

Extracted from Gov.uk website

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-controls-on-offensive-weapons#importing-knives-swords-and-other-offensive-weapons-into-the-uk>

Guidance

Guns, knives, swords and other offensive weapons: UK border control

This guidance summarises the requirements, controls and sanctions that Border Force applies to firearms and offensive weapons when they are imported into the UK.

Introduction

Border Force works alongside other government departments and agencies to prevent the import of illegal firearms (including their component parts), ammunition and offensive weapons into the UK.

What counts as a firearm

Firearms are lethal barrelled weapons and other weapons including:

- rifles
- shotguns
- handguns
- automatic and semi-automatic firearms
- CS gas canisters, pepper sprays and other self defence sprays
- high voltage electric stun guns
- high-powered air rifles and pistols

- items that have the appearance of being a firearm and can be readily converted into a live firearm

Importing firearms and ammunition into the UK

You must meet certain legal requirements in order to lawfully import firearms and ammunition into the UK.

For ammunition and live firearms, you must hold:

- the relevant import licence or certificate from the Department for International Trade (DIT)
- Home Office permission for handguns, pistols, revolvers and automatic or semi-automatic firearms
- permission from your UK regional police authority for other firearms

For deactivated firearms you must hold the relevant import licence from DIT and the firearm must be physically accompanied by an EU deactivation certificate.

Realistic imitation firearms, which are imitation firearms that appear so realistic that you cannot easily tell that they are not real, can only be imported into the UK in certain circumstances. See [further information](#) for more details.

Importing knives, swords and other offensive weapons into the UK

It is an offence to import certain specified weapons including knives, swords and other blades. These are:

- butterfly knives (also known as 'balisongs'): these have a blade hidden inside a handle that splits in the middle
- disguised knives: where a blade or sharp point is hidden inside what looks like everyday objects such as a buckle, phone, brush or lipstick

- flick knives (also known as 'switchblades' or 'automatic knives'): blades hidden inside a handle which shoots out when a button is pressed
- gravity knives
- stealth knives, which are knives or spikes not made from metal (except when used at home, for food or a toy)
- zombie knives: a knife with a cutting edge, a serrated edge and images or words suggesting it is used for violence
- swords, including samurai swords: a curved blade over 50 centimetres (with some exceptions, such as antiques and swords made to traditional methods before 1954)
- sword-sticks: a hollow walking stick or cane containing a blade
- push daggers
- blowpipes (sometimes known as 'blow guns')
- telescopic truncheons: these extend automatically by pressing button or spring in the handle
- batons: straight, side-handled or friction-lock truncheons
- hollow kubotans: a cylinder-shaped keychain holding spikes
- shurikens (also known as 'shaken', 'death stars' or 'throwing stars')
- kusari-gama: a sickle attached to a rope, cord or wire
- kyoketsu-shoge: a hook-knife attached to a rope, cord or wire
- kusari (or 'manrikigusari'): a weight attached to a rope, cord, wire
- hand or foot-claws
- knuckledusters

Offensive weapons which are designed to kill or inflict serious injury and do not have a legitimate use are banned or restricted from being imported into the UK.

Circumstances where restricted offensive weapons can be imported

Some organisations are allowed to import and hold restricted offensive weapons for specified purposes, this includes:

- museums, galleries and universities to present, display, research or interpret material of historic, artistic or scientific interest, such imports may also qualify for relief from duty and VAT
- HM forces
- visiting forces
- police forces and the prison service for example direct imports of batons and truncheons
- those making commercial imports solely for onward supply to the police or prison service or trade samples to be evaluated - evidence must be produced including a contract stating quantities, where applicable

Restricted offensive weapons may also be imported:

- for theatrical performances
- for rehearsals of theatrical performances
- for the production of films
- for the production of television programmes
- if they are stealth knives designed for domestic use or for use in the processing, preparation or consumption of food or are a toy

Swords with a curved blade of 50cm or more may be imported where the weapon:

- was made before 1954
- was made by traditional hand sword making methods
- is only available for the purposes of use in religious ceremonies or for martial arts
- is for use in a historical re-enactments or sporting activity for example a martial arts demonstration for which public liability insurance is held

If you are importing a restricted offensive weapon you should have evidence to demonstrate why you require it.

If you require further information about the legislation in relation to importation of knives, swords and other offensive weapons, you can email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the Home Office cannot advise on importation of specific items.

The final decision on whether the import is allowed lies with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) when they have an opportunity to see the item.

You may wish to contact the HMRC helpline and provide specifics of the item you want to import. The telephone number of the helpline is 0300 200 3700 and lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Controls and sanctions

Border Force monitors and controls imports of firearms (including their component parts), ammunition and offensive weapons into the UK across all modes of transport and international mail.

If you fail to meet the relevant legal requirements, the item will be liable to forfeiture and will be seized by Border Force. You may also be arrested and prosecuted for importing the item illegally into the UK and/or possessing the item illegally in the UK. The maximum prison sentence is up to 10 years