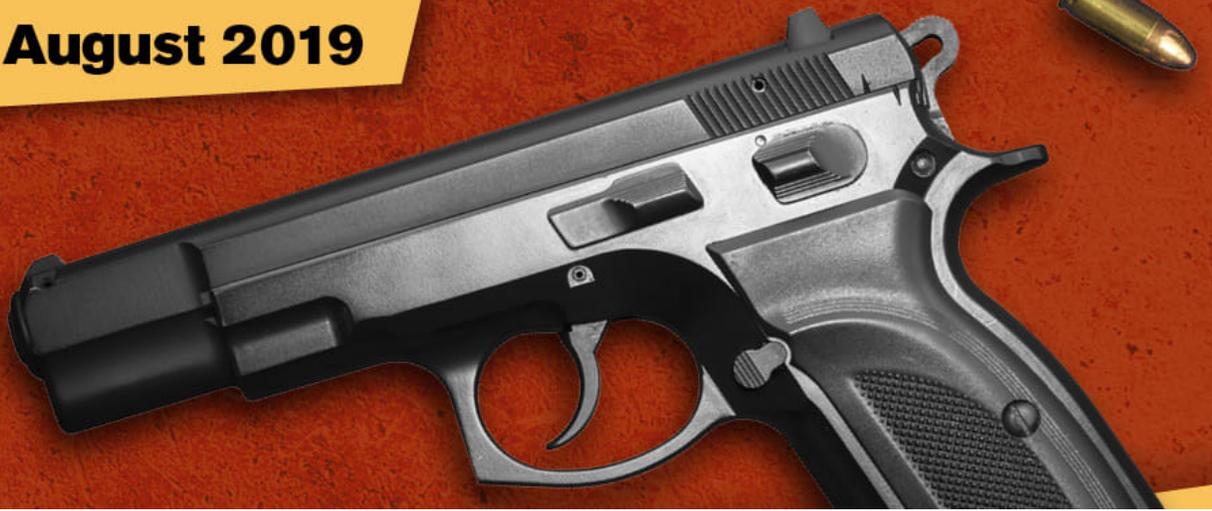




FIREARMS Surrender



20 July - 4 August 2019



Jul 04, 2019 10:20 BST

Hand in your illegal or unwanted guns during national firearms surrender

People in possession of unwanted guns or ammunition are being encouraged to hand them in as part of a campaign to make Surrey and Sussex safer.

Many firearms are held in innocence and ignorance of their illegality, or are overlooked and forgotten in people's homes. Others are acquired and distributed by criminal networks to harm, threaten and intimidate their local communities.

This appeal gives people the chance to dispose of firearms or ammunition by

simply handing them in at their local police station – a list of opening times and locations can be found below.

During the surrender period, those surrendering firearms will not face prosecution for illegal possession of a firearm at the point of surrender of the firearm to lawful authority, and they can remain anonymous.

However, this surrender does not mean police will not investigate firearms offences, should any come to light, once the operation has concluded.

This is a firearms surrender; not a firearms amnesty, and police are committed to reduce the harm to our communities from firearms crime.

The surrender, which runs from Monday 20 July to Sunday 4 August, forms part of a national campaign by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS).

The aim of the operation, supported by Surrey Police and Sussex Police, is to reduce the number of illegally held firearms in circulation which could fall into the hands of criminals.

This includes replica firearms, air weapons, BB guns, imitation firearms, antique guns, de-activated guns, component parts, stun guns, Taser, CS/pepper spray and other ballistic items.

We are also encouraging current and previous military personnel to hand in any items kept as war trophies.

Detective Chief Inspector Steve Rayland said: “If you have any guns or ammunition you no longer want, or if you don’t know what to do with them or how to safely dispose of them, we can help. By surrendering your weapons now, it will prevent them falling into the hands of criminals and endangering the public.

“We recognise that firearms or replica weapons in the wrong hands can assist in the commission of serious offences, can increase community fears, can result in a significant drain on police resources responding to incidents, and can present a potential risk to armed officers confronting an individual in possession of a weapon they believe to be real.

“While crimes involving firearms in both Surrey and Sussex are extremely rare, we understand that every weapon poses a potential threat if not licensed and stored safely. That’s why we’re offering people this opportunity to safely hand in their unwanted weapons which, if in the wrong hands, could be deadly.

