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Procedure for the Importation of Fire- Arms

Importation of Firearms

(Updated – August 2004) - Visitors bringing firearms into South Africa for hunting purposes, will be asked to fill in a SAP 520 – Temporary Import Application which is available from your outfitter, or which can be downloaded off the SAPS Website at www.saps.gov.za, or which can be filled out on arrival. We would suggest filling in the form beforehand to save the processing time at the Police Office.

Instructions for Filling in SAP 520 Form:

1. Black ink must be used to fill in the form.
2. The form must be left unsigned until the document is finalized in front of the police official issuing the actual permit.
3. Please note that not all sections of the form apply. Visitors bringing their own firearms in for hunting purposes should concentrate on filling in the following:

Section D – (temporary import or export permit)

Section E – 1 – 25.4

Section G

Section I – (Must fill in all details requested)

Section J - (remember do not sign until in front of police officer at firearm office)

Additional Requirements along with the SAP 520 are the following:

1. Identity and Flight Details

a. Passport

b. Return Airline Ticket

2. Other Supporting Documentation

a. Proof of Ownership

Firearm licenses, documentary proof, etc. For USA Citizens, Customs Declaration Form 4457 (officially stamped) is acceptable

b. Proof of Export

Documentary proof of export from the country of origin

c. Motivation Letter from Client

This is a letter from the client stating that he is temporarily importing the referred to firearm/s for the purpose of hunting, to include that the firearm/s are required as he will be hunting (list the species to be hunted), etc.

d. Invitation Letter from the Hunting Outfitter

This is supporting documentation from the Hunting Outfitter/company with whom the client will be hunting, to include full name of company, full contact details and address, dates and location where the client will be hunting and confirming that the applicant will be using the specific firearms as applied for.

e. Any Other Supporting Documents

Firearms will be physically inspected to ensure the serial number(s) match those of the licenses (proof of ownership) and the application form. Ammunition will also be inspected.

For visitors clearing customs at the Johannesburg International Airport, please take note of the following procedure to be followed on arrival:

- 1.** Clear passport control in the Terminal where your flight arrives (generally SAA and its co-partners at Terminal 2 and all other airlines at Terminal 1).
- 2.** Proceed to baggage claim at the respective carousel. Pick up general baggage, then proceed to the respective Airline Help Desk to pick up firearm/s from the airline company and sign a receipt for the firearm/s. Ask the Airline Help Desk to direct you to the South African Police Firearm Office. Depending on the terminal where you arrive, they may need to escort you to the Office.
- 3.** Proceed to the South African Police Firearm Office (Do not at this point proceed to customs)
- 4.** On receipt of the temporary import permit at the SAPS Firearm Office, proceed to Customs, the Red Zone, where you declare the firearm/s and finish other custom clearance procedures.

For those visitors clearing customs at any of the other international points of entry, please take note of the relevant information made above which relates to documentation requirements, etc.

Please insure sufficient time is allowed to go through the temporary importation process and to clear customs. During the busy periods of the hunting season up to seventy clients may be needing permits at the same time. We would therefore recommend at least five (5) hours be set aside for this procedure and between connecting flights.

Firearm / Ammunition Allowances and Specifications:

1. No more than one firearm per caliber and 200 rounds per firearm will be permitted. No ammunition for other rifle calibers will be permitted.

An exception to this may apply for shotguns where more than one of the same caliber may be allowed for bird hunting purposes if the client produces on arrival at the SAPS Gun Office an acceptable written motivation as to why more than one is required.

2. Firearms must bear the manufacturer's serial number or any other mark by which the firearm can be identified. The identification number must be stamped and the mark affixed in the prescribed manner on the barrel or the frame or the receiver of the firearm.

3. Handguns will be allowed into the country, but only for hunting purposes. Any visitor wanting to bring in a handgun in this regard needs to have a letter from an association in the country of origin, stating the handgun will be used for hunting purposes.

