

# Field Guides and firearms

By Bob Nixon

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We are receiving several queries relating to firearm ownership as well as the legalities for Field Guides. I hope to address some of these issues, but request that if they are not all answered you contact us with your questions.

I have written this article in heading form as I feel that even though this subject has been previously addressed in a Newsletter, many have not read it!

## What is the difference between Proficiency and Competency?

A Proficiency certificate is issued by a Training Provider on completion of a Unit Standard course for which they are registered to conduct. Most of these have a theoretical and practical component.

A Competency certificate is issued by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and requires that the relevant Proficiency certificates (prescribed training and practical tests) have been completed by an Accredited Training Provider. Copies of these certificates must be attached to the application form (SAPS E517).

## What are the legal requirements for Field Guides?

FGASA has recently implemented a basic requirement that all three of the following Unit Standards MUST be present before an Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH) assessment may be carried out.

- Unit Standard 117705 – Knowledge of the Firearms Control Act
- Unit Standard 119651 – Handle and use a Manually Operated Rifle or Carbine
- Unit Standard 123519 – Handle and use a Manually Operated Rifle or Carbine for Business Purposes

Note that these Unit Standards are in order and ALL THREE MUST be completed!

**WARNING:** There are certain Training Providers who simply skip 119651 and only do the first and the third. THIS IS ILLEGAL!

## What are the legal requirements for working at a Lodge and being issued a rifle?

If you are issued a rifle by a Lodge, you MUST have the Business Purposes Unit Standard (123519). The Lodge can be held responsible if it issues a Field Guide a rifle and they are not in possession of the Business Purposes Unit Standard.

This Unit Standard is in place when you use a rifle “in the course of business”.

## What are the legal requirements for the Lodge?

The Lodge is required to maintain the five required Registers namely

- Issue register
- Rifle Register
- Ammunition Register
- Maintenance Register
- Shooting Register

And finally a Permit, which is valid for 72 hours and is issued to every person who carries a weapon licensed in the name of the Lodge. This Permit **MUST** be carried by the person to whom it is issued.

## **Can I use a personal rifle at a Lodge?**

1. The Lodge is quite entitled to refuse this request. They may feel that the calibre you have is different to that generally used at the Lodge. You should only be using factory ammunition and they should supply that.
2. If you are not in possession of the Business Purposes Unit Standard, you **MAY NOT** use your rifle at the Lodge. You also may **NOT** be issued one of their rifles – as above!

## **Can I be involved in anti-poaching?**

To be involved in anti-poaching you would require the Business Purposes Proficiency and also be a Member of Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA). This is to ensure that any incidents are managed by a qualified security individual who is specifically trained in these.

**NOTE:** As a Field Guide you are quite entitled to protect your life or your guests if you are under fire from poachers. Make sure that you use your firearm as the last resort and only if you have no other method of protection (e.g. vehicle, building etc) !

## **Must I have a Competency Certificate?**

A Competency Certificate, issued by the South African Police Services (SAPS) is **ONLY** required if you will purchase your own firearm! This is simply because only South African citizens or Permanent Residents may own firearms in South Africa.

If an overseas person becomes a qualified Field Guide, they simply require the Proficiency Certificates (as above) issued by an Accredited Training Provider.

A Competency Certificate **ONLY** adds a background criminal check by the SAPS! It is possible that this could be required by Lodge's, of their South African employees! That is the Lodge's prerogative!

A Competency certificate can expire.

## **Can I get a Business Competency certificate?**

No, there is only a Competency certificate to possess a specific type of firearm. The other Competency Certificates are for a Dealer, Gunsmith or to Manufacture firearms

## **What is a Statement of Results (SoR)?**

This is a document (certificate) issued by Accredited Training Providers which indicates that the Unit Standards and the relevant manual numbers have been registered with the South African Professional Firearm Trainers Council (PFTC).

This was implemented by the SAPS on 6 March 2015 in a directive to all Designated Firearm Officers (DFO's) to ensure that training providers are registered with PFTC - (who have now replaced SASSETA).

***PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU OBTAIN A STATEMENT OF RESULTS FOR ALL UNIT STANDARDS YOU DO WITH A TRAINING PROVIDER!***

## **How can I check if my Proficiency Certificates are valid?**

1. You can contact PFTC (011 664 8655) and ask them to confirm if a Training Provider is registered with them.
2. You can check the PFTC website ([www.pftc.co.za](http://www.pftc.co.za)) and select one of the following:
  - a. Verify the validity of a Statement of Results
  - b. Report a complaint or irregularity
  - c. Obtain a list of Accredited Training Providers

## **Do Proficiency Certificates expire?**

The simple answer is "NO"!

Any Training Provider who issues a certificate with an expiry date, should immediately be reported to PFTC. They will take up the matter with the Training Provider.

A Proficiency Certificate issued for any Unit Standard is the same as a Matric Certificate or Degree – it never expires! It is simply a qualification, and is registered with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) once and once only!

## **Contact details**

Our contact details are 063 236 9347 or [admin@fimase.co.za](mailto:admin@fimase.co.za)