



Firearm Safety Code





FOREWORD TO THE FIREARM SAFETY CODE BOOKLET

Recreational shooting is an important part of Victoria's sporting community. The Victorian Government is working closely with the industry and regulators to ensure that recreational shooting is conducted in a safe, sustainable, ethical and lawful manner across the state. As you know, firearm ownership comes with great responsibility and it is a shooter's obligation to ensure their actions do not put themselves or others at risk.

The revised Victorian Firearm Safety Code has been developed by members of the Firearm Safety Foundation Inc and the Licensing and Regulation Division of Victoria Police. My industry advisory committee comprising of Victoria's peak firearm bodies, the Victorian Firearms Consultative Committee, was also consulted and has given their endorsement. The code provides an essential guide to firearm safety and an indispensable resource for recreational shooters, Victoria Police and safety instructors who conduct firearm safety courses for new firearms licensees and those maintaining their firearm safety knowledge.

Safety is paramount, and it's important that recreational shooters handle their weapons with care and in accordance with established safety guidelines. The code has identified ten basic rules of firearm safety, helping people easily understand the expectations when they use a firearm. The code also provides useful advice on firearms maintenance, which will help owners to keep their firearms in the best condition possible.

This is a valuable document and I strongly encourage Victorian shooters to read it and actively practice the rules and advice.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Neville'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

This booklet has been approved by the **Firearms Consultative Committee and Victoria Police** to assist applicants for firearms licences to undergo the written test of their knowledge of safe firearm handling practices.

Before attending the **Firearm Safety Course** and completing the **Firearm Safety Test**, you should read this booklet thoroughly.

Acknowledgements

We also wish to acknowledge the **Licensing and Regulation Division, Victoria Police** for its assistance with and contribution to the content of this booklet.

We would also like to thank **The Game Management Authority** for supplying some of the images and text used in this booklet.

Victoria Police Safety Message

Victoria Police is dedicated to the safety of all Victorians. We know that for most firearm users, safety is also their priority. Firearm users who promote and role-model consistent and safe firearm storage measures, and firearm users who demonstrate safe practices for the transport and use of firearms can reduce the risk of harm to themselves and the community.

Revised by

Firearms Safety Foundation Inc. Vic. 2020

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SECTION ONE:

What you must know about firearm

1a) The ten basic rules

1. Treat every firearm as loaded
2. Always point firearms in a safe direction
3. Load a firearm only when ready to fire
4. Identify your target beyond all doubt
5. Check your firing zone
6. Store firearms and ammunition safely
7. Avoid alcohol or drugs prior to and while handling firearms
8. Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp
9. Never fire at hard surfaces or water
10. Don't climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms

The ten basic rules explained

As long as a firearm is in good condition and handled and stored properly, it cannot hurt anyone. You are responsible for making sure your firearm is in good condition and handled safely.

Rule 1: Treat every firearm as loaded

- Keep your finger off the trigger; always point the muzzle in a safe direction; open the action and inspect the chamber and magazine.
- Do not take anyone's word that a firearm is unloaded. Check every firearm yourself. Only pass or accept a firearm that has the muzzle pointed in a safe direction; the action open; and is not loaded.
- If you do not know how to open a firearm, leave it alone. Keep clear of the muzzle.
- If it is someone else's, ask them to show you that it is empty.



Figure 1: A firearm must be open and empty before you pass it to or accept it from anyone.

Rule 2: Always point firearms in a safe direction

Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

- A safe direction will depend on where you are. Remember that bullets can go through walls and ceilings and they can ricochet against flat or hard surfaces.
- Never point a firearm at anyone or at yourself.
- Keep focussed when handling firearms

- To avoid unintentional firing or damage, firearms should never be leaned against vehicles or any place where they could slide or fall.
- Always be particularly careful when placing firearms in, or removing them from, vehicles, boats or storage. The muzzle should be pointed away from you (and anyone else nearby) and your finger should be **off** the trigger.

Be aware that firearms can go off unintentionally when:

- Closing the action
- Releasing the safety catch
- Uncocking
- Or opening a loaded firearm

Rule 3: Load a firearm only when ready to fire

Only load a firearm when you intend to use it, and only in an area where it can be safely and legally discharged. Remember to unload it when you have used it.



Figure 2: The cartridge must be removed when not firing a shot.

- Only load your ammunition into the magazine when you have reached your shooting area. (The firearm is then carried with the bolt or action closed on an empty chamber. The rounds (i.e., ammunition) are readily available from the magazine and it only takes a second to open the action and feed a round into the chamber.)
- Do not load the chamber until you are ready to shoot.

- Unload the chamber when not firing a shot (Put the round back in the magazine and close the bolt on an empty chamber.)
- Unload completely – no rounds in the magazine or chamber – before leaving a shooting area or entering a hut or camp. Double check.

Self loading shotguns and rifles

Because it is not practical to apply this rule to self loading shotguns and rifles, it is recommended that when you acquire your target you load the firearm and place the **previously tested** safety catch on 'safe'. If you have released the safety catch and then decide not to shoot, re-apply the safety catch. Whenever a round is in the chamber you must be **absolutely** sure that the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. Test the safety catch before loading any rounds into the chamber. If you have any doubt about the safety catch **don't trust it.** Have it inspected by a gunsmith.

Note: No matter what type of firearm you use, you should be cautious when using the safety catch. In most cases they lock the trigger or the bolt but, like all mechanical things, they are subject to wear and tear and may not work properly. The safety catch is only one of several safety precautions you should use when handling firearms.

*** A safety catch only supplements safe handling.**

Rule 4: Identify your target and what is behind it

- You must positively identify your target beyond all doubt before firing. **If in doubt, don't shoot!** The shooter, and anyone supervising an unlicensed shooter, must both positively identify the target.
- Make absolutely certain that the movement, colour, sound and shape of your target is identified correctly.
- Identify the whole animal
- Do not fire at movement only

- Do not fire at colour only
- Do not fire at sound only
- Do not fire at shape only

Target identification issues

When a hunter is tired, or excited about sighting game animals, emotions may override rational thinking (buck or stag fever). Perception can play tricks and you may 'see' what you expect to see. Objects – often people – look like game animals.

There could be other hunters nearby. They may make noises imitating the calls of game. Even the definite sighting of skin and antlers is not positive enough – hunters have been shot while carrying a deer.

BEFORE you shoot! Ask yourself:

“Is this a person?”

This will focus your mind toward expecting to see a person, rather than assuming it is an animal.

Keep your finger away from the trigger until you are ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN it is safe to fire.

Bright coloured clothing and gear can help you to be seen, especially in dim or fading light such as that in the early morning, late evening or under the cover of bush. However, no one colour will be easily seen at all times of the day and in all surroundings. Wear a colour that stands out from the background you are shooting in, and is different from any game animals in that area. While this may minimise your risk of being shot, it will only do so if other hunters properly identify their targets. **Blaze orange** is the recommended colour for all field shooting.

Hunters should use binocular vision, to identify their target. A rifle with telescopic sights, should not be used as it may be loaded. Sweep the binoculars from side to side to ensure no person is close to your field of fire. If using binoculars or telescopic sights, beware of the 'tunnel vision' which limits your field of view.

