



## **Airgun law (@2022) pertaining to match target shooting in England & Wales.**

The Firearms Act 1968 and related legislation is complex. Airguns are regarded as firearms and referred to as air weapons. Most are exempt from licencing unless they are specifically prohibited or declared to be especially dangerous.

This is a summary of the main points as they relate to using match target airguns on our range. If you have any concerns, please ask for advice.

The Club's membership application form requires you to declare that you are not prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition by virtue of section 21 of the Firearms Act 1968.

Section 21 prohibits a person from the possession of any type of firearm if they have been given a custodial sentence when convicted of a criminal offence. If you have received a custodial sentence of between 3 months and 3 years then you are prohibited for a period of 5 years from the date you are released. If you have received a custodial sentence of 3 years or more then you are prohibited for life, from the date of release. The prohibition may be lifted on application to the Crown Court, for advice please consult a solicitor.

### **General Conditions.**

Match target airguns (rifles and pistols) must have a muzzle energy of less than 6ft lb (8 joules) and do not require a licence. This is the rule for most international shooting competitions.

Many match target airguns will have an engraved pentagon symbol containing an "F" – this means the manufacturer has made it to have a power level of less than 7.5 joules, it is "Frei/Free" to be used in competitions and it complies with most countries' legislation.

Air rifles with muzzle energies between 6ft lb and 12ft lb (8 & 16 Joules) do not require a licence, but these are not permitted to be used at our range.

Air rifles with a muzzle energy of more than 12ft lb (16 Joules) are regarded as especially dangerous and can only be possessed on a firearm certificate (FAC) issued by the police.

No one is allowed to possess an air pistol with a muzzle energy of more than 6ft lb (8 Joules). Certain other proprietary low powered or replica weapons may also be prohibited. If in doubt, check; the penalties can be severe.

Under-18's must be prevented from gaining unauthorised access to airguns, or the owner will be liable to a fine. Store the airgun in a lockable cupboard, keeping the keys separate and secure. Alternatively, a locking device can be used to attach the airgun to the fabric of the building or a fixed feature.

It is illegal to sell an airgun or ammunition to a person under 18 years of age. It is an offence for any person to use an airgun for firing a pellet beyond the boundaries of any premises. This includes a supervising adult who allows a person under the age of 18 to use an airgun for firing a pellet beyond the boundaries of any premises.

Whenever you are in a public place you should carry the airgun in a gun cover or case, always ensuring that it is unloaded, not cocked and the pellets should be carried separately.

In Scotland, an Air Weapon Certificate or a visitor permit is needed to use, possess, purchase or acquire an airgun in that country.

### **At what age can you use an airgun?**

#### **Under 14 years:**

You can use an airgun under supervision on private premises with permission from the occupier – normally the owner or tenant.

The person who supervises you must be at least 21 years old.

You cannot buy, hire or receive an airgun or its ammunition as a gift, or shoot, without adult supervision.

Parents or guardians who provide an airgun for use by someone under 14 must exercise control over it at all times, even in the home or garden.

#### **14-17 years:**

You can borrow an airgun and ammunition

You can use an airgun, without supervision, on private premises where you have permission

You cannot buy, borrow or hire an airgun, or ammunition, or receive one as a gift.

Your airgun and ammunition must be bought and looked after by someone over 18 – normally your parent, guardian or some other responsible adult.

You cannot have an airgun in a public place unless you are supervised by somebody aged 21 or over, and you have a valid reason to do so (for example, while on the way to a shooting ground).

#### **18 years and above:**

If you are 18 years or older there are no restrictions on buying an airgun and ammunition, and you can use them wherever you have permission to shoot. It is sensible to always carry the gun in a secure case when in a public place.