“During the surrender we want people to hand in illegally-held guns and ammunition, imitation firearms and air guns used for criminal purposes, other unwanted guns and ammunition including air guns and imitations, and firearms you are being asked to hide for someone else. If you have a gun that falls into any of these categories, now is your chance to hand it in.”

During the two-week campaign, those surrendering firearms will not face prosecution for the illegal possession upon surrender, and can remain anonymous.

Furthermore, lawful gun licence-holders can be reassured that these measures merely enhance their rights and privileges to own firearms, by removing the dangerous ones from the wrong hands. They are also encouraged to use this campaign to consider the surrender of weapons they no longer have any use for.

DCI Rayland added: “I’d like to clarify that this is a firearms surrender and not a general firearms amnesty for the lifetime of the firearm; an amnesty will be granted for police possession of an item only at the point of handover (surrender).

“The fight against gun crime is stronger than ever, and we are working with partners and our local communities to safeguard, educate and intervene at the earliest opportunity. We take all reports of incidents involving firearms extremely seriously, and robust action will be taken against anyone who commits a firearms related offence.”

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey David Munro said: “Illegal firearms can have devastating consequences which is why it is so important we keep them out of the hands of criminals.

“Thankfully gun crime is rare across our two counties but every weapon that is not licensed or properly stored poses a potential threat to our communities.

“Recent changes in legislation mean that those who own an antique, souvenir or replica firearm could fall foul of the law without realising it. So I would urge anyone in Surrey who may possess an unlicensed firearm to take this opportunity to hand it in so it can be safely disposed of.”

Any deactivated firearm deactivated prior to the new specifications of 5 March 2018 (UK implementation date 28 June 2018) is a ‘defectively-deactivated’ firearm and cannot be sold, purchased or gifted, but possession on the other hand is permitted.

Firearms that do meet the 2018 specification and offered for sale or gift must be accompanied by their deactivation certificate (issued by a proof house anywhere within the EU). You can find more information online [here](#).

Q&As:

Why are you running a firearms surrender now?

Following a rise in recorded firearms offences across the UK in 2017, the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC) has asked all police forces in England, Scotland and Wales to take part in a national firearms surrender in 2019.

Is it because of a raised counter terrorism threat?

The threat from counter terrorism is always a consideration and the fact that firearms in criminal hands could be passed to terrorists has increased concerns following terrorist attacks in Europe and elsewhere. However, the primary reason for the surrender is to remove the availability of firearms that could fall into the wrong hands. Firearms surrenders give the public the opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted firearms.

A number of UK police forces have organised successful firearms surrenders in recent years and this is another opportunity to remove the availability of firearms from our streets. By removing weapons in the supply chain we are reducing the risk of criminals being able to get their hands on them.

Changes in firearms legislation also means that lawful sections of our society may not be aware that the law has changed and that some firearms that used to be legal to possess are now illegal to possess. If you are in doubt please

Speak to your local police station for advice or check the government website at: www.gov.uk/government/policies/policing for any changes in the law.

What is the main purpose of the firearms surrender?

To reduce the volume of guns in circulation in the UK which could get into the hands of criminals.

Is this a national firearms surrender?

All forces have the opportunity to carry out weapons surrenders locally whenever they choose. It is a matter for individual forces to assess whether it is right to conduct a firearms surrender individually or collaboratively at a particular moment in time. NABIS encourage forces to participate in the national two week campaign so that we can get as many firearms off the streets as possible. We hope the public will support the initiative and get behind the campaign in 2019.

How long will the firearms surrender last?

Monday 20 July to Sunday 4 August

How effective are these campaigns for targeting real criminals?

During the national firearms surrender in 2014 more than 6,000 firearms and thousands of rounds of ammunition were recovered by police forces across the UK. In 2017, the total figure for firearms and ammunition combined was around 9,500. Any reduction in the volume of illegally held firearms in the UK reduces the opportunity for these weapons to fall into the hands of criminals or terrorists and could save lives. It takes the weapons out of circulation and out of the hands of criminals.

How many firearms and ammunition were surrendered in Surrey in 2017?

More than 100 items were surrendered including 37 rifles and air rifles, 20 pistols, 17 shot guns and a large quantity of ammunition during our two-week firearms surrender in 2017.

As well as guns, residents also took the opportunity to safely dispose of other items including inert grenades, flare guns and BB guns, with no questions asked.

How many firearms and ammunition were surrendered in Sussex in 2017?

Of the 552 ballistic items handed in to us during our two-week firearms surrender in 2017, 441 were guns. These included various shotguns, pistols, rifles and a number of antique items – weapons which could potentially be lethal if in the wrong hands.