Remember – it is ALWAYS the responsibility of the shooter to clearly identify the target.

This is regardless of whatever strategies other hunters may or may not use to be seen.



Figure 3: Positively identify your target beyond all doubt. Other hunters may be wearing clothing that blends with the surroundings so – Do not fire at movement. Do not fire at colour. Do not fire at shape. Do not fire at sound.

Rule 5: Check your firing zone

Be aware of what is between you and your target, and in the area beyond your target.

Ask yourself: *“What could happen if I miss my target?”*

Extreme range for projectiles may be as much as:

.22 rimfire	1.5 kilometres
.308 calibre	4.5 kilometres
Airgun	up to 400 metres
Shotgun	from 250 metres to 750 metres (Depending on the type of shot)

Sights need to be correctly aligned to prevent rounds falling short or going far beyond the target.

Check your



Figure 4: When firing a shotgun, be aware that the spread of the shot may endanger something other than the target.

Safety points

- Never fire when companions are ahead of you, especially when you have lost sight of them.
- Never shoot when stock, human activity or buildings are in the area.
- It is unsafe to shoot at a target on the skyline. Remember that many hunting areas have rural and urban developments close by.
- Night shooting can be dangerous, especially if using telescopic sights, so only shoot at night if you are certain it is safe to do so. Spotlights light up only a small part of the firing zone and the projectile's range.

Telescopic sights restrict your field of view

- **Use extra care when shooting at a moving target, particularly with telescopic sights, because your field of view is restricted/limited and changes rapidly. There is a greater danger of someone moving into your firing zone without you noticing.**
- When shooting near thick bush or scrub you may not be able to see your whole firing zone.
- A charge of shot from a shotgun is very wide, particularly at longer ranges.
- Ricochets can be caused by any flat or hard surfaces – rocks, snow, trees and even water. Be especially careful in rocky river beds.



Figure 5: A hard, flat surface, stones or water, may cause a ricochet.

Firing zones

Your firing zone changes rapidly when you follow a moving target with a firearm. As you swing the muzzle around in an arc be aware of the position of other hunters. Make sure they are not caught in the path between your firearm and the target, or beyond the target. This applies particularly when shooting with shotguns. Duck shooters sharing a hide can drive vertical poles into the ground to prevent an 'over-swing' endangering a companion.

Rule 6: Store firearms and ammunition safely

You are required by law to have a safe and secure place to store your firearms. All firearms and ammunition should be stored separately, out of the reach of children, out of view and in an approved cabinet.

A complete firearm is dangerous in the wrong hands, so lock away your unloaded firearm and ammunition **separately**. Do this **immediately** when you return to camp or home from shooting.

Securing firearms out of sight will help prevent removal by thieves.

For legal requirements in relation to transportation of firearms and ammunition, see pages 34 and 35.

Firearms Storage

The **Firearms Act 1996 (Schedule 4)** provides for storage standards for firearms and ammunition. The following is a brief summary of the storage requirements which you must be able to satisfy. **Victoria Police** recommends you source a commercial standard and purpose built safe.

Storage Requirements (for Category A + B Firearms)

- Hard wood or steel container - not easy to penetrate.
- If the container weighs less than 150kg when empty, it must be securely fixed to the floor or wall frame.
- When a firearm is in the container, the container **MUST** be locked with a lock of sturdy construction.
- The premises must be fitted with an 'intruder alarm system' if more than 15 firearms are stored on the premises. 'Intruder alarm system' means an alarm system which is installed, maintained and operated in accordance with Australian Standard 2201.1.2007 (as amended from time to time) and which, in the event of an intrusion, activates an audible alarm warning device and an external visible alarm warning light.
- Ammunition must be stored in a **separate** locked container (not with the firearm).
- All Victorian Licence holders should when travelling interstate, check with that states' Police Firearms Registry as to licensing and storage requirements.

Firearm storage

Along with the specifications outlined in Schedule 4 of the Firearms Act 1996 it is recommended that you source a commercial standard and purpose built safe. It is recommended that you do not use old school lockers, as these can be easily penetrated and the contents stolen. Separate access points for firearms and ammunition is also encouraged.

All family members, especially children, need to know what a firearm is, what it is designed for, and why it must not be touched. It is essential that children realise that firearms are not playthings and must be treated with caution and respect. Children should be taught not to touch a firearm without an adult present, and if they find a firearm to seek the assistance of an adult.



Figure 6: Securing firearms enhances family and community safety.

Rule 7: Avoid alcohol or drugs prior to and while handling firearms

When handling a firearm you must be able to think clearly. Alcohol and drugs (even those prescribed) dull and slow your mental and physical reactions.

Alcohol and Firearms do not mix! Ever!

- Wait until your firearm has been safely locked away before you consume alcohol.
- Do not shoot with others who are, or have been, drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

Rule 8: Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp

Many people have been injured or killed in these situations due to this rule being broken.

- Before entering a car, home or camp completely unload your firearm.
- Ensure that the action is open and that there is no ammunition in either the breech or the magazine.
- Pay particular attention to tubular or rotary magazines to ensure that all rounds are removed.

Rule 9: Never fire at hard surfaces or water

Consider the area in which you are shooting. Could a ricochet occur? **A ricochet will almost certainly occur from shooting at water or smooth flat surfaces and rocks.**

- Remember that when a ricochet occurs you have lost control of where the projectile will finish up, resulting in possible injury to another person or damage to property.
- Be especially careful when shooting with an air rifle due to the slow velocity of pellets they fire. They are very prone to ricochet and should be treated with the utmost caution.
- Rimfire and centrefire bullets are prone to ricochet as they lose velocity at the end of their travel.
- Exercise extreme caution when dispatching downed game birds on water

Rule 10: Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms

Each year there are shooters who are shot (usually by their own firearm) as they attempt to cross/climb fences and/or obstacles with loaded firearms.

Before attempting to negotiate a fence or obstacle unload your firearm. **Do not rely on safety catches.** Safety catches are only intended to supplement the safe handling of firearms.

If attempting to cross/climb a fence alone:

- (a) unload your firearm;
- (b) place it through the fence and lay it on the ground with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction. Then cross the fence away from your firearm.

If crossing/climbing a fence with a friend:

- (a) ensure all firearms are unloaded;
- (b) use the same method as for crossing alone, or hand your unloaded firearm to your companion and then cross the fence. Then have your companion hand to you your unloaded firearm and his or her unloaded firearm.

*** Think before you cross: unload that firearm**

SECTION TWO:

Firearm safety

2a) Ways to keep yourself and others safe

Always obey the TEN BASIC RULES –

Treat every firearm as loaded

Always point firearms in a safe direction

Load a firearm only when ready to fire

Identify your target beyond all doubt

Check your firing zone

Store firearms and ammunition safely

Avoid alcohol or drugs before and while handling firearms

Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp

Never fire at hard surfaces or water

Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms.

