

## How To

### Travel interstate and overseas for Hunting.

With Hunters today increasingly finding new areas to hunt outside of their safe haven in Australia, it is becoming more difficult sorting out the paperwork both for travel with a firearm and Ammunition and also returning with Trophies and souvenirs.

Overseas travel has changed dramatically in the past 5 years since 9/11 and the Iraq War. Hunters wishing to travel with Firearms today must endure a swage of paperwork both in Australia and on arrival at most destinations.

In this How To article we shall endeavour to take you through the Travel steps

#### 1. Travelling within Australia with Firearm/s & Ammunition, paper work and timing.

- You must have a Firearms License in the State you reside to own or travel with either a firearm, parts there of or Ammunition.
- Allow a minimum of 2 weeks interstate and if possible 4 weeks for overseas to organise your travel paperwork.
- Airlines have procedures for passengers travelling with firearms, check with them in advance to organise a request to transport your firearm, you will be given paperwork to complete, you will need this paperwork when you arrive at the Airport, without this paperwork you will be delayed and some hunters have had firearms put on a different flight (Cargo) which has in turn delayed there hunt.
- There is a treaty between States in Australia for firearms owners that can use there State of origin License for a short stay however laws change and you should check by phoning the local firearms registry in the State you intend to travel to, to be sure of the correct requirement. Some States also have a requirement for you to purchase a Hunting license, see How To Get a Hunting Licence.
- In NSW for instance firearms need to be locked and in some way attached to the vehicle if you are not in attendance, some owners have been fined for this particularly at Clay Pigeon ranges when guns are left in the vehicle.

#### 2. Travelling outside of Australia with Firearm/s & Ammunition, paper work and timing.

- When travelling overseas with a firearm you will require a **B709A** (*Importation of Firearms Police Confirmation and Certification*) form and an RGP (*Restricted Goods Permit*), these form are available from Customs, down loaded from there Web Site, faxed to you or posted, the B709A form is to be filled out and then either faxed, scanned and E-mailed or posted with a photocopy of your Firearms licence to the firearms registry in your state. This form will be verified and returned to you signed and stamped by the State Police with an expiry date which will be shortly after your date of return to Australia.

- You must answer every question on these forms including information on qty of ammunition, if the firearm has telescopic sites etc, and serial numbers.
- When you receive your copy of the B709A form back from the police you must then fill out your Restricted Goods Export Permit also downloadable from the Customs Web site, when complete you can E-mail all documents scanned or Fax the documents to Customs. In NSW all forms will be sent to Customs House, there is a small fee for handling, check that you supply credit card details before posting.
- The alternative to the above is to take the documents to Customs House at the Airport opposite the International Terminal, Ground Floor, they will process the forms while you wait.
- ***Make sure you keep these documents with you at all times when in transit, particularly your B 709, will be required on re entry back into Australia. Also check carefully that the serial number on your rifle matches the form.***

### **3. Safe storage and packing of Firearms and Ammunition in accompanied baggage.**

- Your firearm and ammunition will not be permitted to travel with you as unaccompanied baggage (in the hole of the Aircraft) unless you provide evidence that it is safe, here are a few clues.
- Carry your firearm separate to your bolt and Ammunition
- Your Firearm should be in a strong lockable case, aluminium, Duralite it doesn't matter, ***don't tape the case up***, you can ask the Airline staff to do this after you have checked your bags in.
- Carry your Ammunition in the manufacturer's container, generally cardboard sectionalised boxes of 20, tape the ends, ***and don't use plastic ammo cases***. I then place the Ammo into a steel lockable case, a typical change or petty cash tin works well for this.
- Your bolt should be stored in a strong leather or heavy material pouch also in you suitcase. ***Do not carry any firearm parts or ammunition in your carry on bags***

### **4. Expectations on departure and arrival back into Australia**

#### **Departure**

- You will be required to check your rifle into Customs at the Airport prior to checking in your baggage, here Customs will verify the serial number on the paperwork corresponds with the rifle you are checking in and your Export dangerous goods and B709 forms have been processed correctly, they will also take copies of the forms for their records, from here you proceed to the Airline check in counter.
- When you approach the check in counter have your export paperwork and Airline permission documents ready with your ticket, Passport and baggage keys.

