

## Know your deadlines! How soon should you apply for a New Zealand visitor's firearm license?

There has been some buzz lately about the New Zealand visitor's firearm license, and their application deadlines. If you navigate to the [Visitors Firearms License and Import Permits](#) page under the New Zealand Police official website, you can see the following:

The screenshot shows the New Zealand Police website's 'Advice' section for 'Visitor's firearms licence and import permits'. The main heading is 'Visitor's firearms licence and import permits'. Below it, the sub-heading is 'Visitor's firearms licence'. The text explains that a visitor's firearms licence allows shooting for hunting or competition in New Zealand for up to a year. Key points include: 'You will need to show that you are a genuine shooter in your own country.' and 'Visitor's licence application fee - NZ\$25.00 (including GST)'. A prominent yellow highlight reads: 'Apply online for a visitor's firearms licence at least one month before your visit.' Below this, it states: 'If you intend staying longer than 12 months you must apply for a standard New Zealand firearms licence [PDF, 30KB]'. A sidebar on the right, titled 'On this page', lists several links: 'Visitor's firearms licence', 'Bringing firearms into New Zealand', 'When you arrive in New Zealand', 'Leaving New Zealand with firearms', 'Restricted offensive weapons other than firearms', 'New immigrants', and 'Import permits for parts of firearms'.

This has created some confusion and panic for hunters because the one-month timeframe isn't mentioned anywhere else on the face of the firearms section of the website. However, if you click on [firearms license link](#) to apply, the first line in the instructions now reads "1. Apply for a visitor firearms license at least one month before your visit."

The screenshot shows the 'Firearms Visitors Application' page. A note at the top states: 'NOTE: Yahoo! is configuring their security policies to a more stringent level in light of the data breaches they have recently experienced. This has affected some features of this form. Please consider using a different email provider when responding to the email field below. Thank you.' Below this is the 'Instructions' section. The first instruction is highlighted in yellow: '1. Apply for a visitor firearms licence at least one month before your visit.' The other instructions are: '2. Please complete all required sections of this form.', '3. A fee set by regulations will be required upon arrival (NZ\$25).', and '4. Complete this application for:'. Under instruction 4, there are three bullet points: 'A visitors licence to use sporting rifles and shotguns; or', 'A visitors licence endorsed to use pistols and/or Military-Style Semi-Auto (MSSA) rifles or shotguns; and (if importing firearms)', and 'A permit to import firearms / restricted airguns.'

It seems this highlighted addition to the instructions may be recent, but the deadline has always been in place. According to a representative with the New Zealand Police, they are working to make the deadline appear more prominently on the website and application to avoid confusion.

So, what is the best way to apply? New Zealand Police strongly suggest you apply online via their website. All applications are now being routed to and processed by the Wellington office. This office

handles all aspects of the licensing including notifications to the applicant, updating their database, and notification to the appropriate airports. We've been told applications are being processed in 2-3 business days and find this to be true if the form has been filled out correctly and completely with all requested documents attached.

Hunters arriving with guns into New Zealand without a visitor firearm license are directed to the closest arms officer to apply in person. Licenses are issued at the discretion of the officer, and there is no guarantee a license will be granted when applying this way. The firearms are held by the Police until the visitor has acquired their license from the arms officer.

All things considered, we find the New Zealand permit to be straightforward if you follow the guidelines. Of course, support from a knowledgeable travel agent can relieve a lot of stress and save hours of research. So be sure to call Travel Express before you book your next international flight! Whether you're flying with rifles for a hunting trip of a lifetime, or are planning your next R & R getaway, we're experienced and happy to help.