

# BELIZE

# FIREARMS ACT CHAPTER 143

# **REVISED EDITION 2011** SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2011

This is a revised edition of the Substantive Laws, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011.

This edition contains a consolidation of amendments made to the law by Acts No. 3 of 2007, 6 of 2008 and No. 9 of 2011.

# 3

# **CHAPTER 143**

# FIREARMS

# ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

# PART I

# Preliminary

- 1. Short title.
- 2. Interpretation.

# PART II

# Prohibition against Keeping Firearms without Licence

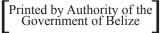
- 3. Gun licences.
- 4. Gun-dealer's licences.
- 5. Penalty for not taking out licence.
- 6. Evidence as to ownership.
- 6A. Evidence of joint possession.

# PART III

### Administration of the Act and Bullet Proof Vest

- 7. Conditions of grant and use of licences.
- 8. Expiry of licence.
- 9. Surrendering of firearms of un-renewed licence.
- 10. Register of licences.
- 11. Effect of not holding a licence for one year before the application.
- 12. Importation of firearms.

# THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



#### [CAP. 143

## Firearms

- 13. Firearms brought into Belize from neighbouring state.
- 14. Unlicensed persons selling firearms.
- 15. Licensed gun-dealers to keep stock books.
- 16. Prohibition of dealings with gas-discharging weapon.
- 17. Production of licences.
- 18. Delivery of firearms or ammunition to carrier.
- 19. Power of Minister to prohibit carrying or sale of arms.
- 20. Exclusion of special weapons, etc., from the jurisdiction of the Act.
- 20A. Registration of proof vest, etc.
- 20B. Person prohibited from registration.
- 20C. Importation of bullet proof vest.
- 20D. Sale of bullet proof vest.
- 20E. Penalty for unauthorised possession of bullet proof vest.

# PART IV

# Search, Arrest and Procedure

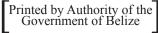
- 21. Production of licence.
- 22. Arrest and search of persons suspected of carrying firearm, etc.
- 23. Power of entry and search.
- 24. Safe custody of firearms.
- 25. Immunity from liability for disposal of firearm.
- 26. Cancellation of licence and forfeiture of firearms.
- 27. Publication of cancelled licences.
- 28. Prosecution
- 29. Evidence.

# PART V

# General Offences and Penalties

- 30. Sale to persons intoxicated or of unsound mind.
- 31. Forging licence or certificate.

# THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



5

32. General penalty.

32A. Serving of sentences.

## PART VI

### Application of Act

- 33. Application of Act.
- 34. Offences of persons under 16 years of age.
- 35. Prohibition of possession, use, etc. of certain firearms.
- 36. Prohibition of alteration, etc. of firearms.
- 37. Transitional provisions.
- 38. Possession of firearm with intent to cause unlawful violence.
- 39. Possession of firearm with criminal intent.
- 40. Discharging firearm in public.
- 41. Prohibition against manufacture of firearms or ammunition.
- 42. Possession of firearm while under the influence of alcohol, etc.
- 43. Restriction on carrying of firearms in certain circumstances.
- 44. Regulations.
- 45. Amendment of Schedules.

Schedules:-

First Schedule — Firearms Licences and Bullet Proof Vest Forms

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Second Schedule — Prohibited Firearms

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

# **CHAPTER 143**

# FIREARMS

Ch. 171, R.L., 1958. Cap. 116, R. E, 1980-1990 25 of 1958. 8 of 1962. 3 of 1963. 40 of 1963. 19 of 1966. 6 of 1977. 17 of 1980. 14 of 1982. 3 of 1983. 15 of 1983. 9 of 1987. 22 of 1987. 26 of 1989. 13 of 1990. 6 of 1994. 18 of 1998. 42 of 1999. 44 of 1999. 36 of 2002. 6 of 2008. 9 of 2011. S.I. 70 of 2008 S.I. 90 of 2008 S.I. 25 of 2011

[1<sup>st</sup> December 1913]

# PART I

### Preliminary

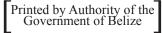
Short title. **1.** This Act may be cited as the Firearms Act.

Interpretation. 2.–(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

 <sup>8 of 1962.</sup> "ammunition" includes gunpowder, nitroglycerine, dynamite, gunotton and every other explosive substance whether fitted for use with any firearm or otherwise, but shall not include air gun or air pistol pellets;

> "carrier" means any person who receives firearms or ammunition to be delivered by him, for reward or otherwise, to any other person within Belize;

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



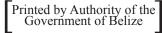
	Firearms	[CAP. 143
"Commissioner"	means the Commissioner of Police;	36 of 2002.
"company" inclu corporate or unin	des a firm, a statutory body, and any body o corporate;	f persons, 36 of 2002.
which any shot, any component pa to any such weap	es any weapon or other thing of any descrip bullet or other missile can be discharged an art of any such weapon or other thing and any oon or thing designed or adapted to diminish y firing the weapon or thing, but does not inc ol;	d includes accessory the noise
"foreign company	y" means a company,	36 of 2002.
<i>(a)</i>	one-half or more of whose directors or sha are not citizens of Belize;	areholders
(b)	one-half or more of the issued share capita is held by or for and on behalf of a person a citizen of Belize; or	
(C)	which is otherwise under the control of a p is not a citizen of Belize;	erson who
	nstructor" means any person who is licence f Police to conduct a certified firearm safet	
"gun-dealer" mea or ammunition, o	ans every person who deals in, sells, or make or repairs firearms;	es firearms
"licensed gun-de under this Act;	aler" means a person holding a gun-dealer	's licence
	means a company which is incorporated or a foreign company.	formed in 36 of 2002.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE	
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8		<b>[CAP. 143</b> Firearms
	3 of 2007.	"shooting club" means a non-profit organisation whose activities includes target practice or target shooting competition among members using licenced firearms;
	3 of 2007.	"shooting range" means a place that is designated or intended for the safe discharge, on a regular and structured basis of firearms for the purposes of target practice or target shooting competitions.
		(2) In interpreting this Act, any firearm or kind of ammunition not coming clearly within the exception shall be deemed to be included in the definition.
		PART II
		Prohibition against Keeping Firearms without Licence
	Gun licences. 9 of 1987.	<b>3.</b> –(1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, no person shall own, keep, carry, discharge or use any firearm or ammunition unless he has been granted a gun licence in Form 1.
	3 of 1963.	(2) Subsection (1) of this section, shall not apply to a licensed gun dealer in respect of any firearm he may possess in the ordinary course of his business or to a carrier.
	9 of 1987.	(3) No person licensed under subsection (1) of this section, shall own or keep a greater number of firearms or ammunition than is specified in his licence.
		(4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6) of this section, the fees specified in the Second Column and Third Column of the Table below shall be

