



Under the all-encompassing Violent Crime Reduction Act of 2006, airgunners need to be aware of some changes in the existing airgun law, which became effective from 1st October, 2007. Primarily, these changes relate to age limits, where you can buy your airgun, and 'soft' airguns.

More detailed information was published in last month's *Air Gunner*, and you can download a copy of this from the internet by logging your computer onto www.airgunshooting.org.

Some readers may find the changes rather pointless (we think they are, too!) and others may be a bit confused over what they can and can't do under the new system (it's certainly got police firearms officers scratching their heads!).

But don't worry. From October 1, there are still plenty of things airgunners *can* do without fear of breaking any new rules. To reassure you, here's a list of answers to the most common questions airgunners are asking...



Airguns will have to be bought from registered dealers and on a face to face basis - though most accessories will still be available through mail order.

they can return it to you) through the postal systems as before. However, if your airgun needs a replacement part that's considered a 'component part', only an RFD will be able to sell it. What constitutes a component part is still to be decided; we expect a barrel and receiver to be included in any list.

Does the law relating to CO2 airguns change?

No. Air pistols and air rifles which run off CO2 gas are *not* affected by the new rules, so it's carry on as normal.

Does the law relating to soft airguns change?

Yes. There are some very complex changes regarding what the government terms as realistic-imitation firearms and imitation firearms - but the new rules do *not* apply to CO2-powered air pistols (like the Walther CP models, for instance), nor CO2-powered air rifles (such as the Crosman RatCatcher).

A realistic-imitation firearm is an imitation firearm which looks indistinguishable from a real firearm. The government now requires that imitation firearms conform to certain specifications, like colour, size and/or shape. The colours must be 'bright' - in blue, orange, pink, purple, red and yellow - or if it's made of a transparent material.

Can I still keep the soft airguns I own?

Yes - and you can still carry on shooting them as before. But you will not be able to transfer ownership of a soft airgun if it's considered a realistic-imitation firearm.

Can I buy soft airguns to add to my collection?

The Act states that it is an offence for anyone to sell a realistic-imitation firearm - but the government has laid out specific 'defences' which, effectively, means that sales of realistic-imitation firearms *can* still be made to certain people and organisations. These include museums, theatrical, film and TV production companies and re-enactment societies.

You can only buy an imitation firearm if it conforms to the government's new specifications (to be finalised), and you must be at least 18 years old.

Can I sell any of my soft airguns?

Yes and no. You cannot if it's considered a realistic-imitation firearm (although there are 'defences' if you do so - see above). But you can sell an imitation firearm - as long as the buyer is over 18 years of age.

Nigel Allen **EDITOR'S QUESTION TIME**

Can I still own an airgun without a licence?

Yes - airguns still do not require any form of licence, and the existing UK power levels remain unchanged. Providing the muzzle energy of your air rifle does not exceed 12 ft. lbs. (6 ft. lbs. in the case of an air pistol), you do not need a Firearms Certificate (FAC) to own or shoot a low-powered airgun.

How old do I have to be to buy/own an airgun?

The previous minimum age limit of 17 has now been increased to 18 years of age. That also applies to the purchase of pellets - you must now be aged at least 18 to buy these.

Can an under-14 still shoot an airgun?

Yes - as long as they're constantly supervised by a person aged at least 21 years old. This rule has not changed. Young shooters aged between 14 and, now, 18 years of age can shoot unsupervised, providing they have permission to be shooting on that land. (Note that you can't carry an airgun to your shoot until you're 18 years old.)

Where can I buy an airgun?

The law has now changed. People who sell airguns as part of their business must now be registered as a firearms dealer (RFD), like the majority of gun shops already are. But, from now on, when you buy an airgun from a gun shop,

the transaction must be 'face to face'. In other words, they will not be able to sell you an airgun by mail order, or via the internet. You will also have to give the shop your name and address when you collect your airgun.

Do I have to sell my own gear through a gun shop now?

No - you *can* sell your airgun privately as before and you do *not* need to be a registered firearms dealer! If it's a private transaction between two people - in other words, you're not selling the airgun as part of a business - the buyer must now be at least 18 years of age. You can advertise private airgun sales in magazines or on the internet and

any private transaction does *not* need to be conducted on a face-to-face basis.

Can I buy airgun accessories through mail order?

Yes, the vast majority of airgun accessories, including pellets, can still be bought through mail order and over the internet - although you must be 18 to buy pellets and the dealer may require proof of age. Gun shops will not be permitted to send a few types of gun parts through the post, though. The government has yet to finalise these, though it's thought it will include receivers and barrels.

What about repairs and servicing?

Airgun repairers do not have to be an RFD, so you can send them your airgun (and



Carry on as normal with CO2 air pistols, like this Walther CP-88 Competition, and CO2 air rifles... regardless of model. The new rules relating to realistic-imitation firearms and imitation firearms do not apply to any air pistols.