

Shotgun security: your responsibility.

As the holder of a shotgun certificate you are required to comply with the conditions on your certificate relating to security – conditions 4 (a) & (b).

Condition 4 (a)

“The shotguns to which the certificate relates must at all times (except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (b) below) be stored securely so as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, access to the shotguns by an unauthorised person.”

Condition 4 (b)

“Where a shotgun to which the certificate relates is in use or the holder of the certificate has the shotgun with him for the purpose of cleaning, repairing or testing it or for some other purpose connected with its use, transfer or sale, or the shotgun is in transit to or from a place in connection with its use or any such purpose, reasonable precautions must be taken for the safe custody of the gun.”



The security requirement relates only to the shotguns, not cartridges. However, it makes sense to keep them hidden away and well away from your shotgun storage.

In practice, this means that when you're not using your guns they should be locked away from anyone who hasn't got a certificate. This includes family members. Undoubtedly the best option is a purpose-built gun cabinet.

Your gun cabinet should be secured firmly so that it can't easily be removed – usually by bolting it to a wall, floor or joists. It is best secured in a corner to make it difficult for a thief to attack it.

You should ensure that you keep the keys to the cabinet in a place where they can't be found easily. Remember that YOU are responsible for the security of the guns, and letting people who do not have a certificate (including family members) know where the keys are, is NOT taking reasonable precautions to ensure that they don't have access to the guns.

Criminals are aware of the habit of “hiding” keys in a drawer, so think carefully about the hiding place. It would be sensible to consider changing that hiding place from time to time. Another option is to put the keys into a small combination safe – for which only you have the combination. Another option is a gun safe with a combination lock. Equal care should be taken to prevent anyone else knowing the access codes.

When you come in from shooting, it's best to clean your guns immediately then put them into their cabinet and lock them away as soon as possible. Leaving guns out “to dry” could compromise security. Modern lubricants and water-dispersants have made drying simple and quick.

There will be many occasions when you need to take your guns out for other reasons, and again the same applies – make sure you don't leave them lying around and put them back in secure storage when you've finished.

If you are in a vehicle and need to stop and leave it with guns in it for any reason, make sure nothing shows which might indicate that there might be guns in it.

If possible park it where it can be seen or overlooked, and reverse up to a wall making access to the boot difficult. The vehicle should be locked and alarmed.

You should not leave the vehicle longer than necessary. You might also use devices such as security cables. Vehicle-mounted gun safes are also available. It would be wise to take other precautions such as taking parts such as the fore-end with you as an additional security measure.

If you have any doubt, you can call on the CPSA for help and advice on the subject. Call 01483 485400 or email info@cpsa.co.uk

The Home Office has published a handbook which provides detailed advice on firearm security – which can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/1CXrOYk>

Remember it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that unauthorised people don't have access to your guns. It is an offence if you fail to do so, and you could be prosecuted and have your certificate revoked if you are careless in this respect.

We each have a responsibility to make sure guns do not fall into the wrong hands.