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 



payable in advance for the grant of a gun licence specified in the First Column of the said Table, respectively by a citizen of Belize and by a

person who is not a citizen of Belize.

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[CAP. 143	5
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	TABLE <sup>1</sup>					
TYPE OF GUN LICENCE		CITIZEN OF BELIZE	PERSON WHO IS NOT A CITIZEN OF BELIZE			
(a)	Special Protection Licence	\$75.00	\$500.00			
(b)	Gun Repair Licence	\$200.00	\$500.00			
(C)	Sport Hunters Licence	\$150.00	\$250.00			
(d)	Farmers Gun Licence	\$5.00	\$250.00			
(e)	Company Gun Licence: Category A (up to 10 firearms)	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00			
	Category B (from 11 to 20 firearms)	\$4,000.00	\$10,000.00			
	Category C (from 21 to 40 firearms)	\$8,000.00	\$20,000.00			
	Category D (from 41 to 60 firearms)	\$16,000.00	\$40,000.00			
(f)	Shooting Range	\$1,000.00	\$3,000.00			

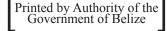
<sup>1</sup> This Table was amended by Acts. No. 36 of 2002 and 3 of 2007(g)

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

[CAP. 143	Firearms	
(g) Shooting Club	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
(h) Firearms Safe Instructor	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
(5) For the purpo	ose of subsection (4) of this sect	ion,

- (a) where a firearm is used for more than one purpose, the higher of the fees prescribed above for such purposes shall be payable;
- (b) the licence fee for a member of the British Forces Belize or of any other foreign Force, or a non-national member of the Belize Defence Force, in respect of a firearm kept by him for his personal use shall be the same as that specified for nationals in the Second Column of the above Table;
- (c) the diplomatic personnel accredited to the Government of Belize by a sovereign State shall pay as administrative charge the fees specified in the Second Column of the above Table in respect of firearms kept by them for their personal use;
- (d) it shall be lawful for the Minister to exempt from the payment of the fees prescribed in the preceding subsection any public officer to whom the Minister has given permission to keep, carry or use a firearm or ammunition for his protection in the carrying out of his official duties;
- *(e)* such conditions may be attached to each type of licence as the Commissioner may consider necessary; and
- (f) in the case of a Farmers Gun Licence, the applicant may, at the time of applying for the licence, request the names of immediate members of his family or

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



farm workers to be included in the licence, and the Commissioner of Police may, if satisfied that such persons are not disqualified from holding a gun licence, include the names of such other persons in the licence, who may lawfully use the licensed firearm, and the list of such other persons may from time to time be amended by the Commissioner of Police at the request of the holder of the licence;

in the case of a Company Gun Licence, it shall be 36 of 2002. (g)lawful for the Commissioner to issue one licence in the name of such company to cover all firearms and ammunition which the Commissioner may approve as reasonably required for the use of such company, and any of the firearms so licensed may be issued to and used by any licensed security guard employed by such company who has been certified by the Commissioner to be a fit and proper person to handle a firearm, and for this purpose, every company which has been issued a licence under this section shall forward a list of the security guards in its employ to the Commissioner and shall forthwith notify the Commissioner of any change in such list.

(6) The Minister may from time to time by Order published in the *Gazette*, amend the Table contained in the preceding subsection.

(7) Where a person who is granted a gun licence fails to acquire the type of firearm shown on his licence within three months of the date of issue, such gun licence shall automatically become void.

(8) A company which has been issued a Company Gun Licence <sup>36 of 2002.</sup> shall be responsible for the proper custody, safe keeping and use of the firearms and ammunition for which it is licensed, and shall be liable for any improper or unauthorised use of any such firearm by any of it security guards.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE		<b>REVISED EDITION 2011</b>
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[CA	AP. 143	Firearms	
Gun-dealer's li- cences.	<b>4.</b> –(1) No person	shall,	
	(a)	carry on business of a gun-dealer unless he is granted a gun-dealer's licence in Form 2 authorising him to do so;	
	(b)	carry on the business of gun-dealer at any other place than the premises specified in the gun-dealer's licence granted to him under this section.	
40 of 1963.	by the Minister, a without the conse	er's licence granted under this section may be revoked nd no subsequent gun-dealer's licence shall be granted nt of the Minister to any person whose gun-dealer's t any time revoked.	
9 of 1987.		ing fees shall be payable in advance for the grant of a ce under this section, namely,	
44 of 1999.	<i>(a)</i> by	a citizen of Belize\$650.00;	
	<i>(b)</i> by	a person who is not a citizen of Belize\$7,000.00,	
		the Minister may, by Order published in the <i>Gazette</i> , time the amount of fee payable for the grant of a gunder this section.	
Penalty for not taking out licence.	<b>5.</b> Every person who contravenes any of the provisions of section 3 or 4 shall be guilty of an offence, and all firearms or ammunition in respect of which any such contravention is committed shall be liable, on the order of the court trying any such offence, to be forfeited.		
Evidence as to ownership.	<b>6.</b> The owner or occupier of any land, house or premises in or on which any firearm or ammunition is found shall, for the purposes of this Act, be deemed to be the owner or keeper of such firearm or ammunition until the contrary is proved.		
Evidence of joint possession. 6 of 2008.		y firearm or ammunition is found in or on any premises I by more than one person, such forearm or ammunition	

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



shall be deemed to be in the joint possession of all such persons and it shall be for the said person or persons to adduce evidence to show that it was there without his or her or their knowledge or consent.