Message From Victoria Police Regarding Safe Firearm Conduct

Victoria Police acknowledges that the majority of firearm licence holders and firearm users respect and value safety when it comes to the use of firearms. We also know that mistakes are made and accidents can happen. The personal consequences of not taking firearm safety and storage seriously may lead to having a firearm stolen; and it may mean the loss of your licence and firearms, criminal charges and could potentially affect your livelihood. The manner in which you conduct yourself in your personal life can also impact on your eligibility to hold a firearm licence and remain in possession of firearms. Just like when you are driving a car, you should not intentionally take risks and failing to observe basic safety measures may lead to serious and ongoing consequences. Handling firearms is no different. Hunting and farming are often family occupations/activities and it is expected that firearm users will emphasise and role model positive safety behaviours when it comes to storing, using and working with firearms. Children look to adults for guidance in all behaviours and Victoria Police believes that firearm owners and users have a strong role to play to educate future generations in safe, responsible firearm ownership.

Your Health and Firearm Safety

Victoria Police hope that families and friends will monitor the mental and physical health of firearm owners. Where issues are identified, a common recommendation is for a licence holder's firearms to be moved to a storage address other than their residential address to mitigate risks. Unless the concern represents an imminent threat to a licence holder's personal safety or the safety of others, any person wanting to report concerns regarding the mental health of a licence holder can do so by contacting the Licensing and Regulation Division. Urgent concerns should always be made to local police or 000 (triple zero).

What We Do

The Licensing and Regulation Division of Victoria Police is responsible for firearm licensing and regulation for both recreational and occupational firearm use. If you need to advise of any changes to storage or home address, you must notify the division in writing within 14 days of any change. Victoria Police regularly conducts storage inspections for all types of licence holders and can provide advice regarding responsible firearm storage.

Where firearms are to be transferred to new owners or from a deceased estate, you can contact Victoria Police for advice or engage with a licensed firearm dealer. Executors for deceased estates need to prioritise and manage the transfer of ownership or safe disposal for firearms in the estate within 6 months of the death of the owner. If firearms are being stored in an empty house, it is recommended that they be relocated and stored in an occupied residence.

If you have any questions about licensing or firearm safety you can contact the division via email licensingregulation@police.vic.gov.au or on 1300 651 645.

A MESSAGE FROM VICTORIA POLICE

Where and when you may use firearms:

Did you know?

Many people believe that it is okay to 'have a go' at shooting if they are supervised by a licensed person under any circumstances. This is a myth. Schedule 3 of the Firearms Act 1996 only allows for a non-prohibited person to receive shooting instruction under immediate supervision at an approved shooting range. This exemption does not apply to children under 12 years of age. Children between the ages of 12 and 18 may only receive instruction at an approved range under immediate supervision and with written permission from a parent or guardian.

NEVER SHOOT AT:

movement only; colour only; sound only; shape only; a target on the skyline; and when companions are ahead of you.

And observe the following SAFETY GUIDES:

- Get permission before shooting on private property, land, local and privately owned land and check your State Game regulations for shooting on Crown land.
- Be aware that others may be in the same area. This applies especially to public land. You will be sharing public land with other bush users.
- Make sure there is nothing obstructing the barrel of your firearm before you fire.
- Completely unload before you leave the shooting area and never leave your firearm loaded.
- Unload your firearm before crossing a fence.
- Walk through a stream while carrying firearms rather than jumping or crossing on rocks.
- Always stay focussed when around firearms – no daydreaming!
- Give advice on safety if you see any careless or unsafe

behaviour with firearms. Irresponsible use of firearms causes injuries and deaths.

- Have your firearm checked periodically by a gunsmith who knows about the firearm you own.
- The wearing of blaze orange when hunting is highly recommended.

2b) Carrying your firearm safely



Hazards

- If you fall or stumble when carrying a firearm, your first and most important responsibility is to **make sure the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction, and that you do not touch the trigger.**
- It is vitally important that the barrel is kept free from any obstruction at all times. If you fall and the muzzle touches the ground, **after unloading - always stop and check** for signs of blockage. Always carry your firearm in such a way that you can control the direction of the muzzle should you stumble.
- To prevent water getting into the barrel in **heavy rain or snow**, keep the muzzle pointed down. (Make sure it doesn't touch the ground.) A small square of insulation or masking tape over the muzzle can keep snow and mud out of the barrel. Never insert a plug of cloth or other material into the barrel.
- When hunting in **heavy scrub**, watch for twigs getting

into the barrel. If you have a firearm action with an exposed hammer, be especially careful that the hammer is not cocked accidentally by brushing through scrub.

- Pay attention when walking along **riverbeds** or **dry creek-beds**. They are often slippery or icy.
- Always ensure your firearm is unloaded.
- If your firearm misfires you must check the barrel, from the breech end, in case a bullet is stuck in it.

Crossing /climbing fences

If there is a gate – use it! Never climb a fence while carrying a firearm. Carrying loaded firearms through fences and over obstacles can result in injury and death.



Figure 7: Crossing/climbing fences must be done carefully.

- If there are two or more people, one should climb over the fence without a firearm. Then, pass the unloaded firearms across with the actions open, and pointed in a safe direction.

- If you are on your own, unload the firearm and place it, muzzle first, through the fence. Lay the firearm on the ground, and then climb over the fence.
- Take special care when crossing electric fences. Have your firearm unloaded and the action open before you get near an electric fence. An electric shock can cause your muscles to contract and your hands to clench.

When hunting

Half-open bolt or action in a state of semi-readiness (Shotguns and rifles except self loading)

The state of 'semi-readiness' can be taken up prior to taking a shot. Hold the firearm in both hands, with a cartridge pushed partly forward into the chamber.

Do not close the action completely unless you know you have correctly identified your target and you have time to make a safe shot. If you do close the action but then do not take a shot, go back to the 'semi-ready' state with a half-open action.

A 'break open' shotgun can be carried in the hinged open position with cartridges in the chambers. This is semi-ready with a shotgun. The firearm is safe while open and can be closed and fired quickly and easily.

The semi-ready condition with half-open bolt is not always practical. Unless the bolt is held with the thumb, it may slide backwards and eject the round completely. In this case, the bolt is best left closed on an empty chamber. When you have reached the shooting area and you are ready to take a shot, only then should a round be fully loaded into the chamber and the bolt fully closed.

Going camping? How will you store your firearms and ammunition?

There have been occasions where firearms have been stolen due to a lack of awareness by the owner regarding the safe storage of firearms when away from home.

Tips for safe storage while away from home:

- Notify local authorities that you will be camping and shooting in the area;
- Store firearms out of sight;
- Ammunition should be stored separately in a locked box;
- Bolts should be removed and stored separately; and
- Don't have firearm related stickers on your car; these only serve to alert others to potential firearms stored in the vehicle.

When you return to your campsite, make storing and dismantling your firearm a priority.

Taking firearms interstate?

Contact the relevant jurisdiction for advice about the rules and regulations regarding travelling, camping and shooting in that area.

2c) Spotighting from a vehicle for vermin

Spotighting from a vehicle is a common practice on private land, however it has the potential to be one of the most dangerous forms of vermin control. Having shooters in the back of a utility vehicle where there is a potential for a driver to inadvertently run into a culvert or hit a hidden stump, may result in the occupants being thrown out onto the ground with their firearms and an accidental discharge may occur. (You must not spotlight on public roads or in a recognised deer habitat. Please contact the GMA Customer Service Centre on **136 186** for further information.)

