

COMPETENCY

Firearm Competency (being declared competent to own firearms by SAPS)

Firearm Competency means that you have been found to be competent to own a firearm by the SAPS in accordance with the stipulations of [Chapter 5 of Act 60 of 2000 as amended](#). You might want to ascertain yourself with the description of [domestic violence](#), which is an important personal issue the SAPS will look at in your specific situation before they will award a competency certificate to legally own firearms.



When you have acquired proficiency by successfully completing the relevant unit standard(s) for your specific firearm(s) with your accredited training provider, you must apply for competency status with the Designated Firearms Officer (DFO) at your local police station. (download forms SAPS 517 and SAPS 517(a) here [SAPS 517 \(English\)](#) - [SAPD517\(a\) \(Afrikaans\)](#) scroll down the page and click on relevant document)

Before one may apply for a new firearm licence, one must first be declared competent to own such a firearm.

One must complete proficiency training with a training provider in the following Unit Standards as explained in the SAPS Directive 27/1/1 dated 10-01-2017 and signed by Major General JJ Bothma, before one can apply to be declared competent to own a firearm.

A compulsory unit standard, generally known as Knowledge of the Act, to be completed in combination of any of the following unit standards depending on what kind of firearm one would want to own:

Knowledge of the Firearms Control Act

Handle and use a handgun (SAQA Unit Standard 119649)

Handle and use a self-loading rifle or carbine (semi-auto rifle) (SAQA Unit Standard 119650)

Handle and use a manually operated rifle or carbine (SAQA Unit Standard 119651)

Handle and use a shotgun (SAQA Unit Standard 119652)

Persons under 21 years of age may apply to be declared competent to own firearms, if they complete the above training in the unit standards they chose, and also hold dedicated status with an accredited association (either hunting and/or sport shooting association).

Competency certificates are issued per category of firearm, i.e. for a handgun, for a self-loading (semi-auto) rifle, for a manually operated rifle (i.e. a rifle with a bolt, lever action, falling block, pump action), and for a shotgun (either break-neck, bolt operated, pump action or semi-auto shotgun).

Although a competency certificate may be issued to a person for a handgun, rifle, shotgun and semi-auto rifle, all printed on one document, each category of firearm has its own competency, which correlates directly with the length of validity of the licence of said firearm (thus relevant to the Section the licence was issued under).

SAPS will investigate your particular situation and determine whether you are Competent to own firearms (see Chapter 5 of the FCA as quoted above) when you apply for a licence for a new firearm. Once the SAPS have completed their investigation and have found no problem with your application, they will award you a Competency Certificate which is valid for the periods stipulated below:

Periods of Validity of Competency Certificates (FCA Amendment Act 28 of 2006)

Self-protection – 5 years (Section 13)

Occasional hunting and/or sports-shooting – 10 years (Section 15)

Dedicated hunting and/or sports-shooting – 10 years (Section 16)

Professional hunting 10 years (Section 16A)

Business as a game rancher or in hunting – 10 years (Section 20)

Business other than game ranching or in hunting – 5 years (Section 20)

Possession of a Muzzle loader – 10 years (Black Powder Competency)

Note: You are not allowed to do business (i.e. PH work) with a rifle you have licensed under Sections 15 or 16.

Because it takes time to issue a competency certificate, you use the time to complete your motivation(s) and collect all relevant documentation you would want to attach to your licence applications – get proof of membership of associations or clubs, get endorsements, etc.

If you are under the age of 21, you may apply to be declared competent to own firearms. You will, however, first have to do [proficiency training](#) and [acquire dedicated status](#) from an accredited hunting and/or sport shooting association (such as NHSA), before you can apply to be declared competent to own firearms. Once you have competency, you can apply for a licence for a firearm for which you have competency.

Renewal of competency

You **MUST** also read the [NHSA Newsletter Vol. 17 \(17\) 08-02-2021](#) in this regard.

You can download the SAPS Directive of 2017 in respect of categories of competencies [HERE](#)