(2) Where any firearm or ammunition is seen being thrown out of a vehicle, such firearm or ammunition shall be deemed to be in joint possession of all persons who were in the vehicle at the material time and it shall be for such person or persons to adduce evidence to show that it was there without his or her or their knowledge or consent.

(3) Where any firearm or ammunition is seen being thrown out of a motor cycle or bicycle, such firearm or ammunition shall be deemed to be in joint possession of all persons riding the motor cycle or bicycle at the material time and it shall be for such person or persons to adduce evidence to show that it was there without his or her or their knowledge or consent.

### PART III

### Administration of the Act and Bullet Proof Vest

7.-(1) Subject to this Act, every licence under this Act shall be granted Conditions of grant of licences.

(2) No licence shall be granted,

- (a) to any person under the age of sixteen years; 9 of 1987.
- (b) to any person who has been convicted of any crime 44 of 1999.
  of violence to the person or of any crime against the public peace within three years immediately preceding the date of his application, except for some special reason shown;
- (c) to any person who at the time of his application for a gun licence is already in possession of any firearm, except for some special reason shown;

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

#### **REVISED EDITION 2011**

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[CAP. 143

14	[CAP. 143		Firearms
9 of 1987.		(d)	to any person who, in the opinion of the Commissioner of Police, is not a fit and proper person to hold any such licence;
		(e)	to any person who is unable to show any reasonable ground why a licence should be issued to him;
		(f)	in respect of any firearm which in the opinion of the Commissioner of Police is of such a dangerous kind as to be unsafe in the possession of any person; or
44 of 1999.		(g)	to any person who has had his previous firearm lost or. stolen, and it appears to the Commissioner of Police after due investigation that the loss or theft of the fire-arm was due to the negligence or fault of such person.
9 of 1987.	Police to gra pray that the	int hii Com	on aggrieved by the refusal of the Commissioner of n a licence may, by petition in writing to the Minister, imissioner of Police be directed to grant him a licence, may after such enquiry as he may think fit,
		(i)	grant the prayer and direct the Commissioner of Police to grant such licence; or
		(ii)	decline to interfere with the decision of the Commissioner of Police.
9 of 1987.	Commission that person	er of propo	aler's licence shall be issued to any person unless the Police is satisfied that the place in the premises where ses to keep the firearms or ammunition is reasonably or other crimes against property.
			dealer's licence shall clearly state the maximum number rearms and ammunition to be kept.
14 of 1982. 9 of 1987.			n-dealer who keeps firearms and ammunition at any in the premises described in the licence, or in any place
		er tha	in the premises described in the licence, or in any place

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in such premises other than the place approved by the Commissioner of Police, or keeps any firearms or ammunition in excess of the number and quantity specified in his licence shall be guilty of an offence, and his licence shall be forfeited.

**8.** Every licence granted under this Act shall expire on the following birthday of the licence holder occurring immediately after the grant of the licence, except for a Gun Dealer's Licence or a Company Gun Licence which shall expire on the 31st December next following the date of issue of the licence, but may be renewed for a like period subject to such conditions and on payment of such fees as may be prescribed.

**9.**–(1) Where any person has made application for a licence in respect of a firearm which has been previously licensed and the application is refused, such person shall forthwith surrender the firearm to the Commissioner of Police if he resides in the Belize district or, if he resides in any other district, to the officer in charge of the nearest police station, who shall hand such firearm to the Commissioner of Police.

(2) Where any firearm has been surrendered under subsection (1) of this section, the owner may, within twelve months of such surrender, sell the firearm to any person to whom the Commissioner of Police is willing to grant a licence. Upon the grant of a licence to a purchaser of a firearm which is held by the Commissioner of Police, such firearm shall be handed to the purchaser.

(3) Where any firearm which has been surrendered under subsection (1) of this section, has not been sold and handed to a purchaser under subsection (2) of this section, such firearm may, not less than twelve months after its surrender, be disposed of in a manner as the Minister may direct.

**10.**–(1) The Commissioner of Police shall keep a register in Form 3 of all licences granted by him under this Act.

(2) At the end of each month, the Commissioner of Police shall cause a copy of the entries in the register made during that month to be published in the *Gazette*.

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

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Register of licences.

6 of 1977. 9 of 1987.

Expiration of licence. 44 of 1999. 36 of 2002.

[CAP. 143

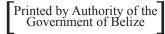
Surrender of firearms of un-renewed licence.

14 of 1982. 9 of 1987.

16	[CA	P. 143 Firearms		
ing on the	fect of not hold- g a licence for e year before e application. of 1987.	<b>11.</b> –(1) Every person applying for a licence under this Act, and who had not held a similar licence for the year immediately preceding the year in respect of which the licence applied for is to be granted, shall make a declaration as to whether he had ever been refused a similar licence by the Commissioner of Police or any other authority competent to grant licences under this Act.		
		(2) At least one month's notice of intention to apply for a gun-dealer's licence shall be given to the Commissioner of Police.		
		(3) At the hearing, the application may be opposed by any police or customs officer.		
fir	portation of earms. of 1987.	<b>12.</b> No firearms or ammunition imported into Belize shall be delivered to any person unless and until such person satisfies the Comptroller of Customs that he is licensed under this Act.		
int ne	rearms brought o Belize from ighboring state. of 1987.	<b>13.</b> –(1) Every person entering Belize with firearms or ammunition in his possession shall forthwith deposit them with the officer or constable in charge of a police station.		
		(2) The firearms or ammunition so deposited shall remain in the custody of the police officer in charge of the police station until the person depositing them either produces to such police officer a licence under this Act or satisfies such police officer that he is about to depart forthwith from Belize, whereupon the firearms or ammunition shall be returned to him.		
		(3) Every person,		
		(a) who fails to deposit his firearms or ammunition at a police station at the first available opportunity under this section; or		
		(b) to whom firearms or ammunition are returned on		