If you must spotlight from a vehicle we suggest you follow these rules to ensure your safety:

- Never have more than one firearm in use at any one time
- Position the shooter in the front passenger seat of the vehicle with the firearm unloaded (no ammunition in the chamber) and pointing out the front passenger side window. Never shoot from the back seat
- Load the firearm only when ready to shoot and then unload the firearm after the shot has been taken or when you have lost the opportunity to shoot
- If you have shot an animal, the shooter should unload the firearm and exit the vehicle before placing the firearm on the ground
- After attending to the animal, and when everyone else has reentered the vehicle, the shooter should pick up the unloaded firearm and reenter the vehicle
- Remember - the more people there are, the more potential for a mishap. At all times point the firearm in a safe direction which will depend on where you are at the time

Note that there are significant penalties for being in possession of a firearm and spotlight in recognised deer habitat, unless exempt. Please refer to the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 and www.gma.vic.gov.au for more details.

2d) Hunting with Vehicles

Statistics have shown that the use of vehicles *is a significant factor* in the number of the people who are injured or killed whilst hunting.

You should NEVER HAVE A LOADED FIREARM IN A VEHICLE - see the previous section on SPOTLIGHTING.

It is against the law to have a loaded firearm in a vehicle or on a *public* road, see current Victorian Legislation.

The practice of riding in the back of a utility, tray vehicle or a “bush basher” [vehicles with the roof cut off and no roll bars or seat belts.] is plainly *irresponsible and extremely dangerous*.

Vehicles in paddocks often hit rocks, stumps hidden by grass and soft banks and inclines result in many vehicles rolling over.

MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR PASSENGERS ARE SAFE BY ALWAYS WEARING A SEAT BELT.

2e) Handling your firearm safely

Cleaning firearms

Firearms are made of metal and wood or composite material. Regular cleaning and maintenance will keep your firearm safe and reliable.

It is essential that the barrel is free from obstruction.

Before storing your firearm you should clean the barrel with a rod, clean patches and solvent. Where possible, insert the cleaning rod from the chamber end of the bore to avoid damaging the muzzle.

When you have cleaned the barrel push an oily patch through it. Clean the action and the outside of the firearm. Wipe all metal parts with a **lightly oiled rag**.

When you are **taking your firearm out for use**, point it in a safe direction then check that it is not loaded. Push a clean patch through the bore and check that the barrel and action are clean and **dry**. Grease or oil in the action can cause a misfire. If either gets into the barrel, they can cause it to bulge or burst.

When hunting, take cleaning gear with you – at least a pull-through, patches and oil. At the end of each day clean and oil the barrel.



Figure 8: Cleaning a firearm. The rod is inserted from the chamber end of the barrel.

If you have any doubts about a safety catch – take it to a gunsmith!

Correct ammunition

It is important to use the correct ammunition for your firearm. Even if you have the right calibre, it may not necessarily be the right ammunition. The chambering may be unsuitable or the action may not be strong enough e.g. .22 short, .22 long, .22 long rifle and .22 magnum are all .22 rimfire, yet are not suitable for every .22 rimfire rifle.

If the wrong ammunition is chambered it may be too big to allow the action to close. If it is too small it can slip so deeply into the chamber that it is out of reach of the firing pin. Worse still, it may fit, allow the action to close and fire the wrong calibre bullet. This could burst the barrel or cause a dangerous blowback of gas in the shooter's face.

Numbers that show the calibre are stamped on the base of the cartridge case. However, sometimes there are other numbers or words to identify one cartridge from another. You should know the correct and full description of the cartridges your firearm requires. To make sure there is no mistake, use that description when ordering ammunition, and also check the description on the ammunition packet.

Many shooters reload their own cartridges because of economy and accuracy. Brass cartridge cases are sometimes pressed through resizing dies to become a type different from the original e.g. a 30.06 Springfield case may become a .270 cartridge. So, the information stamped on the base of the case can be misleading. A new shooter would be wise to use only factory-made ammunition purchased from a shop.

Do not use old or corroded ammunition. It can cause misfires, burst cases and block the barrel. Wet or damp ammunition can increase pressure in the firearm and could also damage and injure. **Never** attempt to dry wet ammunition by heating it.

Loading your firearm safely

Old shotguns

Shotguns with any pitting of the barrel should not be fired. Modern ammunition must not be used in old shotguns. The barrels may not be strong enough for the high pressure of modern ammunition.

Get a gunsmith to check your old shotgun before you use it.

Firearm magazines

All repeating and firearm actions have a magazine where the ammunition is held before being fed into the chamber. Most bolt action rifles have box-type magazines with the cartridges placed one on top of the other. Many lever action and pump action firearms, and some self loading, have a tubular magazine where the cartridges are placed end-on, one behind the other.

A tubular magazine can be dangerous. If the tube has been dented, the cartridge can stick temporarily. If it later becomes free it can be fed into the action without you even knowing about it.

To obey Basic Rule 2 – *always point firearms in a safe direction* – and Basic Rule 5 – *check your firing zone* – you need to know about **Patterning** and **Sighting In**.

Patterning

Before you use a shotgun for hunting you need to see what sort of pattern it fires with the cartridge and choke combination you intend to use. Patterning is a practical exercise that involves shooting a specific barrel, choke and

shotshell combination onto a flat (vertical) recordable surface (sheet of paper). For more information refer to the *Shotgunning Education Handbook* at www.gma.vic.gov.au.



Sighting in

'Sighting in' with a rifle is even more important. If your rifle has a telescopic sight a dealer or gunsmith can check that the sight is correctly set according to a collimator. However, it will still require checking with the ammunition you intend to use. Do this on a range or suitable rural area.

Setting of sights for accuracy

Sights must be correctly set. If they are not, rounds may fall short or go far beyond the target. Adjust the sights for distances suitable for the calibre and intended use.

'Sighting in' is best carried out on an established range. Otherwise, it should be somewhere away from people, stock or property, and with a safe backstop.

- Shoot from 25 metres and adjust sights until the point of aim and the bullet impact are the same.
- If you are using iron (open) sights always move the rear sight in the direction you want the shot to move. The foresight is the reverse of this. With a scope, follow the arrows on the scope adjustment.
- Now, from 100 metres, fire shots in pairs, and adjust sights.
- Most high-powered rifles are best Zeroed so the bullet hits the target at your preferred range.

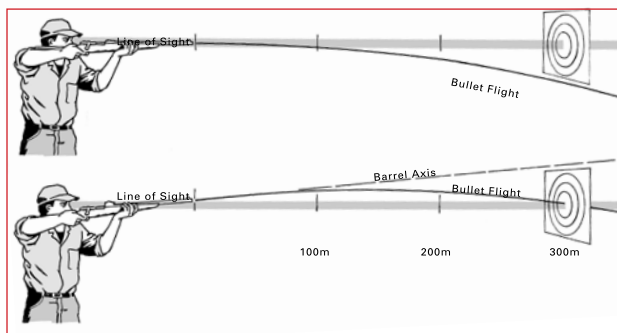


Figure 11: A bullet begins dropping from the moment it leaves the barrel, so if your sights are just lined up with the barrel, the bullet will drop below where you are sighting

Mechanical fitness of firearms

It is dangerous to tamper with firearms. Even minor repairs or adjustments should be carried out by a competent gunsmith. **Never** exchange bolts, bolt heads or other action parts yourself. Get a gunsmith to fit these.