- ***Do not put your bags carrying a Firearm, bolt or ammunition on the belt until you have explained to the check in steward that you are checking in a firearm and ammunition otherwise they may end up on the baggage handling system without a dangerous goods tag.***
- The check in steward may ask you for your Airline permission documents and wish to check the goods prior to loading, this is normal practice, if acceptable your bag will be tagged with the usual international bar coded ticket and if you haven't already done so you will be asked to fill out a dangerous goods label that will then be fixed to any bag carrying a firearm, parts or ammunition, you will be asked to take the firearm and sometimes your luggage to the fragile and oversized baggage belt where the security guard will have the baggage hand delivered to the aircraft hole.

### **Arrival**

- When departing the country you have visited you may or may not go through the same procedure as when you departed Australia so be ready with the same documents and knowledge.
- On arrival back into Australia your firearm will most likely come out via the oversized or fragile baggage counter, most times you will simply pick up the goods and proceed to the Customs and Quarantine, the guard at the counter may ask for proof of ownership, that's fine at least they are looking after it.
- You have obviously filled out your Customs and Quarantine declaration forms on the plane during transit and you will be required to proceed to the Red counter where inspection of your goods and paperwork will be required. You will need to have your B709 form with you together with your passport and keys. My experience is that the procedure is generally well rehearsed, the serial number of your firearm is checked against the B709 form and providing you have no other items to declare including for Quarantine inspection you will proceed out of the terminal like all other passengers.
- ***Tip, I always keep a second copy of my documents in a separate bag just in case one of my bags goes missing, regardless, Customs should have copies and records of your documents***

### **5. Paperwork and expectations on arrival at an overseas country with a firearm.**

- Whether you have booked with an outfitter or are travelling to your hunting destination self guided as you may in New Zealand I believe it is essential to understand the firearm and hunting regulations of that country, you can generally find this information either on the Web or contact the Council General for that country to have them send you details. Most professional guides will already have documents sent to you to fill out; if not make sure you do this prior to your departure. Hunters have been known to be questioned, have their firearms confiscated or worse still be locked in jail at the terminal on entry because they did not have appropriate documentation on arrival expecting the outfitter to have arranged this with the authorities.

- **Tip, do not leave the Airport you have arrived at without checking with the Airport police, all countries have strict guidelines when entering with a firearm, to leave the Airport without documentation checks and an authority to possess a firearm in that country is suicidal, I have personally witnessed this happen and it cost the hunters dearly to pay there way out of it, a fine of a \$1000 US each?**

#### **6. Other items carried with you or in your luggage that may cause problems when departing or re entry both into Australia and overseas Countries**

- Those hunters carrying Bows and Arrows will find restrictions have started because of the sharp objects ban and the fact that they are classified as weapons; check with the Airline before you travel you may be surprised that some Airlines will require you to declare your equipment prior to boarding.
- All knives must be sheaved or locked closed when in your luggage; you are obviously not permitted to carry sharp objects onto the Aircraft in your carry on bags. This goes for pen knives, letter openers, sharp combs, box cutters etc
- You are also not permitted to carry any type of fuel in any of your luggage, Cigarette lighters, stove fuel both Gas and liquid fuel is not permitted, check with your guide or country of destination if they have stores that stock gas containers or fuel if you are back packing or going alone and will be doing your own cooking.
- Some Hunters will often take chemicals with them particularly if you do your own taxidermy for small animals, birds or fish. Chemicals like Formalin, Formaldehyde used to inject into feet and wings, Latex mixtures for death masks are all toxic and generally prohibited from travelling on passenger airlines. Carried in the correct container some items like salt may be permitted.
- Pressure packs of any kind as in containing gun oil are not permitted, I generally carry an oil soaked Chamois cloth, this is compact and light. Tin and plastic non pressure oil containers are OK.
- I may be preaching to the converted here but be very careful when carrying personal medication, drugs and Alcohol into some countries, both of these items may not be permitted without prior approval. Small qtys are generally OK if labelled with the content and your name.

#### **7. Care of Equipment and Trophies for transport back with you as luggage**

- Australia is the lucky country and has been mainly free from some major pests and diseases, our Quarantine laws are as strict as any in the World to keep our country that way. We all have a duty to Farmers and general public alike to take care when returning from exotic countries. Hunters are particularly at risk of transmitting bugs and unwanted pests.
- Preparation of Trophies and a bit of homework prior to you returning back to Australia will save you a lot of heart ache and could prevent the loss of those trophies you worked so hard for not to mention the cost.