(b) to whom firearms or ammunition are returned on the ground that he is about to depart forthwith from Belize who shall not at once depart therefrom by the customary route,

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



(4) All firearms and ammunition so deposited shall be stored at the police station where they were deposited at the risk of the owner and if not claimed by and returned to the owner within one month from the day when they were so deposited shall be destroyed or disposed of in a manner as the Minister may direct.

14.–(1) Every person, other than a licensed gun-dealer, who sells or otherwise disposes of any firearm or ammunition to any other person in Belize shall, within fourteen days of such sale or disposition, notify in writing the Commissioner of Police or the police officer in charge of the district where such person resides, stating the name and address of the person to whom the firearm or ammunition has been sold or otherwise disposed of.

(2) Every person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of an offence.

15.-(1) Every licensed gun-dealer shall,

- (a) keep on his premises a "stock book" and shall make or cause to be made an entry therein of all firearms and ammunition on his licensed premises, and shall immediately after the receipt of any firearm or ammunition make or cause to be made therein an entry giving the particulars of such firearms and ammunition;
- (b) immediately after delivery of any firearm or ammunition from his licensed premises make or cause to be made in his "stock book",
  - *(i)* an entry of the number of firearms and the quantity of ammunition delivered by him together with the number or other identification mark, if any, of each such firearm;

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 

40 of 1963.

[CAP. 143

Unlicensed persons selling firearms. 14 of 1982. 9 of 1987.

Licensed gundealer to keep stock books. 17 of 1980. 9 of 1987.

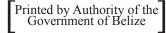
[CA	AP. 143	Firearn	ns	
	(ii	the date ammunitior	of delivery of the n;	firearm or
	(ii	( <i>iii</i> ) the name and address of the person to whom the delivery was made;		son to whom
	(iv	<i>(iv)</i> the number of the licence produced by the person to whom the firearm or ammunition was delivered; and		
	(v,	the district from which the licence was granted or the circumstances excepting the person from producing his licence and the cause of the delivery, whether on sale, hire or otherwise.		person from cause of the
	and control of such l	tock book and all arms and ammunition in the possess of such licensed gun-dealer shall be produced by him up ny police officer for his inspection.		
(3) Every person who contravenes any section, or who in the sale, purchase, hire or ammunition knowingly makes or causes to statement as to any matter which he is require shall be guilty of an offence.		, hire or delivery of any uses to be made any f	y firearms or alse entry or	
Prohibition of dealings with gas-discharging weapon.	manufacture, sell, pu of whatever description	ase, carry or designed for y ammunitio	e authority of the Min have in his possession the discharge of any no on containing or designe	any weapon, oxious liquid,

(2) Every person who contravenes this section shall be guilty of an offence.

Production of licences. 44 of 1999. **17.**–(1) Every person who has been granted a licence under this Act shall carry such licence with him at all times when he is carrying or using the firearm specified in the licence, and shall produce and deliver such licence to be examined and read by a police officer on demand.

### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

18



(2) Every person who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (1) above shall be guilty of an offence.

**18.**–(1) Every person who delivers firearms or ammunition to a carrier to be delivered by him to any other person within Belize shall, at the time of delivery of such firearms or ammunition, give to the carrier a certificate in writing stating that the person to whom the firearms or ammunition are to be delivered is licensed under this Act.

(2) A carrier shall not receive firearms or ammunition without, at the same time, receiving the certificate mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, and such certificate shall be kept by him and be produced by him at the request of any police officer.

(3) A carrier who has had firearms or ammunition so delivered to him or her shall not keep them in his possession for a longer period than is reasonably necessary for delivering them to the person named in such certificate.

(4) Every person who fails, in contravention of subsection (1) of this section, to deliver a certificate to a carrier, and any carrier who, in contravention of subsection (2) of this section, receives any firearms or ammunition without at the same receiving a certificate, or who does not produce and deliver such certificate to be examined and read by a police officer within a reasonable time after such officer has requested its production, and any carrier who contravenes the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, shall be guilty of an offence.

**19.**–(1) The Minister may, from time to time by Order published in the *Gazette*, prohibit,

- (a) the carrying of firearms or ammunition in any district or part of Belize;
- (b) the carrying of firearms or ammunition by persons who are not citizens of Belize;
- (c) the sale of firearms or ammunition within Belize for such time as may be specified in the Order, or only

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

#### **REVISED EDITION 2011**

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Delivery of firearms or ammunition to carrier. 9 of 1987.

Power of minister to prohibit carrying or sale or arms. 40 of 1963. 9 of 1987.

	1/3
11.	143

allow the sale thereof within Belize subject to the conditions set out in such Order; or

(d) the sale of firearms or ammunition to persons who are not citizens of Belize.

(2) Every person who carries any firearms or ammunition in contravention of the said Order shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to forfeit any such firearms or ammunition.

(3) Every person who sells any firearms or ammunition in contravention of the said Order shall be guilty of an offence.

Exclusion of special weapons, etc., from the jurisdiction of the Act. 40 of 1963. 9 of 1987.

Registration of bullet proof vest, etc.

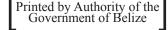
**20.** The Minister may from time to time by Order published in the *Gazette* declare that any kind of weapon or ammunition specifically named in the said Order shall be excluded, either for the whole of Belize or any district in Belize, from the operation of this Act either for a fixed period or until such time as the Minister shall revoke the said Order by another Order.

f **20A.**–(1) A person who intends to own or purchase a bullet proof vest shall apply to the Commissioner of Police to register that bullet proof vest at least 10 days before the date of purchasing or owning.