Items that need to be checked:

Headspace

Firing pin protrusion and shape. (for safe, reliable firing.)

Tightness of action and stock. (affects accuracy.)

Condition of barrel and chamber. (for safety and accuracy.)

General condition of firearm, including action and stock.

Safety catch. (only supplements safe handling)

Trigger pull. (for safety and accuracy the trigger pull set by the manufacturer should be used. Trigger pull should only be changed by a competent gunsmith.)

Reloading ammunition

When you have gained experience you may wish to reload ammunition yourself. This can save you money if you fire a lot of rounds. It also offers you the chance to learn a new skill.

Before you begin, you will need to speak to an experienced reloader for advice and instruction. You will also need the right equipment, powder and projectiles. You can find more information online, or in books dealing with this subject.

Before using your firearm

If you intend to use your firearm on a shooting range or in the field check that:

- The firearm is mechanically sound
- It is not loaded
- The barrel is not blocked
- The grease and oil is removed from the barrel and action
- The ammunition is correct for the firearm
- The firearm is not left unattended
- The firearm is made safe and secure.

SECTION THREE:

Understanding firearm

Rifles

A rifle normally fires a single bullet and generally range in calibre from .17 to .45. All are used for target shooting.

- The .17 and .22 rimfire is suitable for small animals such as rabbits and hares.
- The centrefire .22 is suitable for hunting goats and foxes.
- Minimum legal calibre and projectile weight are set for deer hunting in Victoria. Please check with the Game Management Authority at **www.gma.vic.gov.au**
- Some cartridges such as the .308 Winchester, .270 Winchester, 30.06, and the .303 British are popular for hunting pigs and deer.

Shotguns

Shotguns are used for clay target shooting and to hunt small animals such as rabbits. They are the only firearms allowed for hunting game birds on the wing. There are a number of pellets in a 12-gauge cartridge that spread out when they leave the muzzle.

Different sized animals require different sized shot to ensure effective pellet penetration for a humane kill. All hunters must not use a shot gun with a gauge greater than 12 gauge to hunt game birds.

Some recommended shot sizes are:

- 7, 8 and 9 for smaller birds
- 4, 5 and 6 for rabbit
- 3 and 2 for foxes
- buckshot, or a single solid slug, for pigs
- duck hunters cannot use or possess toxic shot in Victoria whilst out in the hunting area.

Recommended non-toxic shot sizes for Australian game birds can be found at **www.gma.vic.gov.au**

The size of the shot for clay target shooting depends on the competition.

Please visit the Game Management Authority at www.gma.vic.gov.au for more information.

Types of actions

All cartridge firing firearms used for target shooting or hunting have the following things in common: the cartridge is fed into the chamber; it is locked there by the action; the action is cocked; it is fired; it is unlocked; and the empty cartridge case is extracted and ejected.

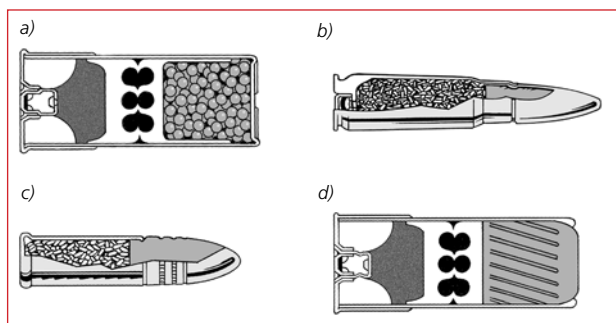


Figure 16: Cutaway drawings of four different types of cartridge.

a) A shot cartridge

b) A centrefire cartridge

c) A rimfire cartridge

*d) A rifled slug for use in a shotgun
(single projectile)*

The **bolt action** is one of the simplest and most trouble-free firearm actions. Starting from the unloaded condition, the action is unlocked by lifting the bolt handle and pulling it back. A cartridge is fed into the chamber by pushing the bolt forward. The bolt handle is then turned downwards, locking the bolt and cartridge in place. A firing pin is usually cocked by movement of the bolt or bolt handle, and when the trigger is squeezed the pin is released, firing the cartridge. The empty cartridge case is then ejected by lifting the bolt handle again and pulling the bolt back.

The **lever action** works on the same basic principle, except that a lever is pushed down to unlock the bolt and move it backwards. This movement also cocks the action. When the lever is pulled upwards again it feeds a cartridge into the chamber and locks, ready to be fired by the trigger. After the cartridge is fired the empty case is ejected by once more pushing the lever down.

A **pump action** is again similar. A pump slide is pulled backwards to open the action and cock it. When the slide is pushed forward the action feeds a fresh cartridge, locks, and is ready to fire.

A **self loading** also known as a **semi-automatic action**, operates in the same way as the above firearms. However, ejection and loading is carried out automatically by the force of either the recoil or by gas pressure. Because of the automatic reloading, a cartridge is ready to be fired each time the trigger is squeezed.

The most common **shotguns** in Australia are the break-open variety where the barrel(s) hinge downwards. There are over-and-under, side-by-side and single barrel shotguns. Some shotguns are self loading or pump action.

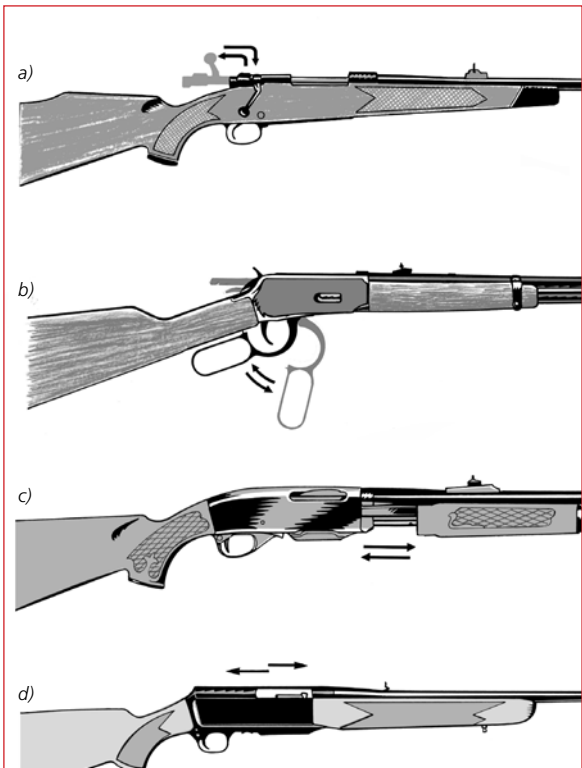


Figure 17: Common firearm actions.

- a) A bolt action*
- b) A lever action*
- c) A pump action*
- d) A self loading*

3) Where and when you may use firearm

Before you do any shooting, whether with a firearm or airgun, you need to know when and where it can be safely and lawfully used.