4. Prohibited firearms which may NOT be imported into South Africa include:

- a. Any fully automatic weapon
- b. Any semi-automatic weapon
- c. Handgun/s for self-defense
- d. Weapons which fall under military categories

5. A semi-automatic shotgun for hunting purposes may be allowed if an application is made at least 21 days before arrival through the Central Firearms Register with a motivation letter as to why this type of firearm is required.

General Provisions:

1. Temporary Import Permits:

- a. May only be issued to a foreign visitor for the purpose of hunting
- b. Will be issued subject to the requirements of the Act with regard to the carrying, storage, safe custody and transport of a firearm and ammunition
- c. Subject to the use of the firearm only for the purpose set out in the permit
- d. Subject to the fact that no person who holds a temporary import permit is allowed to transfer the firearm to another person in South Africa without prior written permission having been obtained from the Central Firearm Register.
- e. Whenever the holder of a temporary import permit leaves the Republic of South Africa, the firearm in respect of which the permit is issued must accompany the holder of the permit
- f. Possession of no more than the quantity of cartridges determined by the Registrar and specified on the permit for each firearm in respect of which the temporary import permit applies
- g. A Temporary Import Permit shall not be issued for a period exceeding six months at a time
- h. Applicant must be 21 or over

i. Should a firearm not be declared on arrival and a temporary import permit not issued, you will face severe penalties and possible arrest on departure from South Africa.

2. Applications for Temporary Import Permits can be made in advance to the Central Firearm Register. Ask your Hunting Outfitter to assist you in this regard.

3. Please ensure that your firearm/s arrive on the same flight as you do. This must be done with the airline company on departure. Your firearm/s may only be signed for by you and will not be released to your outfitter or professional hunter should it/they arrive on a separate flight. If the firearm/s do not arrive with the passenger, the passenger must proceed to his final destination in South Africa and apply at the closest Police Station for a Temporary Import Permit. When the Temporary Import Permit has been issued, the original permit with the keys to the rifle case must be couriered to the Border Post of entry. A Transport Agent with transport permit must be appointed by the passenger. This Transport Agent must have a letter from the passenger instructing him/her to transport the firearm/s to the passenger in person. The firearm/s will be inspected by the Police at the Port of entry and the firearm/s and permit will be handed to the transporter to be transported to the passenger.

4. Please do not pay for any service regarding the handling of firearms at Johannesburg International Airport, or any port of entry. The issuing of the SAP 520 is a free service and the South African Police Service asks clients not to pay anybody involved in handling firearms from the time of arrival in South Africa right through until you receive your firearm/s and the permit from the SAPS. Clients that are paying the various airline staff, security staff, or porters involved are actually creating a problem. Please note however there is a handling fee charged by airlines and/or security companies for the handling of handguns, and some airlines have started charging a handling fee for all firearms. We suggest checking with your airline with regard to any "official" fees that may be required.

5. There is no permit required, nor any charge by the South African Police Service for a bow. Handling fees are charged by airline and/or security companies for bows and handguns.

6. Please note that NO firearms will be held for safekeeping by the SAPS. If a client brings in a prohibited firearm, brings in more than what is allowed, or lacks the necessary documentation and his request for a temporary import permit is denied, the involved firearms must be exported immediately by the client or voluntarily surrendered to the State.

In Transit Passengers (Transiting South Africa)

It is critical that you check with and confirm with the airline/s involved before departure to make sure what their procedure is for the transfer of baggage and/or firearms.

If the airline does transfer your baggage/firearms, and you have booked them through to the final destination, and you stay in the in-transit area and do not clear South African customs, then you need not go through the temporary import process.

If your airline company will not transfer your baggage/guns to your connecting airline/flight, then you must collect your baggage/firearm/s and go through the entire entry process. If this is the case, the South African limitations, requirements, etc. will apply.

This also applies if you are overnighing in South Africa before flying on to your country of destination.