(2) An application for registration shall contain the following information,

- (a) name and address of applicant;
- (b) date of intended purchase or own;
- (c) details of the bullet proof vest;
- (d) reasons for purchasing or owning of the bullet proof vest;
- (e) names and address of persons other than the applicant who will be using the bullet proof vest;

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



(f) any other information that the Commissioner of Police may require.

(3) The application for registration shall be accompanied by,

- (a) a non-refundable fee of \$100.00;
- (b) police record;
- (c) identification documentation.

(4) Subject to subsections (1) and (2) of this section, the Commissioner of Police shall register the bullet proof vest or other protective apparel and issue to the applicant a certificate of registration as set out in Form 4 of the First Schedule.

**20B.**–(1) The following persons shall not qualify to apply for registration under section 20A of this Act,

Persons prohibited from registration.

- (a) a person under the age of 21 years;
- (b) a person convicted of a crime of violence within 3 years immediately preceding his application unless the person satisfies the Commissioner that a bullet proof vest is required for use in his employment or for some other special reasons;
- (c) a person who is unable to show reasonable ground for the possession of bullet proof vest;
- (d) a person who in the opinion of the Commissioner is not a fit and proper person to own or use a bullet proof vest.

(2) A person aggrieved by the refusal of the Commissioner to grant a certificate of registration may, by petition in writing to the Minister request that the Commissioner is directed to grant the certificate of registration and the Minister may,

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE		<b>REVISED EDITION 2011</b>
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22 <b>[C</b> ]	AP. 143	Firearms
	(a)	approve the request and direct the Commissioner to grant the certificate of registration;
	(b)	decline to interfere with the decision of the Commissioner.
Importation of bul- let proof vest.	any person unless	of vest imported into Belize shall not be delivered to that person satisfies the Comptroller of Customs that egistered under section 20A of this Act.
Sale of bullet proof vest.	sale of bullet proo	r may by Order published in the <i>Gazette</i> , prohibit the of vest within Belize for such time as may be specified only allow the sale thereof within Belize subject to the in such Order.
Penalty for un- authorised pos- session of bullet proof vest.	<b>20E.</b> A person wh <i>(a)</i>	no is found in possession of a bullet proof vest that is, not registered; or

(b) registered but not authorized for use by the person in whose possession it was,

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$500.00.

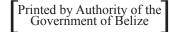
### PART IV

### Search, Arrest and Procedure

Production of li-**21.** Any police officer, or any other person authorised by the Minister, cence. may,

- enter upon any lands for the purpose of requesting *(a)* any person possessing, carrying or using any firearm or ammunition to produce his licence forthwith;
- (b) arrest without a warrant any person possessing, carrying or using firearms or ammunition without

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



a licence as provided by this Act who does not satisfactorily account for the non-production of his licence; and

(c) detain any such firearm or ammunition in his custody until such time as he can produce it with the person arrested before the court of summary jurisdiction of the Belize Judicial District or of the district where the arrest was made.

**22.** Any police officer may arrest without warrant any person whom he believes to be in possession of, or to be using or carrying a firearm or ammunition in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act, and may search that person and, whether arresting him or not, may seize and detain any firearm or ammunition in his possession, or used or carried by him.

**23.**–(1) Any police officer may enter and search all premises of persons suspected of possessing or selling firearms or ammunition otherwise than in accordance with this Act and may enter and search any place, vessel, boat or conveyance in which there is reasonable cause to suspect that any firearms or ammunition is or are concealed or placed in contravention of this Act.

(2) If upon any such search any firearm or ammunition is found and no licence under this Act in respect of such firearm or ammunition is produced the firearm or ammunition may be seized and delivered into the custody of the officer in charge of the nearest police station, pending further proceedings in relation to the offence or until the licence is produced.

**24.**–(1) Any person may hand to an officer in charge of a police station any firearm which has become unserviceable or which such person no longer wishes to retain.

(2) Subject to subsection (3) of this section,

(a) where any firearm has been handed to an officer in charge of a police station under subsection (1) of this section; or

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 

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# 23

Arrest and search of persons suspected of carrying firearms, etc.

[CAP. 143

Power of entry and search.

Safe custody of firearms. 19 of 1966.

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(b) where any firearm has come into the possession of any police officer whether by finding or otherwise and the owner of such firearm is unknown,

the Commissioner of Police may, not less than six months after such firearm has been handed in or come into the possession of the Police, publish an Order in the *Gazette* setting out,

- (*i*) the details of such firearm;
- (ii) the owner's name if known; and
- *(iii)* the date the firearm came into his possession.

(3) The Order mentioned in subsection (2) of this section, shall also state that unless such firearm is claimed within twenty-eight days of the publication of the Order, it will be disposed of in a manner as the Minister may direct, and the Commissioner of Police shall thereafter dispose of it in accordance with the Minister's direction.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection (2) of this section, no such Order shall be published before 1st January, 1967.

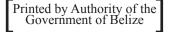
<sup>li-</sup> <sup>ver-</sup> **25.** No suit or other legal proceedings shall be instituted in any court of law against the Government, the Commissioner of Police or any other officer of Government or the Minister in respect of the disposal of any firearm under section 9 (3) or 24 (3) of this Act.

f 26. The Commissioner of Police may in his discretion revoke any licence,
 certificate or permit granted under this Act,

- (a) if, in the case of a licensed gun-dealer, he is convicted of an offence against this Act or of an offence against the Customs Regulation Act, Cap. 49;
- (b) if he is satisfied that the holder thereof is of intemperate habits or of unsound mind, or is otherwise unfit to be entrusted with such firearm or ammunition as may be mentioned in the licence, certificate or permit;

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

#### **REVISED EDITION 2011**



Immunity from liability for dispersal of firearm.

