The British Shooting Sports Council
Chairman: Mark Garnier OBE MP | Secretary: Jeremy Hinde

INSERT FOR REGISTERED FIREARMS DEALERS

When a Registered Firearms Dealer Dies

Additional guidance for families, executors, business partners and staff

This insert accompanies the leaflet *Firearms and Shotguns After Bereavement*. It covers the additional points that arise when the person who has died was registered as a firearms dealer. The general advice in the leaflet still applies.

Registration is personal

Registration as a firearms dealer under section 33 of the Firearms Act 1968 is held by the registered person. It does not pass automatically to family members, executors, beneficiaries or staff, although the police may register a manager temporarily (see overleaf).

Section 8(1) allows a registered dealer, or a servant of that dealer, to possess firearms, ammunition and relevant accessories without a certificate only in the ordinary course of the dealer's business. Once the dealer has died, nobody should assume that this authority continues. Seek police advice before anyone handles, sells or moves stock.

What to do first

1. **Tell the police firearms licensing department** that the dealer has died. Give the dealer's registration details, every place of business and every location where firearms or ammunition are stored.
2. **Keep the premises secure.** Maintain locks, the strongroom and the alarm. Carry out no transaction until the police have confirmed the arrangements.
3. **Preserve the records.** Find the certificate of registration and the register of transactions and keep them safe. Do not alter or remove entries.
4. **Segregate the firearms.** Keep customers' firearms, business stock and the dealer's personal firearms held on a firearm or shotgun certificate clearly apart.
5. **Contact the nominated dealer,** if one has been arranged. If not, ask the police about a section 7 permit or transfer to another Registered Firearms Dealer.

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Planning ahead: a nominated dealer

The simplest arrangement is for a dealer to agree in advance with another Registered Firearms Dealer, often a trusted member of staff who holds their own registration, who knows the stock and can access the premises. Being registered in their own right, they can take the stock into their own register under section 8(1) without waiting for a permit. Put the arrangement in writing, keep it with the will, and tell the firearms licensing department.

Keeping the business running

It is critical that the business continues to operate wherever possible, as closure can have a significant impact on employees and other stakeholders. Quite often, the registration is reissued in the manager's name on a temporary basis until ownership and estate matters have been resolved.

Customers' firearms

From experience, this is the area where firearms are most likely to go missing. Customer-owned firearms should be clearly separated from business stock, and no firearm should be sold, auctioned or transferred unless ownership has been established beyond doubt.

The dealer's stock

The dealer's own stock forms part of the estate, as do any firearms the dealer held personally on a firearm or shotgun certificate. Identify these and keep them apart from stock. Options may include transfer to the nominated dealer or another Registered Firearms Dealer, a section 7 permit where the police consider it appropriate, or police care.

Register and certificate

Keep the register of transactions (section 40) available for inspection. When the business ends, the police will remove the dealer from the register of dealers (section 38(1)) and require the certificate of registration and the register to be surrendered within 21 days of notice (section 38(8)).

Prohibited weapons and explosives

Tell the police about any prohibited weapons held under the dealer's section 5 authority and contact the Home Office, which issues those authorities. Tell the police exactly what propellants, primers or other explosives are stored, and where.

> **KEY MESSAGE**
>
> Secure the premises, segregate the firearms, preserve the records and contact the police before anything is moved, sold or returned.

BSSC, October 2026. England and Wales; general information, not legal advice.

Constituent Associations: APSI, BASC, CPSA, CA, DWA, FCSA, GTA, HBSA, ICSI, MLAGB, NGO, NRA, NSRA, SAGBNI, UKPSA, VAA
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