



# KEEP IT SAFE

Honorary Solicitor **Laura Saunbury** answers more questions from members on gun security.

In our July 2018 issue Laura answered the most common questions from members about gun cabinets and home security. We have now asked Laura to respond to further members' questions on this topic.

## Q Can I move my gun cabinet to another part of the house without telling my firearms officer?

Strictly, you can since the overall security of your home has already been approved, although this would be subject to the new location meeting the usual requirement for the cabinet to be securely fixed to the floor and an external load-bearing wall, and being out of sight from casual visitors to the property. Having said that, before you begin the task of detaching the cabinet from its current site and drilling new holes in the wall and floor, it would be wise to discuss it with your firearms officer to ensure your plan meets with their approval, rather than risk the possibility of them insisting you move it back to its previous location.

## Q And what if I want to move my cabinet to a different address?

If you are moving house, a condition of your certificate is to notify a change of your permanent address within 7 days. If you have decided to install your cabinet at the home of a friend or family member because you no longer wish to store your guns at home, then you are under an obligation to notify the police of the new address at which the guns will be stored so that the security provisions at those premises can be inspected, although the arrangements must conform with

the usual criteria. Again it would be sensible to discuss with your firearms officer where in that other property you propose to install your cabinet, so that the location can be approved in advance. If the persons occupying the other property are not certificate holders they must not have access to the cabinet. Generally, the police will expect guns to be stored at the certificate holder's home address since you are responsible for the security of your guns.

## Q Can I share my gun cabinet with someone else in my household?

Yes, you can, provided that other person is also a shotgun certificate holder. This is usually acceptable to the police, although in theory you are 'lending' your guns to another certificate holder for more than 72 hours. It is possible to have all the guns

entered on both your certificates, but the police do not insist on this in most cases. You can each have your own set of keys and access the cabinet independently of each other.

## Q Does my shotgun ammunition need to be locked away in a cabinet?

There is no requirement in law for shotgun ammunition to be locked away. Having said that, most responsible certificate holders chose to store theirs in a locked cabinet and this will certainly

meet with approval from your firearms officer. The ammunition should not be stored in the same cabinet with the guns to eliminate the possibility that if an unauthorised person gains access to your cabinet they do not have ready access to ammunition which they can use in your gun. A separate ammunition safe which can also be used for the storage of jewellery and other valuables is therefore generally recommended. If you chose not to lock up your ammunition in a cabinet, then it should be stored in a location within your home as out of the way as possible, such as in the loft or cellar, and preferably within a cupboard or other item of furniture, so that it is not discovered in a quick search.

## Q Can I ever leave my gun out of the cabinet overnight, for example if I am leaving very early in the morning to go shooting or I get back very late and want to clean my gun the next morning before putting it away?

Definitely not, never leave your guns out of the cabinet overnight, tempting though it may be to aid an early start in the morning, and certainly don't load your guns or ammunition into your car the night before. If your car or home were to be broken into, even if nothing was actually stolen, you would have some serious questions from your firearms office to answer as this would put you in breach of the condition on your certificate to store your guns securely at all times when not in use. Aside from being a criminal offence for which you can be prosecuted, any such breach would almost certainly cost you your certificate and result in revocation.

If in doubt about storage requirements, seek advice from your firearms officer.



**Laura Saunbury** is a consultant solicitor with a leading London law firm and has ten years experience as the Association's Honorary Solicitor and shotgun licensing advisor.