Cancellation of licence and forfeiture of firearm. 18 of 1998.

- if the licence holder is convicted of any crime of violence to the person;
- if the licence holder is convicted under any of the (d)following provisions, namely, paragraphs (xvi), (xxii) and (xxiii) of subsection (1) of section 3, paragraph (xxviii) of subsection (1) of section 4 and section 14 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act, Cap. 98;
- for non-payment of fees; (e)

(c)

- if the licence holder is or becomes a prohibited (f) immigrant for the purposes of the Immigration Act, Cap. 156;
- in any other case, if there is some other fit and proper (g)cause.

27.–(1) The Commissioner by the 31st day of December in each year, Publication cause to be published in the *Gazette* a list of all the licences revoked by es. him under this Act.

(2) The Commissioner shall, immediately on the publication of any such list mentioned in subsection (1) of this Act, strike out from register of licences kept by him under section 10 of this Act, the names of all those persons whose licences have been cancelled, noting in the register the reasons for the cancellation.

28. All offenders under this Act may be prosecuted by any member of the Police Department before the court of Summary Jurisdiction of the judicial district in which the offence was committed.

**29.** Whenever in any prosecution under this Act the defendant claims to be licensed or claims any qualification or exemption from liability, the burden of proving such licence, qualification or exemption shall lie on him.

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of cancelled licenc25

14 of 1982. 9 of 1987.

Prosecution. 9 of 1987. 42 of 1999.

Evidence.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

### PART V

# General Offences and Penalties

Sale to persons intoxicated or of unsound mind.	<b>30.</b> Every person who knowingly sells or delivers any firearm or ammunition to any person who is intoxicated or is not of sound mind is guilty of an offence.
Forging licence or certificate. 9 of 1987.	<b>31.</b> Every person who forges or counterfeits any licence or certificate required by this Act or who knowingly uses any forged licence or certificate is guilty of an offence.

- General penalty. 6 of 2008. **32.**–(1) A person who commits an offence under this Act shall, unless otherwise specially provided, be sentenced to imprisonment on summary conviction as follows,
  - (a) for a first offence, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to five years;
  - (b) for a second or subsequent offence, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to seven years.
- 6 of 2008.
  (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, the Director of Public Prosecutions shall have a discretion to determine whether an offence under this Act shall be prosecuted summarily or on indictment.

6 of 2008. (3) Where the Director of Public Prosecutions determines under subsection (2) of this section that an offence under this Act shall be prosecuted on indictment, any person convicted of such an offence shall, unless otherwise specially provided, be sentenced to imprisonment as follows,

(a) for a first offence, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to seven years;

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

(b) for a second or subsequent offence, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to ten years.

(4) Where it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the convicted person was the holder of a valid firearms licence three months before the commission of the offence but the same had expired and was not renewed due to inadvertence, the court may, instead of imposing the penalties specified in subsection (1) or (3) of this section, impose a fine of not less than five thousand dollars and not more than ten thousand dollars, and in default of payment of such fine, a term of imprisonment of not less than two years and not more than five years.

(5) Where any person is convicted of an offence or of an attempt to commit an offence or of soliciting or inciting the commission of an offence under this Act the court by which such person is convicted shall order that the firearm, the subject of the offence, be forfeited; and any currency whether foreign or Belizean found in his control or possession may be forfeited, if the court is satisfied that the money was intended to be used for an illegal purpose.

(6) Where a person is convicted of an offence or of an attempt to commit an offence or of soliciting or inciting the commission of an offence under this Act and the court by which such person is convicted finds that any vehicle, vessel, aircraft or any other means of conveyance of whatever description was used or employed by such person for transporting or attempting or conspiring to transport any firearms or ammunition which are the subject of the offence of which he is convicted, such vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other means of conveyance of whatever description shall be forfeited.

(7) If, upon the application of any person (other than the accused person) prejudiced by a forfeiture order made under subsection (6) of this section, the court is satisfied that he did not know, believe or suspect nor had reasonable grounds to believe or suspect that any such vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other means of conveyance of whatever description, as the case may be, was being used or employed in the commission or attempted commission of any offence under this Act, the court may upon such terms and conditions (if any) as it thinks fit revoke that order.

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

#### **REVISED EDITION 2011**

[CAP. 143

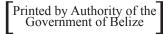
28	[CAP. 143	Firearms
26 of 1992.	of a forfeiture made or within	cation under subsection (7) of this section for the revocation order shall be made either at the time when such order is a thirty days of the date of the order, unless the court for to be recorded in writing, extends such period.
Serving of tences. 6 of 2008.	this Act, the to any other to undergoing fo	court imposes a term of imprisonment for an offence under court shall order that such term shall run consecutively rm of imprisonment which the convicted person may be a previous offence or which may be imposed on him ny other offence, where under this Act or any other law.

# PART VI

# Application of Act

Application of Act 9 of 1987. 26 of 1980. 42 of 1999. 9 of 2011.	<b>33.</b> This Act shall not apply to any person in the Naval, Military, Air or Volunteer Forces of Her Majesty, or in the Police Department, or in the Prison or Revenue Services of Belize keeping, carrying or using a bullet proof vest or any firearms or ammunition in the performance of his duties or when engaged in target practice or going to or returning from any place for such purpose.
Offences of per- sons under 16 years of age.	<b>34.</b> –(1) No person without a written permit from the Commissioner shall carry, keep, use, own or have in his possession any firearm or ammunition.
3 of 1963. 9 of 1987. 36 of 2002.	<ul><li>(2) No person shall sell, lend, give or otherwise dispose of any firearm or ammunition to any person under the age of 16 years.</li><li>(3) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of an offence.</li></ul>
Prohibition of possession, use, etc., of certain firearms. 9 of 1987.	<b>35.</b> –(1) Subject to section 33 of this Act, no person, including a gundealer, shall own, keep, carry, use or have in his possession any firearm or ammunition or other equipment or material of the descriptions set out in the Second Schedule.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

