



NSW Police Force
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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Firearm Magazines

In NSW, firearms are classified according to calibre, method of firing and magazine capacity. Magazine capacity can determine what category a firearm will fall into, which in turn determines what type of licence is required to authorise possession and use.

This FACT sheet provides information on fixed and detachable firearm magazines and the restrictions applicable to each.

What is a firearm magazine?

A firearm magazine is an ammunition storage and feeding device within or attached to a repeating firearm and is defined as a firearm part under section 4 of the *Firearms Act 1996*. A magazine may be internal or external, with the external magazine being detachable.

The magazine functions by moving the cartridges stored in the magazine into a position where they may be loaded into the chamber by the action of the firearm.

Magazines come in many shapes and sizes and are an essential part of any repeating firearm, therefore they are subject to regulation and legislative control which restricts the number of cartridges they may hold.

What magazines are restricted and are there any exemptions for obtaining a prohibited weapon permit?

The following detachable magazines are defined as prohibited weapons by clause 4(4) to Schedule 1 of the *Weapons Prohibition Act 1998*:

- (a) a rimfire rifle magazine with a capacity of more than 15 rounds,
- (b) a centre-fire self-loading rifle magazine with a capacity of more than 5 rounds,
- (c) a centre-fire rifle magazine (other than a self-loading rifle magazine) with a capacity of more than 10 rounds,
- (d) a shotgun magazine with a capacity of more than 5 rounds,
- (e) a tubular magazine extension that is capable of extending the capacity of any firearm,
- (f) a pistol magazine with a capacity of more than 10 rounds,
- (g) any magazine designed to be attached to any machine gun, sub-machine gun or other firearm that is capable of propelling projectiles in rapid succession following one pressure of the trigger.

A person who holds a category D licence issued for the genuine reason of Vertebrate Pest Animal Control is exempt from the requirement to obtain a prohibited weapon permit for a detachable magazine referred in (a) - (d) above.

The holder of a category H licence issued for the genuine reason of Business or Employment is exempt from the requirement to obtain a prohibited weapon permit for a detachable magazine referred in (f) above.

What restrictions are there on magazine capacity if the magazine is not detachable?

The categories of licences and the firearms which apply to each licence class are found in section 8 of the *Firearms Act 1996*. The following provides a summary of both fixed and detachable magazines for reference:

Rimfire Rifles other than Self Loading

Non detachable magazine 1 - unlimited rounds = category A licence
Detachable magazine 1 - 15 rounds = category A licence
Detachable magazine over 15 rounds = prohibited weapon permit required

Rimfire Rifles Self Loading

Non detachable magazine 1 - 10 rounds = category C licence
Detachable magazine 1 - 10 rounds = category C licence
Non detachable magazine 10 - unlimited rounds = category D licence
Detachable 10 - 15 rounds = category D licence
Detachable magazine over 15 rounds = prohibited weapon (however, exemption provided to Category D licence holders, see above section)

Centre Fire Rifle other than Self Loading

Non detachable magazine 1 - unlimited rounds = category B licence
Detachable magazine 1 - 10 rounds = category B licence
Detachable magazine over 10 rounds = prohibited weapon permit required

Centre Fire Rifle Self Loading

Non detachable magazine 1 - unlimited rounds = category D licence
Detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category D licence
Detachable magazine over 5 rounds = prohibited weapon (however, exemption provided to Category D licence holders, see above section)

Firearm Magazines

Lever Action Shotgun

Non detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category B licence

Non detachable magazine 5 - unlimited rounds = category D licence

Detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category B licence

Detachable magazine over 5 rounds = category D licence (Note: Also prohibited weapon, however exemption provided to Category D licence holders, see above section)

Shotgun other than Self Loading, Pump Action or Lever Action

Non detachable magazine 1 - unlimited rounds = category A licence

Detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category A licence

Detachable magazine over 5 rounds = prohibited weapon permit required

Shotgun Self Loading or Pump Action

Non detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category C licence

Non detachable magazine over 5 rounds = category D licence

Detachable magazine 1 - 5 rounds = category C licence

Detachable magazine over 5 rounds = category D licence (Note: Also prohibited weapon, however exemption provided to Category D licence holders, see above section)

Pistols

Non detachable magazine 1 - unlimited = category H licence

Detachable magazine 1 - 10 rounds = category H licence

Detachable magazine over 10 rounds = category H licence (Note: Also prohibited weapon, however exemption provided to Category H licence holders with the genuine reason of Business or Employment, see above section)

Tubular Magazine Extension

Capable of extending the capacity of any firearm = prohibited weapon permit required.

Magazines designed to fit a machine gun, sub-machine gun or other rapid fire automatic or semi-automatic firearm = prohibited weapon permit required.

What about a detachable magazine which also fits a firearm described in clause 4(4)(g)?

If the magazine was specifically designed to fit a machine gun, sub-machine gun or other rapid fire automatic or semi-automatic firearm, this item is classified as a prohibited weapon and would require a prohibited weapon permit to authorise possession and use.

However, if the magazine was specifically designed for a category A, B, C or D type firearm, and incidentally also fits a firearm described above, then the item would not be considered a prohibited weapon and would not require a permit to authorise possession and use provided it was only ever attached to the firearm for which it was designed.

References

Sections 4 & 8 of the *Firearms Act 1996*,

Clause 4(4) of Schedule 1 to the *Weapons Prohibition Act 1998*,

Clause 4 of Schedule 1 to the *Weapons Prohibition Regulation 2017*.

Where can I find more information?

The information provided in the FACT Sheet is for general guidance only. Applicants and licensees should familiarise themselves with the *Firearms Act 1996* and the associated Regulation, which are available on the NSW Legislation website - www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Firearms Registry

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