

Travelling with a European Firearms Pass if there's no Brexit deal

Summary

How travelling with a European Firearms Pass would be affected if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

Detail

Find out how the arrangements for European Firearm Passes (EFPs) used by UK residents travelling with firearms to EU countries would change if the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal. This guidance applies to the arrangements for EFPs in the UK.

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a no deal scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an overarching framing notice [overarching framing notice](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-preparations-for-a-no-deal-scenario/>) explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

Before 29 March 2019

The EFP is a form of passport for firearms and is designed for use by those who are travelling with their firearms between EU countries. EFPs are issued by the EU country in which a firearm owner is resident. You do not need an EFP if you are traveling within the UK and you hold a valid UK firearms certificate.

In the UK, police forces are responsible for issuing EFPs to UK residents who have been granted a certificate permitting them to acquire and possess firearms and shotguns. An EFP can only cover the firearms and shotguns that are specified on your certificate.

In addition to an EFP, all EU visitors to the UK must hold a valid Visitor's Permit in order to bring their firearm into the country. The provisions relating to Visitors' Permits are set out in section 17 of the [Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988](<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/45/contents>) and articles 15-16 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004. An application for a Visitor's Permit must be made to the local UK police force by the EU visitor's sponsor in this country and must be accompanied by the EU visitor's valid EFP or a copy of it.

After March 2019 if there is no deal

Should the UK leave the EU with no deal, EFPs would no longer be available to UK residents wishing to travel with their firearms to EU countries. You would need to comply with whatever licensing or other requirements each EU country decides to impose, as well as UK import and export licensing requirements (see link below for information about export controls but, in summary, export licences would be required for exports of firearms to EU countries, although there would be an exemption for firearms travelling as personal effects).

EFPs would no longer be recognised for EU visitors to the UK. Their sponsors would, as now, have to apply for a Visitor's Permit but it would no longer be a legal requirement to also produce a valid EFP. This would not weaken the current firearm controls as the police would continue to assess an applicant's fitness to hold a firearm as part their consideration of the Visitor's Permit application.

What you need to do

UK residents wishing to travel to EU countries with their firearm or shotgun after 29 March 2019 should contact the authorities of the countries concerned for information about their licensing requirements. This advice would also apply to UK residents who are due to be in an EU country with their firearm at the point when the UK leaves the EU.

If you are sponsoring an EU visitor to the UK, you should continue to apply to the local police force for a Visitor's Permit. Permits issued before the UK leaves the EU will remain valid until they expire.

More information

The arrangements for EFPs are set out in the EU Weapons Directive [91/477/EEC](<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31991L0477:EN:HTML>), as amended by [2017/853](<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/29f12e83-4051-11e7-a9b0-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>) and are implemented through provisions in sections 32A-C of the [Firearms Act 1968](<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/27/contents>) and, in Northern Ireland, through articles 19-23 of the [Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004](<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2004/702/contents/made>).

Find out more about [applying for Visitors Permits](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518193/Guidance_on_Firearms_Licensing_Law_April_2016_v20.pdf).

[PSNI Firearms travel information can be found here](<https://www.psnipolice.uk/>).

Find out more about [UK export licensing requirements](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exporting-controlled-goods-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/exporting-controlled-goods-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>).

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.

The UK government is clear that in this scenario we must respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement. The UK government has consistently placed upholding the Agreement and its successors at the heart of our approach. It enshrines the consent principle on which Northern Ireland's constitutional status rests. We recognise the basis it has provided for the deep economic and social cooperation on the island of Ireland. This includes North-South cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which we're committed to protecting in line with the letter and spirit of Strand two of the Agreement.

The Irish government have indicated they would need to discuss arrangements in the event of no deal with the European Commission and EU countries. The UK would stand ready in this scenario to engage constructively to meet our commitments and act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland, recognising the very significant challenges that the lack of a UK-EU legal agreement would pose in this unique and highly sensitive context.

It remains, though, the responsibility of the UK government, as the sovereign government in Northern Ireland, to continue preparations for the full range of potential outcomes, including no deal. As we do, and as decisions are made, we'll take full account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.