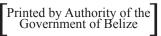


-	7.	
- 14	irearms	
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[CAP. 143

(2) A gun licence or gun-dealer's licence granted to any person in respect of any firearm of the description mentioned in subsection (1) of this section shall be deemed to have been cancelled on and from the date of commencement of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 2002, and such person shall surrender such firearm to the Commissioner within one month of such commencement.		
	who contravenes the provisions of this section is guilty shall be sentenced to imprisonment as follows,	6 of 2008.
(a)	upon summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to seven years;	6 of 1994.
(b)	upon conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than five years but which may extend to ten years.	36 of 2002.
(4) Where any fir under subsection ( based on the marl within a reasonabl	44 of 1999.	
the advice of Cabi	ubject to the directions of the Minister, to be given on inet, no compensation shall be payable if such firearm ntrary to the provisions of this Act or of any other law.	
<b>36.</b> –(1) No person shall, without the previous permission in writing of the Commissioner of Police, in any manner whatsoever add to, alter or with any firearm for which a gun licence or gun-dealer's licence has been granted to him under this Act.		
(2) Any person this section is guil	who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of ty of an offence.	
<b>37.</b> –(1) Every person, other than a licensed gun-dealer, who at the commencement of the Firearms (Amendment) Act, 1987, owns, keeps or has in his possession or control any unrifled shotgun or ammunition suitable for use in such shotgun shall, if he wishes to retain such firearm		

### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



#### Firearms

[CAP. 143

or ammunition, apply to the Commissioner of Police for the grant of a gun licence within one month of such commencement.

(2) Where an application for a gun licence made under subsection of this section (1) of this section, is refused, or where the owner or keeper of such firearm or ammunition does not wish to retain the same, the applicant or such other person, as the case may be, shall forthwith surrender such firearm or ammunition to the Commissioner of Police, or to the officer in charge of the nearest police station who shall hand the same to the Commissioner of Police.

(3) Where any firearm or ammunition has been surrendered under subsection (2) of this section the owner may, within twelve months of such surrender, sell the firearm or ammunition to any person to whom the Commissioner of Police is willing to grant a licence, and upon the grant of such licence, such firearm or ammunition shall be handed to the purchaser.

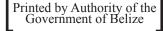
(4) Where any firearm or ammunition which has been surrendered under subsection (2) of has not been sold or this section handed to a purchaser under subsection (3) of this section, such firearm or ammunition may, not less than twelve months after its surrender, be disposed of in a manner as the Minister may direct.

(5) Where any firearm or ammunition is disposed of on the directions of the Minister under subsection (4) of this section, a reasonable compensation therefor, based on the market value of such firearm or ammunition, shall be paid to the owner within a reasonable time,

Provided that no compensation shall be payable if such firearm or ammunition was being kept contrary to the provisions of this Act or of any other law.

Posession of firearm with intent to cause unlawful violence. 18 of 1998. **38.** It is an offence for a person to have in his possession any firearm or imitation firearm with intent by means thereof to cause, or to enable another person by means thereof to cause, any person to believe that unlawful violence will be used against him or another person.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



Firearms

[CAP. 143

**39.**–(1) It is an offence for a person to have with him a firearm or imitation firearm with intent to commit an offence, or to resist arrest or prevent the arrest of another, in either case while he has the firearm or imitation firearm with him.

(2) In proceedings for an offence under this section, proof that the accused had a firearm or imitation firearm with him and intended to commit an offence, or to resist or prevent arrest, is evidence that he intended to have it with him while doing so.

(3) For the purposes of this section and section 38 of this Act, "imitation firearm" means anything which has the appearance of being a firearm whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile.

**40.**–(1) A person shall be guilty of an offence against this Act who discharges any firearm or ammunition on or within forty yards of any public road or any public place, except,

- (a) in the lawful protection of his person or property or of the person or property of some other person; or
- (b) under the direction of some civil or military authority authorized to give such direction; or
- (c) with the permission of the Commissioner of Police; or
- (d) for any other lawful excuse or justification.

(2) Where any person is charged with an offence under subsection (1), of this section the burden of proving that the discharge of the firearm or ammunition in respect of which the contravention is alleged to have occurred was lawful within the meaning of paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of this section, shall lie on the person asserting the same.

**41.**-(1) No person shall manufacture or assemble any firearm or ammunition, or keep any equipment or paraphenalia capable of use for the making or assembling of firearms or ammunition, without a licence granted by the Commissioner of Police.

Prohibition against manufacture of firearms or ammunition. 18 of 1998.

# THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE REVISED EDITION 2011

Printed by Authority of the Government of Belize Possession of firearms with criminal intent. 18 of 1998.

Discharging firearm in public. 18 of 1998. (2) Every person who contravenes subsection (1) of this section is guilty of an offence.

Possession of firearm while under the influence of alcohol, etc. 44 of 1999. **42.**–(1) Subject to subsection (2) of this section, it is an offence for a person to have in his possession any firearm or ammunition while such person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol above the prescribed limit.

(2) Where a person is charged with an offence under subsection (1) of this section, it will be a defence for him to adduce evidence to show that the firearm was carried in the case of extreme necessity.

(3) For the purpose of this section, the words "drugs", and "prescribed limit" shall have the meaning assigned to each of them by section 74G of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Cap. 230.

(4) The provisions of sections 74C and 74E(3) and (4) of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Cap. 230 shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the provision of a specimen of blood or urine for a laboratory test under this section by an accused person to determine the proportion of any drug or alcohol in a specimen of blood or urine provided by the accused person.

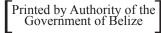
Restriction on carrying of firearms in certain circumstances. 44 of 1999.

