



LICENCING UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT: PART 3

A critical issue for us as SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association relate to the **restrictions** in the Draft Firearms Control Amendment Bill imposed on our sector. One cannot help but feel targeted and singled out with some rather absurd and senseless proposals that adds to the **administrative burden for the firearm owner and Police while also impeding our way of life and passion.**

OCCASSIONAL HUNTING AND SPORT SHOOTING

Section 15 makes provision for the issuing of firearm licences for occasional hunting and sport shooting. The proposed amendment states that such a licence will only be issued for occasional hunting and sport shooting if the applicant is the **owner or legal resident of a property** where hunting or sport shooting occur occasionally, or if the applicant can provide **written proof or permission by the owner or legal resident** of the property where hunting or sport shooting take place. The specific wording reads as follows:

"(2A) The firearm licence for occasional hunting or occasional sport-shooting purposes may only be issued if the applicant—

- (a) is the owner or lawful occupier of property where occasional hunting or occasional sport-shooting shall take place; or
- (b) produces documentary proof of permission by the owner or lawful occupier of property referred to in paragraph (a), to engage in occasional hunting or occasional sport-shooting on the said property."

*Currently, occasional hunters may own a maximum of 4 firearms. This will remain unchanged.

***Our comment/viewpoint:** By implication, the proposed amendment means that any individual that wants to apply for a Section 15 licence, will have to obtain proof from a shooting range or a landowner or a legal resident that he/she may participate in hunting or shooting activities, before a licence will be issued.*

This is an unnecessary impediment and completely absurd. SA Hunters has more than 44 000 members of which 65% live in one of the mega cities in Gauteng. Very few of them will be able to obtain a licence without such a letter.

Again, one has to wonder why specific sectors are seemingly targeted with additional barriers to legal firearm ownership while illegal firearm owners and criminals continue to act with impunity. This is just another paper chase exercise. What proof will a letter from a landowner really provide that a hunter will actually hunt on his/her land?



DEDICATED HUNTING AND SPORT SHOOTING



Section 16 deals with firearms for dedicated hunting or sport shooting. In this instance, **various amendments** have been proposed. Currently, Section 16 licences are issued for semi-automatic handguns, rifles, and shotguns. **It is proposed to change this condition to refer to handguns, rifles, and shotguns that are not forbidden.** Semi-automatic firearms will be restricted in any event, and it is unlikely that licences would be issued.

Furthermore, a member's dedicated status will only be acknowledged if he has been complying with requirements to retain his status over the previous 24 months. Dedicated hunters and sport shooters may not have **more than 6 firearms of which not more than two may be handguns or semi-automatic firearms or pump action shotguns** (currently there is no restriction on the number of firearm licences issued to a dedicated hunter or sport shooter). Only a person that has maintained dedicated status for 24 months will be allowed to have a licence for a semi-automatic rifle or shotgun. Such an application must meet the following requirements:

The Registrar may issue a licence in terms of this section to any natural person who is a dedicated hunter or dedicated sports person if the application is accompanied by a sworn statement or solemn declaration from the chairperson of an accredited hunting association or sports-shooting organisation, or someone delegated in writing by him or her, stating that the applicant—

- (a) is a registered member of that association;
- (b) has actively participated in hunting or shooting events of the association; and
- (c) has, during the preceding period of 24 months, complied with requirements of being awarded with a dedicated hunter or dedicated sports person status as prescribed."; and

(e) by the addition of the following subsections:

"(5) A person may not hold more than six licences in terms of this section.

(6) A person issued with a licence in terms of this section may not hold more than two licences each in respect of a—

- (a) handgun;
- (b) semi-automatic rifle; or
- (c) pump action or semi-automatic shotgun, for dedicated hunting or a dedicated sports-shooting.

(7) A semi-automatic rifle or a semi-automatic shotgun may only be registered in terms of this section to a person who has maintained a dedicated status as a hunter or sports-shooter for a period of at least two years and continues to maintain such a dedicated status.