You should take steps to ensure that your shooting does not endanger property or frighten, annoy or put neighbours at risk. Telling your neighbours about what you are doing is always a good first step.

The permission of the land owner is required before shooting anywhere.

.22 Rimfire rifles

A .22 rimfire rifle has been the traditional first rifle of many shooters. It is regarded as a safe and inexpensive firearm for a young person. This rifle can be just as deadly as any other firearm and must be handled with respect, caution and care.

Shotguns

A shotgun is the only firearm suitable for shooting at birds on the wing. Firing a rifle in the air carries the danger of some person or property being struck when the bullet falls back to earth. Although shotgun pellets fall too, they do not travel so far and are much lighter. This means they are less likely to endanger someone.

The shotgun is used for fast moving game on the ground and in the air. A shotgun is also used for competitive shooting at clay targets.

Centrefire rifles

Centrefire rifles in various calibres are suitable for a whole range of game and target shooting. There is such a variety of calibre, projectile type and weight, however, that no single firearm or cartridge is suitable for every purpose. It is important, therefore, to think about where you can use your firearm before buying one. Ask someone who is involved in that sport.

SECTION FOUR:

Firearm licensing and acquisition

4a) Applying for a new firearm licence

To apply for a new firearm licence, you must submit an application to Victoria Police.

Depending on the type of licence that you wish to apply for, you may be required to complete an online application through the Victoria Police eServices Portal. For more information and to access the eServices Portal, go to: **www.police.vic.gov.au/eservices**

For further information regarding the application process, including documents you will need to supply with your application, go to:

www.police.vic.gov.au/applying-new-licence

Information collected by the Licensing and Regulation Division is being collected on behalf of Victoria Police. It will be used in accordance with the provisions of the Firearms Act 1996, Private Security Act 2004, Control of Weapons Act 1990 and Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. You can read our full privacy statement on the Victoria Police eServices Portal.

4b) Purchasing or acquiring a firearm

You must have your current firearms licence with you whenever you carry your firearm. Anyone who sells you a firearm (i.e., licensed firearms dealers) will need to see your licence. You will also need a permit to acquire a firearm. All sellers (licensed firearms dealers) are legally required to see the purchaser's current firearm licence and permit to acquire.

Keep a record of the firearms you have bought or sold because if one should be lost, destroyed or stolen you must immediately inform Victoria Police in writing. Upon providing those details (including any police report), Victoria Police will update your firearms records to reflect the change in firearms status.

Ammunition

Only a firearms licence holder can purchase ammunition for the category of their licence.

4c) Disposing of firearms and ammunition

You can hand in any unwanted firearms and ammunition to Victoria Police (including to a Divisional Firearms Officer) or to a Licensed Firearms Dealer. A list of Divisional Firearms Officers is available on www.police.vic.gov.au/firearms.

4d) Other important legal requirements

Change of address

You must notify the Chief Commissioner of Police of any change of address (residential/postal/ordinary storage/place of business for firearms dealers) in writing (to the Licensing and Regulation Division) within 14 days after the change occurs.

Expiry of Licence

If you intend to make application for renewal of your licence, you must do so to the Chief Commissioner of Police prior to the expiration of your firearm licence.

If you do not intend to apply for renewal of your licence, you **must** dispose of your firearm(s) to a Licensed Firearms Dealer prior to the expiration of your firearm licence. Failure to dispose of your firearm(s) in these circumstances will result in penalties imposed against you including fines and/or imprisonment.

SECTION FIVE:

Your duties and legal requirements

5) Transporting firearms and ammunition

Even before you buy your first firearm you need to know how you will carry it home and where you will keep it. Bear in mind that it is illegal to carry or use a loaded firearm in a vehicle.

All Victorian licence holders should when travelling interstate, check with that states Police Firearms Registry as to licensing and storage requirements.

You are strongly advised to get a **padded cover or hard case** in which to carry your firearm. This ensures the firearm is protected and stays in good condition. It also makes it less obvious so is less likely to alarm other members of the public.



Figure 18: A hard case with a soft lining will protect your firearm while travelling. A soft padded cover is useful but not as protective.

You must have a particular lawful, proper and sufficient purpose to have firearms with you so you should have firearms – unloaded – in your vehicle only on the way to or from a hunting trip, shooting range, or for some other genuine reason.

It is vital for community safety and crime reduction to keep your firearms and ammunition secure at all times. You may lose your firearms licence if you fail to do so

Car

- It is advisable that you, make the firearm inoperable e.g. by taking out the bolt.
- You cannot drive a vehicle on a road with a loaded firearm. This includes the magazine - when in the firearm it must be empty.
- Even on private property it is dangerous to have a loaded firearm in a vehicle, or to get in or out of the vehicle with a loaded firearm.
- Be careful when moving your firearm in or out of a vehicle. Treat it as loaded. Do not point it at yourself or at anyone else. Do not pull it towards you by the muzzle and make sure the firearm action is open.
- Duck shooters should take particular care when using a firearm in a boat.
- Each year, a significant number of firearms are stolen from motor vehicles and places of temporary accommodation. You should not leave your firearms unattended in a vehicle or at the very least, ensure you take adequate measures to secure your vehicle and avoid leaving any firearms within view when in your vehicle. A good starting point is to ask yourself 'have I taken all reasonable steps to ensure my firearms are not stolen?'

Other forms of transportation (bus, train, aircraft)

On some shooting trips you will need to carry your firearm by public transport.

Similar/in addition to the above-listed precautions relevant to transport by car, always ensure you take precautions when travelling by other forms of transportation such as bus, train or aircraft.

Recent events have demonstrated that transportation of firearms via 'public transport' has the potential to arouse fear and alarm amongst other passengers, despite the fact that this was unintended.

Remember to make suitable arrangements when planning your trip, including discussing transport requirements with your travel agent or the carrier.

GLOSSARY:

Action

Effective Motion – a mechanism – the breech action of a firearm. The operating part that transmits power to the mechanism.

Ammunition

Ammunition is the consumable component of firearms system. Ammunition is required to fire a firearm. A single unit of ammunition in modern firearms is called a cartridge. The units of measure for quantity of ammunition are rounds. There are hundreds of sizes of ammunition; examples include .223 Remington, 9mm Luger, 30.06, .308 Winchester, .300 Winchester Magnums, and .50 Browning Machine Gun (BMG). The ammunition used must match the firearm.

Barrel

A narrow hollow cylinder portion of a firearm through which the bullet travels during the acceleration phase of its journey to the target.

Bolt

The mechanism of some firearms that holds the cartridge in place during the firing process. See also Bolt Action.

Bolt Action

A type of firearm, almost always a rifle, in which an empty shell casing (remnant of a cartridge) is removed from the firing chamber by the turning and retraction of a metal cylinder shaped mechanism called a bolt. A new, unfired, cartridge is inserted and secured into the chamber by reversing the action of the bolt. Bolt action firearms are typically the most accurate.

Bore

The hollow portion of a barrel through which the bullet travels during its acceleration phase.

Breech-Block

The metal block at the base of the breech which retains the cartridge after it has entered the chamber. The bolt of a bolt action rifle is a breech-block.

