

10 September 2026

To Health Practitioners

**Subject: Arms Act 2026 and health practitioners**

Kia ora koutou katoa,

I am writing to you and your members regarding the commencement of the Arms Act 2026. This Act replaces the Arms Act 1983.

Recently the Arms Act 2026 was passed, meaning from 23 September 2026:

- commencement of the updated and modernised Arms Act
- day-to-day responsibility for the firearms regulatory system shifts to Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand (FSE)
- Firearms Safety and Education will be focused on:
  - encouraging a culture of community safety
  - enabling legitimate possession and use of firearms
  - ensuring compliance through education and enforcement; and
  - providing simpler, smarter services for firearms licence holders.

**What do health practitioners need to know?**

Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand (FSE) replaces Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority on 23 September 2026.

Starting from 23 September 2026, health practitioners will be interacting with the new regulator, but in all other respects very little is changing for health practitioners.

You'll begin seeing this new name, and visual identity, and you'll be able to find information on our new website [firearmssafety.govt.nz](https://firearmssafety.govt.nz). Any previously saved email and web addresses you have for the old firearms regulator should redirect you automatically to the new entity.



## When you must consider notifying Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand

Your obligation as a health practitioner is described in [Section 373](#) of the new Arms Act 2026 (previously Arms Act 1983 s92).

As previously, you must consider notifying Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand if you have reason to believe:

- a) your patient is a firearms licence holder (or you have reason to believe they are a licence holder); and
- b) you consider the patient's health condition may impact their safety or the safety of the public, if they continue to use or possess firearms.

You must consider notifying Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand as soon as practicable:

- Providing the grounds on which your opinion is based; and
- Whether you believe the licence holder poses an immediate or imminent danger of self-harm or harm to others.

Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand may require the licence holder to undergo further medical assessment by another independent health practitioner, or they may ask the licence holder to surrender their firearms licence.

## How to notify Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand

If you think the licence holder poses an immediate or imminent danger of self-harm or harm to others, please call 111 and ask for Police.

If you have concerns that do not pose an immediate or imminent danger due to a patient's access to firearms, you can:

- use the updated online at [Health Practitioner Reporting form](#), (**NB** this link will go to the new form from 23 September 2026); or
- phone the non-emergency Police number [105](#).

## Protection for health practitioners remains in place!

Importantly, the protection for a health practitioner from criminal, civil, or disciplinary proceedings by disclosing personal information while performing any function or responsibility under Arms Act 2026, continues so long as the practitioner has acted in good faith.

## What is changing for firearms licence holders that medical practitioners might need to be aware of

As a health practitioner you may like to know that from 23 February 2028, if a firearms licence holder has their licence suspended on a health-related ground, that

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### Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority

Telephone: 0800 844 431 [www.firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz](http://www.firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz)

Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority is a business unit of New Zealand Police

suspension will last for 12 months. Currently, suspensions last for 90 days, in which time a decision is required as to whether to revoke their firearms licence (which leads to a loss of licence for five years).

This change will give licence holders in this situation more time to seek medical advice and address concerns, without the complete loss of their licence.

### **Further background about the new regulator – Firearms Safety and Education New Zealand (FSE)**

- From 23 September 2026, all firearms licensing and other regulatory decisions will be delivered independently of NZ Police. Police will focus on criminal law enforcement.
- FSE has its own Chief Executive who reports directly to the Responsible Minister, not the Commissioner of Police.
- NZ Police will continue to provide corporate services to the regulator – including Finance, IT, facilities and HR support.
- FSE is developing new IT systems to make it quicker and easier for firearms users and other stakeholders to meet their responsibilities.

### **To find out more about the new Arms Act 2026 and what is changing**

People can go to the existing Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority website and click on the link from the homepage to stay up-to-date and find out more: [firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz](https://firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz)

If you would like to receive email updates about the changes to firearms legislation and licensing, you can subscribe to our regular Panui newsletter. Please email us at [firearmspartnerships@police.govt.nz](mailto:firearmspartnerships@police.govt.nz) to receive the newsletters.

Ngā mihi nui



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