What items do you think will be handed in?

In previous surrender campaigns there have been various weapons handed in including antique guns, air weapons, rifles, shotguns. We hope many weapons will be surrendered across the UK. If you want to safely dispose of a firearm or ammunition you can contact your local police force for advice by dialling 101.

What is the difference between a firearms surrender and a firearms amnesty?

A firearms surrender exists around a particular point in time when a firearm is handed in to a lawful authority.

Firearms surrenders allow law enforcement to examine the history and use of a firearm prior to its surrender. Any possession or use of the gun prior to its surrender may therefore legitimately be considered for investigation or prosecution.

A firearms amnesty may be considered by some to represent an immunity from prosecution for the lifetime of the firearm, this is not the case with a firearm surrender; with a surrender any criminal use of that firearm will be examined and acted upon. NABIS and police forces are keen to ensure that messaging from forces around the nature of a surrender makes this clear.

A firearms surrender is aimed at taking guns out of circulation and removing them from criminal use to minimise the harm to our communities.

This approach allows the public to be reassured that forces are not 'going soft on gun crime' and that it is the intention to consider prosecution linked to any firearm where police can prove a link to offences committed before the weapon was handed in. Any amnesty applies only at the point of surrender, not for any offences committed prior to the surrender.

The message we want to get out is that anyone with a gun they don't want or do not legally hold should give it up during the firearms surrender and not wait for the police to turn up at their address.

What if I live in a police force area who are not taking part?

If you have a firearm you wish to hand in to police you can call your local force by dialling 101 and seek the necessary guidance. You may not need to travel to another force area which is having a firearms surrender.

What will happen to all the guns handed in?

A proportion of the firearms will be destroyed but some may be retained by NABIS or museums if they are of significant interest or unusual. Any guns which can be proved to be linked to a crime will be kept as evidence and retained for any future court case proceedings.

Will I get into trouble for surrendering my firearms?

During the two-week campaign, those surrendering firearms will not face prosecution for the illegal possession and they can remain anonymous. However, a prosecution may be sought if individuals are found in illegal possession of firearms after this period.

When and where can I hand in firearms?

Weapons should be handed to police station front counter staff. A list of designated stations and their opening times can be found below.

If someone is unable to travel to a police station they should contact police via 101 and arrange for the firearm to be collected.

Sussex:

- Battle: Mon-Fri 9am-12pm;
- Bexhill: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Burgess Hill: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Bognor Regis: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 2pm-6pm;
- Brighton: Mon-Sun 10am-6pm;
- Chichester: Mon-Sat 9am-8pm;
- Crawley; Mon-Sat 9am-8pm;
- Crowborough: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Eastbourne (Hammonds Drive): Mon-Fri 9am-5pm;
- Hailsham: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Hastings: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm;
- Haywards Heath: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Horsham: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Lewes: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Littlehampton: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Midhurst: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Rye: Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm;
- Seaford: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Shoreham: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm / 3pm-6pm;
- Uckfield: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm;
- Worthing (Chatsworth Road): Mon-Sat 9am-8pm.

Surrey:

- Guildford: Mon-Sun 8am-10pm;
- Reigate: Mon-Sun 8am-10pm;
- Staines: Mon-Sun 8am-10pm;
- Woking: Mon-Sun 8am-10pm.

Can I hand them to an officer in the street?

No. Weapons should be handed in to a police station or contact should be made via 101 to arrange collection.

How can I surrender military weapons?

Members of the public who wish to surrender any military items (such as

grenades, guns or other ballistic items), even if considered inert, are asked to call police on 101 in the first instance so officers can attend and assess the items in situ.

What if I have another weapon, such as a knife, that I wish to hand in?

This is not a general weapons surrender – we are asking the public to hand in guns and ammunition specifically.

What if I don't have time to hand in my firearms during the campaign? Can I hand them in afterwards?

Firearms can be handed into police stations at any time for surrender and destruction.

What if my firearms are of monetary value? Will you pay me for them?

All firearms surrendered are done on a voluntary basis only. If you are a firearm or shotgun certificate holder who wishes to surrender legally held firearms then please take advice from your local Firearms licensing officer.

Will police sell any firearms if valuable?

All firearms will be assessed, any that hold historic value will be offered to national armouries or museums; the remaining firearms will be put forward for destruction.

Read more from Surrey Police: https://news.surrey.police.uk/latest_news