Bullet

A generally cylindrical shaped projectile that travels through the air after being fired from a firearm. This is only one component of a cartridge, which is a single piece of ammunition.

Butt (of a stock)

The stock of a rifle or shotgun is usually placed against the shoulder to fire. The contact point with the shoulder is the butt of the firearm.

Butts

A target range. An obstacle behind a target for stopping a shot. (dictionary.com)

Chamber

The portion of a barrel where a cartridge is placed just prior to being fired. This is a high-pressure containment area that is very precisely aligned with the bore of the barrel. A firearm cannot be fired when the chamber is empty.

Cartridge

The assembly of a bullet, shell casing, gunpowder, and primer that is put in the chamber of a firearm.

Calibre

1) The diameter of the bore of a firearm. Typically in millimetres or a decimal fraction of an inch. 2) Common usage, but imprecise – the name of the cartridge used in a firearm. Examples include .223 Remington, 220 Swift, 22-250 which all use the same bullet, but different cartridge, because they have the same diameter of bore.

Centrefire Cartridge

A cartridge that has a primer located in the centre of the base of the shell casing. This is as opposed to a rimfire cartridge.

Crimp

In cartridge making, to fold the edge of (a cartridge case) inward so as to close the mouth partly and confine the charge. (dictionary.com)

Cocked

A state of readiness of a firearm. The hammer (or similar mechanism if there is no hammer) only needs to be released by the trigger to cause the firearm to fire.

Dowel

A usually round pin (often wood) that fits tightly into a corresponding hole to fasten or align two adjacent pieces. (dictionary.com)

Elevation

1) The setting on the sights of a firearm that controls the vertical placement. 2) The altitude above mean sea level. This is important for long range precision shooting because the air density changes with elevation and affects the path of the bullet.

Firearm

A firearm which uses the combustion of some chemical mix, typically smokeless gunpowder, to propel a projectile (see the definition at the beginning of this manual).

Firing Line

A line, either imaginary or marked, from which people shoot their firearms down range.

Firing Pin

A needle-like metal part of a modern firearm that gives a vigorous strike to the primer initiating the firing of the cartridge.

Flush Game

To frighten from cover. To drive or force into the open. To excite, to animate. To stir. See also Game. (dictionary.com)

Game

Game animals are any kind or taxon of wildlife declared to be game by the Wildlife Act 1975

Gunpowder

A chemical mixture or compound that burns rapidly with or without the presence of air to produce hot pressurised gases capable of propelling a bullet. There are two basic types of gunpowder – Black Powder and Smokeless Powder. Black Powder is composed of a mixture of charcoal, sulphur, and potassium nitrate and produces a cloud of white noxious smoke when it burns. Smokeless Powder burns much cleaner but may still produce a small puff of smoke. All modern firearms use smokeless powder, not only because there is less smoke, but also because the bullets can be made to exit the firearm faster.

Hammer

Similar in function to the carpenter and mechanic's tool, the hammer of a firearm is propelled by a spring to strike either directly or via a firing pin the primer of a cartridge causing the firearm to fire.

Heel (of a stock)

The top of the butt, when the firearm is in position on the shoulder to be fired, is called the heel.

Iron Sights

Sights made of metal with no optics.

Lever Action

A type of firearm that uses a lever operated mechanism to remove an empty shell casing and insert a new cartridge in the chamber of a rifle. Other types of mechanisms include bolt action and pump action.

Magazine

An ammunition feeding device that holds the cartridges just prior to them being put in the chamber of the firearm by the operation of a mechanism on the firearm. This mechanism may be operated manually as in a bolt action or semi-automatically when the firearm fires after pulling the trigger. The magazine may be detachable or part of the firearm (as in a tubular magazine common with lever action rifles and most semi-auto and pump shotguns).

Muzzle

The end of the barrel where the bullet exits as it is being fired.

Pellet

A bullet or piece of small shot. (dictionary.com)

Primer

A small metal cup that contains a tiny explosive charge that is sensitive to impact. A primer is placed in the base of a shell casing to ignite the powder of the completed cartridge. It is detonated by the striking of a firing pin in the firearm.

Projectile

An object given an initial velocity which proceeds on its own inertia through the air and perhaps solid objects in its path. A bullet fired from a firearm is a projectile.

Pistol Grip

- 1) A section of a rifle stock shaped like the grip of a pistol.
- 2) A variation of stock type that is often fitted to military-type firearms, and is not permitted on a sporting semi-automatic firearm.

Powder

See gunpowder.

Pump or Pump Action

A type of mechanism for removing a spent shell casing from the chamber of a firearm and inserting a fresh cartridge into the chamber. This type of mechanism is most commonly used in shotguns and rimfire rifles.

Ramrod

A rod used to force the charge into a muzzle-loading firearm. A rod used to clean the barrel of a firearm. (dictionary.com)

Receiver

The portion of a rifle that has the serial number on it. The stock, barrel and other components such as the bolt are typically attached to the receiver. Some firearms may have a multi-part receiver such as an upper receiver and a lower receiver.

Recoil

The sudden rearward push made against the shooter when a firearm is fired. This push is due to Newton's Third Law of Physics (for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction). The heavier the bullet and the faster it leaves the muzzle of the barrel the more recoil. The weight of the powder and the velocity of the gases it produces at the muzzle also enter into the equation describing the total recoil.

Rifle

A firearm designed to be fired from the shoulder and fire only a single projectile at a time, as opposed to a shotgun, which can throw many small projectiles (shot) at the same time.

Rimfire Cartridge

A type of cartridge whose primer is integral to the shell casing and located along the edge of the base in a rim. When the firing pin strikes it pinches the rim against the chamber and causes it to detonate and ignite the powder.

Rounds

A unit of measure for ammunition. One cartridge. Typical quantities are 20 rounds and 50 rounds in single box. A serious target shooter will normally go through about 100 rounds in one day. At some pistol matches a shooter may go through several hundred rounds. In a weekend of training, a pistol shooter may go through 1500 or more rounds.

Safety (mechanical)

A mechanical device used to block the firing pin or trigger such that the firearm cannot be fired.

Self Loading

A firearm that uses the energy and momentum of the just fired cartridge to eject the spent shell casing and load a new cartridge into the chamber. This is an automatic loader. This is sometimes shortened to 'automatic' which some confuse with a full-auto (machine gun).

Shot

1) *n.* A term used to describe the round pellet projectiles fired in a shotgun. The shot may be one of many different sizes described by a number. The smaller the number the larger the pellet. The numbers do not go negative, but start adding additional zeros to the designator. 00 (pronounced 'double-nought') is larger than 0. Number 8 shot is about the size of a head of a pin. 00 shot (also sometimes called 'buck-shot') is about the size of a large pea. 2) *v.* Act of firing a firearm.

Shotgun

A (typically) smooth bore long firearm that shoots a group of pellets called shot instead of bullets. Depending on the bore size and the size of the pellets there may be from less than 10 to two hundred or more pellets in a single shotgun cartridge. Shotguns are designed for shooting moving targets (such as flying birds or moving rabbits) at close range.

