

Gun Law of Thailand

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This article seeks to provide tourists and foreigners who are residents in Thailand with a general overview of the regulations concerning gun possession. For specifics and further information, you should refer to the Act Controlling Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, Fireworks and Imitation of Firearms (henceforth referred to as “the Act”)¹. Note that amendments to the Act have been issued.

The Fundamentals

Under Thai law, it is mandatory for all individuals to obtain authorization prior to the possession, manufacturing, using, selling, purchase, ordering, and importation of firearms. Possession of ammunition for use with a gun other than one which you have obtained a license for owning and/or using is prohibited. You are not allowed to bring a gun with you into a city, neighborhood, or public areas without a license for carrying one on you. Exceptions do exist for emergencies depending on the situation, and for government officials or law enforcement bodies of certain types.

Purposes for Gun and/or Ammunition Possession that are permitted

Licenses for the possession and using of guns and ammunition are issued to individuals only for the following purposes: self-defense, protection of property, sports or hunting. Licenses must also be obtained for the possession of guns as keepsakes. These are usually guns which are out of date, damaged and no longer functional, or those which were awarded to individuals from official government shooting competitions. Note that you are not permitted to fire guns that are for keepsake purposes nor be in possession of ammunition for those guns.

Marking of Firearms that are Permitted

If you have received a license for possessing a gun for the aforementioned purposes, you will need to hand over the gun to the registrar. The registrar will then mark the gun per rules outlined in the appropriate Ministerial Regulation. This is for identifying and keeping track of firearms in the Kingdom.

Application for Licenses for More than One gun

If you are in possession of more than one gun, remember that one license is required for each unit.

Details Concerning the Holder of the License and Application for Authorization on Behalf of Another Individual

Be aware also that authorization for possession of guns is applicable solely to the holder specified in the license. If you would like to apply for a license for someone to be in possession of a gun or ammunition in order to protect your property, you must obtain special permission from the appropriate government office in your local area. The person whom you are applying on behalf of must satisfy the same requirements.

Other Limitations and Prohibitions for Issuing of Licenses

The Minister of Interior has the power to limit or prohibit the issuing of licenses for specific types or for all types of firearms and ammunition for a period of time (even if you have satisfied the requirements). If this occurs, a public notice will be issued or you will be notified in writing.

Requirements for Obtaining a License for Gun Possession

In order to be eligible for application for a license, you must not be an individual who is imprisoned for certain types of crimes², nor one who has been discharged from such crimes for a period of time of less than five years (counting from the date of discharge). Licenses will not be granted to individuals who are being imprisoned from violations of the Act. This also applies to individuals who have previously been imprisoned for two or more times in the past five years for other violations of the law as specified in the Act.

Thai law requires that you must be at least 20 years of age in order to apply for a license. Licenses for gun possession will not be granted to individuals who are disabled or handicapped and incapable of using a gun, unless possession is only for keepsake purposes. Persons who are incompetent, quasi-incompetent, mentally insane or deranged will not be permitted a license. Those who behave in a way that disrupts social peace and order are not eligible to obtain a license for gun possession. You must be employed and receive income. You must have a permanent address in Thailand and have your name listed in the house registration specifically in the area where you are applying for a license, for at least six months.

Application Fees

The application fee for a license for the possession and using of air rifles is 200 Bht per license/unit. The license for all other types of guns is 1,000 Baht per license. A license for carrying firearms (on your person) costs 1,000 Baht per license³.

Duration of License for Possession of Firearms (Period of time a license is valid for)

The license for the possession and use of firearms and ammunition is valid for the time that the holder of the license is the owner of the firearm, whilst the temporary license is valid for six months from the date of issue. The license for the possession of a gun for keepsake purposes is valid for the time that the holder of the license is in possession of the gun for the aforementioned purpose. The license for carrying a gun is valid for one year from the date of issue.

Firearms Damaged or Lost after License Grant

If you lose or damage the gun that you have received a license for possessing, you must notify your local government office (where you are resident), and hand over the license to the registrar. Alternatively, you may follow the same procedures at the government office in the district where the damage or loss took place. This must be done within 15 days from when you first become aware that damage or loss has taken place.

Moving your Residence after License Grant

After you have been granted a license, if you move to a new residence within the same district or region as the original address listed in the license, make sure you notify the local registrar your new address within 15 days of the move. If you are moving to a different district or region, you must notify the local registrar in the new location within 15 days of arrival.

Loss or Damage of the License

If the license is lost or if it becomes illegible, you must apply for a document in substitution for a license. You must notify the local registrar within 30 days upon becoming aware that your license has been lost or damaged. If you do find the original license after reporting it as lost to the registrar, you are required to send the substitute document back to the registrar within 15 days of finding the original.

Denial of License Grant

If the local registrar disapproves of the license grant, you may file for an appeal within 15 days of receiving written notification of the rejected application. The appeal should be presented to the local registrar, who will then submit it to the Minister. You will be informed of the Minister's decision via written notification.

Revocation of Licenses

Should suspicions arise concerning whether you have satisfied the outlined requirements, the registrar may ask for references or for you to be on parole. Failure to satisfy such requests will result in a revocation of the license.

Should you become incompetent, quasi-incompetent, mentally insane or deranged after having already received a license, your license will be revoked. In this case, you (or your guardian or representative) will be required to hand over the firearms and ammunition in your possession to the registrar.

Punishment for Violations of the Act

Violations of the rules and regulations set out in the Act are serious and the consequences for such violations vary, depending on the case. It is crucial to remember that the death penalty is permissible in Thailand. Consequences such as fines and imprisonment also apply to violations of the terms and conditions specified by the registrar in the granted license. The following are some examples of punishments for violations of the Act:

If you possess, manufacture, use, sell, purchase, order, or import firearms and/or ammunition without a license from the local registrar for doing so, you will be subject to imprisonment for a period of between one and ten years, and/or fines between 2,000 to 20,000 Baht.

If you use firearms and/or ammunition of types other than those specified as permissible in the Act, this will be considered a criminal offense. You may be subject to life imprisonment or death.

We strongly advise therefore, that you abide by all the rules and regulations outlined in the Act.

***Remarks**

Much of the information in the article has been (unofficially) translated from clauses contained in the Act.

1. *Act Controlling Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, Fireworks and Imitation of Firearms. B.E. 2490.* Direct Translation. Legal Affairs Bureau, Office of the Permanent Secretary for Interior. <http://www.law.moi.go.th/092.pdf>

2. For more information on the specific crimes which forbid an individual to apply for a license for gun possession, see details stated in the Act Controlling Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, Fireworks and Imitation of Firearms. B.E. 2490.

3. Amendments to the Act Controlling Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, Fireworks and Imitation of Firearms. B.E. 2490. Office of the Juridical Council.
<http://app-thca.krisdika.go.th/Naturesig/CheckSig?whichLaw=law2&folderName=%cd09&lawPath=%cd09-20-9999-update>