- (8) Any application for a licence under this section must be accompanied by a written motivation containing at least the following information—
- the needs of the dedicated hunter or dedicated sports shooter;
 - the type of firearm required;
 - the shooting disciplines that the applicant is involved in; and
 - such other information as may be prescribed.
- (9) The motivation contemplated in subsection (8) must be supported by the chairperson or authorised office bearer of the relevant hunting association or sports-shooting organisation, as the case may be.
- (10) Where a licence holder under this section ceases to hold the status as dedicated hunter or dedicated sports-shooter, the licence holder must, in writing, notify the Registrar of such cessation within 30 days of ceasing to hold such status, and the Registrar must follow the process in section 28 for the cancellation of the licence.
- (11) Any failure by the holder to comply with the provisions of subsection (10) constitutes an offence.
- (12) The association or organisation which has granted dedicated status to the member involved must, at the end of the association's year, provide a report in the prescribed manner to the Registrar on all its members who have—
- not renewed their membership;
 - had their membership suspended;
 - failed to comply with the requirements for awarding dedicated hunter or sport shooter status; and
 - been expelled from the association.
- (13) If a person issued with a licence in terms of this section holds any other licence contemplated in sections 12, 15 and 16A, the number of licences which that person may hold in terms of this section must be reduced by the number of such other licences held."

Our comment/viewpoint: These proposed amendments create numerous additional requirements for dedicated hunters and sport shooters that wish to apply for a firearm licence, with the following elements of critical concern:

- the individual must comply with requirements of being awarded with a dedicated hunter or dedicated sport shooter status during the preceding period of 24 months and continuously retaining the status for that period,
- has actively participated in hunting or shooting events of the association,
- may not be in possession of more than six firearm licences;
- may not hold more than two licences for handguns, semi-automatic rifles or shotguns, or pump action shotguns;
- only a dedicated hunter or sport shooter that has maintained dedicated status as a hunter or sport shooter for at least two years, will be able to obtain a licence for a semi-automatic firearm;
- Any application must be accompanied by a motivation that indicates the need for such a licence, the type of firearm, the shooting discipline in which he will participate, and any other information the Registrar requires;
- Must include an endorsement from the association that supports the application;
- Must inform the registrar if he/she loses dedicated status, after which the Registrar will cancel the licences according to Section 28.
- Dedicated hunters and sport shooters will also have to complete additional prescribed training (*which is not specified in die draft)
- Lastly, dedicated hunters and sport shooters will be required to apply for additional competency to obtain dedicated status (the nature of which is also not defined in the draft)

This amendment puts considerably more obligations on the dedicated hunters and sport shooters to own two additional firearms. In many instances, the proposed amendments do not make any sense. Associations may organise sport shooting events, but as a rule they do not organise hunting activities. Hunting is an activity that individuals arrange for themselves. If a dedicated hunter cannot maintain his dedicated status, the Registrar will cancel all his firearm licences. No provision is made for dedicated licences to be converted to licences for occasional hunting or sport shooting.

PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS

Section 16A deals with professional hunters and their firearm licences. Professional hunters must comply with exactly the same restrictions and requirements as dedicated hunters and sport shooters, except that professional hunters may own a **maximum of 8 firearms**.

Our comment/viewpoint: Similar to our concerns relating to dedicated hunters and sport shooters, the impediments added for a rather limited number of licences is absurd. It is imported to understand that professional hunters often require a variety of rifles for different conditions and hunting scenarios. Therefore, the restriction to 8 licences could prevent them from optimally operating their businesses. Professional hunters play an integral part in not only the hunting sector but also tourism. Limiting their scope of work could have a dire impact on communities surrounding hunting destinations.

OUR CONTINUED FOCUS

The actions we will be taking to stop this legislation include:

- **Legal pressure** on government to drop the proposed changes to the bill
- **Challenging anti-firearm propaganda** and misinformation
- **Explaining why firearm ownership is a civil right** for law-abiding citizens
- **Giving thousands a voice** to challenge and pressure the government through **commentary and petitions**
- **Collaboration** with industry stakeholders to **amplify our impact**

HELP US TO HELP YOU - GET INVOLVED