Shell Casing

A hollow, bottle or drinking glass shaped, piece of metal that is closed on one end except for a small hole which holds a primer. The open end holds the bullet. The hollow portion holds the powder. Together the assembled unit is called a cartridge.

Sights

The device that aids the eye in aiming the barrel of a firearm in the proper direction to hit a target. The most common sights are iron and telescopic.

Stalk

To move threateningly or menacingly. To track prey or quarry. To pursue by tracking stealthily. To approach under cover of a screen, or by stealth, for the purpose of killing, as game. (dictionary.com)

Stock

The supporting structure of a long firearm to which the receiver, barrel, trigger, and other components are attached. Typically this is the portion of the firearm the shooter holds while firing. See also heel and butt.

Telescopic Sight

A sight which has an integral telescope.

Toxic Shot

As determined in Wildlife (game) Regulations 2001.

Trigger

The mechanism used by the shooter to initiate the firing of a cartridge. Typically this is a lever type piece of metal that must be pulled with the index finger.

Trigger Lock

A locking device put on a firearm to render it unable to be fired.

Trigger Pull

A piece, as a lever, which is connected with a catch as a means of releasing it; especially (Firearms), the part of a lock which is moved by the finger to release the cock and discharge the piece. (dictionary.com)

Intervention orders, family violence and firearms

In the event that you become the subject of a family violence intervention order, interim or full, this will affect your firearm licence. Many people are unaware that should you become subject to a family violence intervention order, action will be taken on your licence and any firearms registered to your licence will be removed from your possession, while enquiries are conducted and any proceedings finalised.

If you have an Interim Family Violence Intervention Order served on you, Victoria Police will suspend your firearm licence. Your firearms will be seized and held by Victoria Police until a full hearing in the Magistrates Court. Once that hearing has been completed firearms may be returned to you once your licence has been reinstated. This can be a lengthy process.

Where a full Family Violence Intervention Order has been issued against you, your firearm licence will be immediately cancelled and your firearms will be either destroyed or handed to a licensed firearm dealer to be sold. You will become a Prohibited Person, which means you will not be able to participate in any activity that requires the use of a firearm. You will remain a Prohibited Person for a period of five years after the Intervention Order expires or a court orders that you are a non prohibited person.

It is likely that you may have to make multiple court appearances, costing you time and money in legal fees and storage fees, and it may affect your livelihood.

Your behaviour and treatment of those around you can have a lasting impact on you and your family. There is no shame in seeking help should you need assistance with behaviour change and family conflict.

Magistrates Court

www.familyviolence.courts.vic.gov.au

Victoria Legal Aid

1300 792 387

Men's Referral Service

1300 766 491

Housing (24 hrs) state-wide referral
for emergency housing

1800 825 955

Victims of Crime Help Line

1800 819 817

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre (24 hours)

1800 015 188 or 9322 3555

Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24 hours)

1800 806 292

Child Protection Service DHHS (24 hours)

131 278

VICTORIA POLICE ONLINE LICENCE APPLICATION

The Licensing and Regulation Division has removed manual application forms for new Longarms, Handguns, Provisional, Heirloom and Junior Firearm Licences.

Manual applications have been replaced with electronic forms available via the Victoria Police eServices Portal.

If you are wishing to apply for any of the following categories of firearm licence, please access and complete an application through the Victoria Police eServices Portal:

- Longarm Licence Application (Category A, B, C, D or E Longarms)
- Handgun Licence Application (General Category Handgun or Category E Handgun)
- Provisional General Category Handgun Licence Application
- Junior Firearm Licence Application
- Heirlooms Licence Application

www.police.vic.gov.au/firearms 1300 651 645

Log onto this website for:

- the instructional video which complements this brochure;
- information on firearms licensing; firearms registration; firearms identification; and classification;
- updates on legislative changes;
- newsletters;
- information brochures;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- form downloads etc.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION:

Victoria Police

www.police.vic.gov.au/firearms

1300 651 645

The Game Management Authority

www.gma.vic.gov.au

Customer GMA Centre **136 186**

Firearm Safety Foundation Victoria

www.firearmsafety.org.au

Game Hunting in Victoria

Victoria has some of the best game hunting opportunities in Australia. There are generous open seasons and bag limits for game deer, duck and quail and about 4 million hectares of public land available for hunting.

When you are out enjoying Victoria's great hunting opportunities it is important to remember your obligations to not only comply with the law, but to behave responsibly to protect our valuable resources and the reputation of hunting.

Game Management in Victoria

The Game Management Authority is an independent statutory authority responsible for the regulation of game hunting on public and private land in Victoria.

It promotes sustainability and responsibility in game hunting and delivers programs to improve responsible hunting across the state in conjunction with its partner agencies.

The Game Management Authority is responsible for issuing Game Licences, managing open and closed seasons for game species, enforcing game hunting laws and educating and informing hunters on how to hunt legally in Victoria.

For more information on hunting in Victoria, please visit gma.vic.gov.au.

Game Licence

Anyone hunting game in Victoria, including juniors (12–17 years), must hold a current Game Licence. A range of licence types are available, depending on the requirements of the individual hunter.

The Game Licence must be endorsed for the type(s) of game that you wish to hunt and only permits you to hunt that game in Victoria.

Should you wish to apply for a Game Licence, please complete the Game Licence application form found at gma.vic.gov.au or contact the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

SAFETY TIPS WHEN OUTDOORS



- Know if any fire restrictions are in place
- Campfire must not exceed 1m²
- Never leave a campfire unattended
- Always put out a fire with water not soil

More information at: ffm.vic.gov.au

- Set up camp 3m away from campfires
- Wash up 50m away from the water
- Take all your rubbish with you



More information at: parks.vic.gov.au



- Don't damage aboriginal scar trees, burial grounds or other sacred objects
- Use fallen firewood or bring your own
- Only drive on formed tracks and roads

More information at: parks.vic.gov.au

- Bring a first aid kit with you
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Let people know where you are



More information at: stjohn.org.au and
gma.vic.gov.au



- Keep firearms / ammo safely secured
- Treat every firearm as loaded
- Poaching is unsafe and illegal

More information at: police.vic.gov.au

If you poach deer



...you could lose all your gear

To report illegal hunting,
call the GMA on 136 186 or
your local Police station.

www.gma.vic.gov.au



Game
Management
Authority



RESPECT
HUNT RESPONSIBLY



Help secure the future of hunting

Through the below standards we can enjoy our hunting even more, improve the perception of hunting and be proud of hunting.

Respect for animals

Respect the environment

Respect other hunters

Respect non-hunters

Respect the hunt

Respect the laws

This will help to raise the awareness and maintain the highest standards of behaviour of all involved in hunting.

For more information on the standards visit
www.depi.vic.gov.au/hunting

Secure your hunting future, show respect and hunt responsibly.

The Ten Basic Rules of Firearm Safety

- 1 Treat every firearm as loaded
- 2 Always point firearms in a safe direction
- 3 Load a firearm only when ready to fire
- 4 Identify your target beyond all doubt
- 5 Check your firing zone
- 6 Store firearms and ammunition safely
- 7 Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms
- 8 Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp
- 9 Never fire at hard surfaces or water
- 10 Don't climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms