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Subject: Firearms Business Panui October 2026



**Firearms Safety
and Education**
New Zealand

Firearms Business Pānui

The latest information for firearms businesses

October 2026

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Kia ora and welcome

Welcome to the first Business Pānui from Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand (FSE). We'll continue to share practical information, firearms safety resources, regulatory updates and answers to common questions to help support the safe and lawful possession and use of firearms.

In this Pānui you can find a high-level introduction to the new Arms Act 2026 and Arms Regulations 2026, and what this means for you.

We cover:

- Dealers have become business licence holders - what that means for you
- What's going to be different for employees of businesses
- An extra year for Registry requirements
- Other proposed changes that may interest firearms businesses
- What will be different for the regulator
- Latest numbers update

Partnerships Team
Communities Directorate
Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand

Important Arms Act Changes

Firearms Businesses

Dealers become 'business licence' holders

- The new Act sees dealer licences renamed 'business licences'.
- For people who have previously had a dealer's licence because they were involved in museum curation or management, this becomes a 'Museum licence'.
- If you operate both a business and a museum, you will need to apply for or renew each licence separately. As businesses and museums now have different legislative requirements, a separate application and assessment process applies to each licence type.

Business licence will last five years (after compliance record is established)

- Your Business Licence will last five years once a proven compliance record has been established. This means licence holders on their third licence (second 'renewal') will become eligible for a five-year licence.
- The first licence applied for will continue to last for one year; as does a second licence issued (the first 'renewal'). Thereafter, the business licence will last five years.

Current licences stay current

- From "day one" your dealer's licence remains current under the new Act as a business licence. All conditions issued under the previous Act continue to apply as if issued under the new Act. All new conditions of the Arms Act 2026 will also apply. **Your business licence expires on the date specified on your existing licence card.**

New licence card when you 'renew'

- Dealers will receive a new business licence card when they renew their licence. When you get a new business licence, if this is your third time licence (second 'renewal') that licence will last five years.

New licence card if your existing card is lost, stole or you notify us of changes

- If your dealer's licence card is lost or stolen; or you make any notification (for example, for a change of premises, or change of employee; or you apply for a new business activity) we will issue you a new business licence card before the expiry date (as this information will be added to the NIA system). The card will have the same expiry date as the card being replaced.

New licence cards will look different

- From 23 September to around March 2027, if issued a new licence card, you will notice it will look different – the card will no longer have the red band at the top saying 'New Zealand Dealer's Licence'. Instead, on the face of your card you will see the words 'Business Licence'. This is an interim card solution, and from around March 2027 we'll be introducing a new permanent card solution for all firearms businesses. We expect to reissue all businesses a refreshed card at that point, though final decisions on this aspect are still pending.

Licence applications started, continue on

- Applicants who applied for a new business (formerly dealer) licence before day one (23 September 2026) and it has not been finalised, will continue to be processed but under the new Act. The applicant will not be asked to submit the application form again. If any further information is required during processing, this may be asked for.

Endorsements already held by business licence holders continue on

- Business licence holders (formerly dealers) endorsements held before day one (23 September 2026) will continue in force. From 23 September 2026, endorsements on business licences will remain in force as long as your licence does. This means that endorsements on a five-year licence will be in force for the five-year licence term.

Business Employees

Employees will not need endorsements

- Employees of a firearms business (formerly 'Dealers') no longer need endorsements or permits to possess to handle restricted firearms and other arms items in the course of their duties in the licensed business.
- Employees still require a firearms licence to work at a licensed business if they are handling arms items. They will still be unable to make an application for a permit to possess the business' arms items independent of the business licence holder.

An extra year for Registry requirements

Registry obligations for businesses push out to 2029

- There is also a small change related to businesses' Registry obligations. The final date by which all businesses (formerly dealers) must register arms items in their possession as part of their business licence will now be 24 June 2029.
- This timeframe has moved out by one year. This will allow the new digital Arms System to be operational, which is expected to help simplify how dealers can register their arms items.

Other changes that may interest firearms businesses

Ammunition sellers change in July 2027

- There is a change coming for ammunitions sellers, but not until July 2027. From that time, ammunition sellers will require prior approval from the regulator, instead of just notifying of their intention to sell ammunition.

