

Information sheet

Date of Issue: March 2006

Regulation of handgun target shooting – minimum participation requirements

The rules relating to the annual minimum participation requirements for handgun target shooters have recently changed or, in some cases, are about to change. This information sheet sets out the nature of the changes and the implications for handgun target shooters.

Background

- In accordance with the National Handgun Control Agreement, the *Firearms Act 1996* ('Firearms Act') requires that all handgun target shooters satisfy annual minimum participation requirements in order to retain their shooting licence.
- Under the current provisions in the *Firearms Act*:
 - handgun target shooters who hold one class of handgun are required to participate in at least 6 approved shooting matches on at least 6 separate days and a further 4 approved shooting matches or handgun target shoots on at least 4 separate days;
 - handgun target shooters who hold more than one class of handgun are required to participate in at least 6 approved shooting matches on at least 6 separate days and, for each class of handgun owned, a further 4 approved shooting matches or handgun target shoots on at least 4 separate days.
- Approved shooting matches are prescribed under the *Firearms Regulations 1997*, as are four different 'classes' of handguns.
- Handgun target shooters are only permitted, under the terms of their licence, to participate in target shooting for the purpose of preparing

for, or competing in, an approved shooting match.

The changes

- Following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the release of a public discussion paper, several significant changes have been made to the minimum participation regime for handgun target shooters.
- The *Firearms (Further Amendment) Act 2005* received Royal Assent on 22 November 2005. This Act will amend the *Firearms Act* to make these changes to the minimum participation requirements for handgun target shooters.

Minimum participation requirements - quantum

- The requirement for handgun target shooters who own more than one class of handgun to participate, for each class of handgun owned, in an additional 4 approved shooting matches or handgun target shoots, will be changed to require that such licensees participate in an additional 4 handgun target shoots only.
- This means that such licensees will not be required to participate in an additional 4 approved shooting matches for each class of handgun owned.

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- It will be open to licensees, however, to satisfy this component of the minimum participation requirements by participating in one or more approved shooting matches, should they wish to do so.
- The annual minimum participation requirements for handgun target shooters can best be illustrated in tabular form, as set out in attachment A to this Information Sheet.
- This change took effect on 1 January 2006.

Minimum participation requirements - application

- The annual minimum participation requirements will only apply to handgun target shooters who own a handgun.
- This means that junior handgun target shooters will not be required to satisfy annual minimum participation requirements. Similarly, adult handgun target shooters who do not actually own a handgun will not be required to satisfy the annual minimum participation requirements.
- Further, the annual minimum participation requirements will only apply to handgun target shooters who are natural persons.
- These changes will take effect on 1 July 2006.
- In order that handgun target shooters can enjoy the benefits of these changes as soon as possible, however, there will be an amnesty from the requirement to comply with the minimum participation requirements for shooters who do not own a handgun and licensees who are not natural persons from 1 January 2006 until 30 June 2006.

Minimum participation requirements - flexibility

- Several new measures will be introduced to give a greater degree of flexibility to the operation of the annual minimum participation requirements. These are set out below.

➤ *Proportional application*

If, in any calendar year, a handgun target shooter holds his or her licence for less than the full calendar year, or holds a licence in respect of a particular class of handgun for less than the full calendar year, then the annual minimum participation requirements for that licensee will apply proportionately. Calculations will be based on whole calendar months for the relevant year, after rounding down to the nearest whole number of matches or shoots.

This change will take effect on 1 July 2006.

➤ *Deeming provision for matches or shoots conducted over more than one day*

An approved handgun target shooting match or handgun target shoot that takes place on more than one day will be taken, for the purposes of the minimum participation requirements, to be a separate match or shoot for each day on which the match or shoot takes place.

- This change took effect on 1 January 2006.

➤ *Chief Commissioner may modify minimum participation conditions*

The Chief Commissioner of Police will have the power to vary the minimum participation requirements for handgun target shooters if satisfied that the licensee was unable to participate in a match or shoot for reasons outside his or her control or was unable to complete participation in a match or shoot for reasons outside his or her control.

This change will take effect on 1 July 2006.

➤ *Chief Commissioner may exempt handgun target shooters from the minimum participation requirements*

The Chief Commissioner of Police will have the power to exempt licensees from the minimum participation requirements if satisfied that he or she was unable to comply with those requirements due to:

- a temporary physical incapacity; or
- absence from the State for a substantial period of time; or
- any other reasonable reason.

This change will take effect on 1 July 2006.

- contact the Department of Justice directly on (03) 9651 6226;
- contact the Victoria Police Licensing Services Division on 1300 651 645.

Approved handgun target shooting matches

- As noted above, approved matches are currently prescribed under the Firearms Regulations 1997.
- This will no longer be the case. Instead, the Chief Commissioner of Police will have the power to approve matches as approved handgun target shooting matches provided that they are organised by an approved handgun target shooting club and are conducted on an approved shooting range.
- Approved matches approved in this way will be gazetted in the Government Gazette, rather than prescribed in the Firearms Regulations 1997. (All matches previously prescribed in the Firearms Regulations 1997 as 'approved matches' for the purposes of the Firearms Act have now been gazetted as such.)
- This change will take effect on 1 January 2006. All matches currently prescribed as approved matches will be gazetted as such.

Further information

For further information on any of the matters raised in this Information Sheet, you are invited to:

- access the web page prepared by the Department of Justice at www.justice.vic.gov.au;

Minimum Handgun Target Shooting Participation Requirements

Classes of Handguns	Approved Handgun Target Shooting Matches	Handgun Target Shoots or Approved Handgun Target Shooting Matches	Total Participation (approved matches and/or target shoots)	Minimum Separate Days
1	6	4	10	10
2	6	8	14	10
3	6	12	18	10
4	6	16	22	10