Regulations. 44 of 1999. **43.** The Minister may, on the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police, by Regulations made under this Act, restrict the carrying of firearms, including the carrying of firearms by licence holders, in places of public entertainment or public functions, where he is satisfied that the carrying of firearms in such circumstances may result in a breach of the peace.

**44.** The Minister may make Regulations to give better effect to the provisions of this Act, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, such Regulations may provide for,

- (a) the establishment of a forensic firearms identification system and the functions of that system;
- (b) the requirement that all persons applying for gun licences should pass a proficiency firearms test;

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



- (c) the requirement that all persons granted gun licences should deposit with the Firearms Examiner testfired ammunition, bullets and cartridges and other information regarding the identification of their firearms;
- (d) restricting the carrying of firearms, including the carrying of firearms by licence holders, in places of public entertainment or public functions; and
- (e) any other matters necessary to give full effect to the provisions of this Act.

**45.** The Minister may from time to time, after consultation with the Commissioner, amend any of the Schedules by Order published in the Gazette.

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of

# FIRST SCHEDULE<sup>2</sup>

FORM 1

# FIREARMS ACT Firearms Gun Licences [Section 3]

### NOT TRANSFERABLE

Licence No.

District.

(a)

having paid the sum of.....is hereby licensed under the Firearms Act, Cap. 143, to keep the following firearms and ammunition, namely:-

(b)

until the 31st December, 20.....

DATED this..... day of..... 20.....

Commissioner of Police.

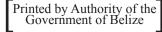
(a) Full name, description and address

------

(b) Number and description of firearms and quantity and description of ammunition.

<sup>2</sup> This schedule was amended by Acts Nos. 14 of 1982, 9 of 1987 and No. 36 of 2002

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



### FORM 2

# FIREARMS ACT Firearms Gun-Dealers Licences [Section 4]

### NOT TRANSFERABLE

Licence No.

District

*(a)* 

having paid the sum of..... is hereby licensed to deal in firearms and ammunition and to trade as a licensed gun-dealer under the provisions of the Firearms Act, Cap. 143 at his premises in

(b) until the 31st December, 20.....

DATED this.....day of .....20....

Commissioner of Police.

(a) Full name, description and address.

(b) Address of business premises.

\_\_\_\_\_

### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 

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# [CAP. 143

Firearms

# FORM 3

# FIREARMS ACT Register of Firearms Licences [Section 10]

Name	Address	Description	Number
Receipt No.			
		Of Licence	of firearm
and date,			
Year 20			

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

FORM 4<sup>3</sup>

### FIREARMS ACT

Shooting Club/ Shooting Ranges Licence [Section 3]

### NOT TRANSFERABLE

Licence No..... District.....

*(a)* .....

Having paid the sum of.....is hereby licenced to conduct the business of a shooting club/shooting range under the provisions of the Firearms Act, Cap. 143 at his premises in.....

*(b)*.....

Until the 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 20.....

Dated this.....day of.....20.....

Fee\$.....

Commissioner of Police

-----

(a) Full name, description and address.

(b) Address of business premises.

#### THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 

[CAP. 143

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This Form was inserted by Act No. 3 of 2007

Firearms

FORM 4<sup>4</sup>

# FIREARMS ACT Firearms Safety Instructor Licence [Section 3]

### NOT TRANSFERABLE

Licence No.....

District.....

Full Name
Description
Address,

is hereby licenced under the provisions of the Firearms Act, Cap. 143, as a Firearms Safety Instructor until the expiration of this Licence.

Dated this.....day of.....20....

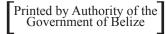
Fees \$.....

.....

Commissioner of Police.

<sup>4</sup> This Form was inserted by Act No. 3 of 2007

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



### FORM 5

FIREARMS ACT Certificate of Registration of Bullet Proof Vest [Section 20A(4)]

Certificate No	District
Name	of
	(Address)

having paid the sum of \_\_\_\_\_\_ is hereby registered under the Firearms Act,

to Purchase  $\Box$  Own  $\Box$  the following bullet proof vest:

(Description and quantity of bullet proof vest)

(Description and quantity of bullet proof vest)

and declared that the bullet proof vest will be used by the following persons:

(Full name and address of persons who will be using bullet proof vest if applicable)

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20

Commissioner of Police

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE

**REVISED EDITION 2011** 

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# SECOND SCHEDULE<sup>5</sup>

# FIREARMS ACT Prohibited Firearms [Section 35]

# RIFLES

- 1. Rifles of calibre greater than 7.62 mm or 0.30 inch.
- 2. All Assault Rifles.
- 3. Machine Guns of any calibre.
- 4. Rifles designed or adapted to have bayonet affixed.
- 5. Sawed-off Rifles of any type.
- 6. Rifle that is a replica of or designed for security forces in Belize.

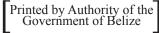
# SHOT GUNS

- S.I. 25 of 2011. 7. Shot guns of barrel length 18 inches or under.
  - 8. Rifled shot guns.

# HAND GUNS

- 9. Hands Guns of calibre greater than 9 mm or 0.38 inch.
- 10. All firearms chambered for Magnum Cartridges, except for .22 inch or 5.6 mm.
- 11. Home made firearm of any type or caliber.

# THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS OF BELIZE



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This Schedule was substituted by Statutory Instrument. 70 of 2008 and amended by Statutory Instrument. 90 of 2008, and Statutory Instrument. 25 of 2011.

[CAP. 143

- 22 pen guns. S.I. 25 of 2011.
- 13. Any altered handgun to make it semi or fully automatic.

# **OTHERS**

12.

- 14. All types of Firearm Sound Suppressors.
- 15. Extended magazines for handguns.
- 16. *Deleted*.

S.I. 25 of 2011.

- 17. Any armour-piercing ammunition of any caliber.
- 18. Any equipment, material or accessories to be used in recharging of any expended ammunition or light weapon casing.