Changes for permits to import

- **The time to receive imports delivered by consignments to New Zealand will change on 23 February 2028.**
- Businesses will have up to 12 months from the date the first consignment arrives to bring in the remaining consignments under a single permit to import. This will replace the current requirement where permits are valid for 12 months but once a first consignment arrives, there is only 30 days for all remaining consignments to come in, or the permit expires and a new permit is required.

- For permits to import that have been issued before commencement date (23 September, 2026) for the Arms Act 2026, permit holders can still import their items using the permit that was issued to them prior to day one.

Business can only sell blank firing guns to licence holders

- Under the Arms Act 2026, a person now requires a firearms licence to possess a blank-firing gun. From commencement (23 September 2026) anybody who already has a blank-firing gun does not need to apply for a firearms licence. But if a person seeks to purchase or import a new blank-firing gun, they will need a firearms licence before they can legally obtain any further blank-firing guns.
- From day one, firearms businesses (formerly dealers) can only sell or supply blank firing guns to licence holders.
- **It's also a requirement that anyone who possesses a blank firing gun can only sell it to a licence holder.**

Approval required to manufacture items

- Business licence holders can still manufacture arms items that they received specific approval for before day one (23 September 2026).
- When the business gets to their next expiry, they will need to apply again and there will be new requirements. But those who can manufacture currently will be able to continue to from day one.
- From 23 September 2026, any arms item manufactured by a firearms licence holder can only be on-sold to business licence holders or via a business licence holder.

Privately manufactured firearms can only be on-sold by business licence holders

- From 23 September 2026, any arms items manufactured by firearms licence holders can only be on-sold to business licence holders or via business licence holders.

Firearms Business Employees and Arms Act 2026

- Under the Arms Act 2026 firearms dealer employees no longer need an endorsement to handle endorsed items in the course of their employer's business operations. Firearms business employees must still hold a firearms licence.
- Firearms dealer employees who hold Firearms 'F' endorsements do not need to take any action. The endorsement will expire on its due date and a new updated firearms licence card will be sent to the employee.
- Where an application for a dealer employee endorsement or to renew an endorsement has been made the employee is encouraged to contact the Firearms Compliance Business Team to discuss their circumstances to ensure the application is cancelled.
- We recognise that the legislative changes may create uncertainty for some dealer employees and employers. The Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand Business Team will work directly with affected individuals to identify and resolve any issues or concerns.

To minimise disruption and to support affected businesses and employees, those with F Endorsements expiring are advised to contact the Business Team by email at firearmscompliance@firearmssafety.govt.nz.

Keep up to date with the latest numbers

On our website, we proactively release firearms regulatory information to help people better understand features of the firearms licence-holder community, and aspects of the performance of New Zealand's firearms regulatory framework. The information below provides a snapshot of selected data.

This section contains:

- Active firearms licences summary, by type - Individual, Visitor and Businesses
- Firearms licensing completion summary - Individual, Visitor and Businesses. This section now shows the total number of licences completed in the given month, rather than a percentage, and is broken down by licence types.
- Firearms Registry update - including total firearms, parts and licence holders registered

Two additional firearms data sets are now available, providing information on firearms regulation, Registry service performance, and Firearms Safety Course delivery.

More detailed firearms data is available at: [Firearms data and public information](#) | [Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand](#)

Active firearms licences	
1 October 2026	
Individual	217,462
Business	434
Museum	3
Museum Worker	0
Visitor	114
Total	218,013

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Firearms licensing completion summary		
	Sep 2026	Aug 2026
Individual	1,823	1,645
Business	0	25
Museum	0	0
Visitor	55	53

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Firearms Registry Update	
1 October 2026	
Total Firearms Registered	726,470
Total Firearms Parts Registered	20,344
Total Licence Holders Registered	155,542

Total Licence Holders registered refers to all current and expired individual or visitor firearms licence holders with a registered firearm or firearms part

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If you have feedback on this Panui or there is anything you would like to see in future editions, please email

firearmspartnerships@firearmssafety.govt.nz

