

Mode of Work for the Firearms Expert Committee

Introduction

Minister of State at the Department of Justice James Browne has established a new advisory body, the Firearms Expert Committee mandated to carry out an assessment of all types of firearms currently licensed in the State to determine their use under the existing licensing system. Based on this assessment, the Committee will make recommendations on the suitability of different types of firearms for future licensing.

In line with the Committee's terms of reference, it will consider other firearms licensing matters, including if conditions should be applied to firearm certificates, if there should be a limit on the number of firearms a person may hold, and any other firearms licensing matter the Minister considers appropriate during the Committee's term.

Reports to be prepared

The work of the Committee be separated into the preparation of two reports.

- The first report containing the recommendations on which types of firearms should be licensable in the State and for what purposes.
- The second report containing the recommendations on other firearms licensing matters considered by the Committee.

Report one – Mode of Work

Report one will contain the recommendations on which types of firearms should be licenced in the State and for what purposes. The report contain two lists detailing which types of firearms should be licenced in the State and for what purposes and which firearms, if any, should not be licenced. The steps to construct the report are as follows:

Step one

- I. A list will be compiled by secretariat based on firearms that have been authorised to be imported into the State by the Department of Justice. This list will be circulated to the FEC membership before the first meeting.
- II. At the first meeting, members will advise if additional firearms need to be added to the list. The agreed list will be circulated to the FEC membership by the secretariat for agreement after the first meeting.
- III. Before the first meeting, a list of the purposes for which a firearm may be licenced will be circulated by the secretariat i.e. clay pigeon shooting, deer hunting etc. At the first meeting, members will agree if additional purposes need to be added to the list.

Step two

- I. Based on the discussion in the first meeting, the secretariat will circulate a document detailing each firearm that the FEC has agreed is currently licenced in the State. The members will be requested to consider the document and for each type of firearm indicate if, in their opinion, it should be licenced in the State. If a member suggests a firearm should not be licenced, they should briefly provide reasons why.
- II. The member should also indicate the purpose, from the agreed list, for which the firearms should be licensed, for example, target shooting, deer hunting, rabbit hunting, etc. Members may include brief comments elaborating their positions if appropriate.

Step three

- I. The secretariat will then compile three lists:
 - List one detailing the types of firearms where there is agreement on both the licensing and the purpose;
 - List two detailing the types of firearms where there is disagreement on licensing;
 - List three detailing the types of firearms where there is disagreement on the purpose for which the firearm should be licenced.
- II. These lists will be agreed with the Chair before circulated for consideration by the FEC.

Step four

- I. The FEC will consider the firearms detailed on list two and three with a goal of categorising them into types of firearms should be licensable in the State and identifying for what purposes, and further identifying which types of firearms, if any, should not be licensable.

Report Two – Mode of Work

Report two will contain the recommendations of the FEC on other firearms licensing matters considered by the Committee. Some issues have been identified in the Committee's Terms of Reference. These are:

- To consider whether firearms certificates should be conditioned to specify the locations where the firearm may be used;
- To consider whether firearms certificates should be conditioned to limit the use of the firearm to the purpose for which the firearms certificate was sought; and
- To consider whether there should be a limit on the number and type of firearms a person may hold.

The Committee may also be tasked with making recommendations on other matters by the Minister.

When the Chair requests the secretariat to prepare discussion papers to introduce the issue, the secretariat will devise some guiding questions to aid the Committee's discussion of the matter.

Members of the FEC are also invited to submit their views and/or guiding questions for consideration.