the second paragraph may be waived with the permission of the chief of police if a weapon has collectors' value or if special circumstances warrant. Only the police are permitted to import, manufacture or acquire manacles and leg irons made of metal or other materials. [The same applies to spray weapons such as mace and tear gas weapons.]<sup>1)</sup>

*1) Act 24/2007, Art. 19.*

**Article 31** The sale or supply of bows with a draw weight greater than 7 kg. or pointed arrows to children under the age of 16 is prohibited.

## **Chapter VI. Handling of fireworks**

**Article 32** The sale or supply of fireworks to children under the age of 16 is prohibited if the instructions accompanying the fireworks so specify. All sales of fireworks to children under the age of 12 are prohibited.

**Article 33** Persons handling fireworks shall exercise due care. The Minister shall provide in a government regulation<sup>1)</sup> for the sale and handling of fireworks; the regulation may include rules prohibiting the sale to the public of various harmful types of fireworks. Furthermore, the Minister may provide for special controls for this purpose and, as applicable, the bearing of the cost of such controls by the importer.

*1) Reg. 952/2003, cf. Reg. 1040/2006, 163/2007, 848/2007 and 6/2009..*

## **Chapter VII. Penalties, confiscation etc.**

**Article 34** Permits under this Act may be withdrawn by the issuer at any time if the necessary conditions are no longer seen to exist for the permit, if the permit holder has not observed instructions or if it may be anticipated that the permit holder will handle the substances and devices covered by the permit in an unacceptable manner. In the case of permits under Articles 12 or 27, the chief of police in the district of domicile of the permit holder shall decide on the withdrawal of a permit, regardless of the place of original issue of the permit. A chief of police is permitted to suspend a permit temporarily without notice if urgently necessary. If the premises, manufacturing practices or custody of goods are inadequate in the opinion of a chief of police, the chief of police may temporarily and without notice confiscate firearms, ammunition, fireworks or explosives. The same applies to other weapons covered by this Act.

**Article 35** When a permit under this Act is withdrawn, the person deprived of the permit shall turn in the permit to the police together with the weapons, substances and devices in his possession under the terms of the permit. When conditions are not present for confiscation, the chief of police may, when one month has passed from the withdrawal of a permit, decide to sell the goods in question; weapons may be sold when six months have passed. In the course of the sale, the owner of the goods shall be consulted to the extent possible. The

proceeds of the sale, net of cost, shall accrue to the owner. If the chief of police is of the opinion that the weapons, substances or devices are so poor or of such little value that their sale is not warranted, they shall be destroyed or rendered inoperative without compensation to the owner.

**Article 36** Violation of this Act or rules established under the Act is subject to fines ...1) or up to four years' imprisonment unless there are more severe penalties under other legislation.

Attempted violation of the provisions of this Act or rules established under this Act, or complicity in such violation, is subject to penalties under the terms of Chapter III of the Penal Code. 1)Act 82/1998, Art. 242.

**Article 37** Firearms, ammunition, explosives and fireworks which are imported to Iceland or manufactured in Iceland without permission, or which are found without custody or in the custody of a person who does not possess a permit, shall be confiscated and accrue to the State Treasury. Also, other weapons which are considered to be unlawful under this Act and rules established under this Act shall be confiscated. If a person commits a crime using the said devices or substances, and the conditions for their confiscation are present, it is permitted, if the crime is major, to confiscate also other such devices and substances for which the perpetrator may possess a permit. In other respects, confiscation shall be subject to the provisions of Article 69 of the Penal Code. The National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police shall decide on the arrangements of the storage and disposal of weapons which are seized following the withdrawal of a permit or confiscated pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter.

#### **Chapter VIII Further provisions**

**Article 38** All modifications, e.g. of the type of bolt, number of cartridges or accessories which affect the characteristics of a firearm or its function, are prohibited except with the permission of the chief of police. Modifications pursuant to the first paragraph shall be entered in the register of firearms and the firearms permit.

**Article 39** The Minister may lay down further provisions relating to the enforcement of the present Act in a government regulation.1)

*1)Reg. 787/1998, cf. Reg. 688/2003, 162/2007, 433/2007, 846/2007, 847/2007, 540/2008 and 964/2008. Reg. 684/1999, cf. Reg. 161/2007. Reg. 952/2003, cf. Reg. 1040/2006, 163/2007, 848/2007 and 6/2009..*

**Article 40** This Act shall enter into force on 1 September 1998. ...