- The two areas you will be checked for when returning to Australia will be clothing, Boots and Trophies and souvenirs. Clothing and boots are simple take time to wash muddy clothing and de'bur wool and polar fleece, scrub all dirt from boots and if possible spray them with disinfectant prior to leaving the country you were hunting.
- Trophies are a different story, there is no country that is immune from Australian Quarantine and protection under the CITES, (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) laws, yes even New Zealand. For importation of any animal and Biological material into Australia you must have the material inspected and you must have paperwork in the form of Veterinary certification, country of origin wildlife hunting permits and a completed game tag. Yes I know, some one says oh my mate had no problem, he brought a set of horns in from Asia, they were inspected and he went straight through, no paperwork.
- It is true that some Trophies are passed through the Airport and there are no questions asked, this is of course at the discretion of the officers at the gate however there are the other stories, not so well publicised (due to the embarrassment of losing a hard earned and costly trophy) where hunters have had antlers and capes, from NZ of all places, confiscated due to not taking the time or knowing that they need Vet and DOC certification for legal entry of biological material into Australia. And worse still because they didn't understand the laws, those trophies were destroyed.

These are the **Tips** for bringing back trophies into Australia.

- Contact a class 3 QAP Quarantine Approved Premises owner prior to your hunt, I know of only two, Gary Pegg Vic or Mel Burton Qld, they are both Taxidermists and have the licence to take delivery and process Trophies. Only QAP owners are permitted to take delivery of these goods into Australia, you may get away with a letter from either of these QAP owners that they will take delivery of the goods on your arrival at the Airport, this won't happen in NSW because there is no QAP here for taking delivery of Trophies. To bring Trophies through as baggage is now extremely risky.
- Contact your guide/outfitter and be sure he has the facility to salt down, dry skins and boil out skulls. If you are not satisfied with his response and you must hunt with this outfit make sure you take some items like salt and fleshing knives to carry out the job. Encourage your outfitter to provide for salt drying with clean coarse cooking salt or similar not table salt. Reputable outfitters are very well organised and generally the charge for this is modest, be sure to check if there is a cost for preparation and boxing prior to shipping.
- If you do not skin or prepare the trophies yourself in camp keep an eye on those that do, taking short cuts like leaving meat and fat on skins prior to salting and not scraping meat and tissue from skulls will make the importation more difficult and cause Taxidermy problems.
- Some countries like NZ, South Africa and United States have treaties with Australia on Quarantine Laws and have QAP places there that will ensure and certify that the goods were treated to Australian Quarantine standards prior to leaving that country, in this case you can have your Trophies sent by normal means through an approved Customs Clearance Company, they

will handle the paperwork and clear the goods, this is how other items like furniture and tanned skins are imported. Your outfitter can check this for you in his own country.

- There is a growing trend towards having skins and capes tanned in the country of origin, this seems to work OK as long as you use a reputable dealer, the same companies will also bleach the skulls and fumigate the horns.
- The alternative of course to all of this is to have your Trophies mounted in the country they were collected, this is not always possible of course in some areas like in Asia and some African Countries, however it is an alternative and has worked well for some Trophy Hunters. Tanned and mounted Trophies still require vet certification and some form of Gvt Environment certification from the country of origin.
- To bring any animal product or biological specimens into Australia may also require you to fill out an approved import permit for Biological materials, through AQIS. There are standard forms for this however the safest and cheapest way is to process these through an approved customs clearance group. AQIS charge a considerable fee for each species to process, \$120 each. If you have all of your CITIS documents and country of origin permits with the common and scientific names listed on accompanying paperwork stamped or approved by a Veterinary professional from the country of origin you should not have too many problems bringing the goods in.
- Endangered Species? Elephant, Lion, Leopard, Rhino and many other Trophies around the world are listed on the CITIS list, there are three general categories of Animals on CITIS, some species are less threatened and permitted into Australia, others you can receive permits from Customs to import. Check with your outfitter or if necessary check the CITIS web site listed below to be sure of these restrictions. Even with less threatened species, if they are on the list you will need a CITIS certificate from the country of origin and you should check with Customs for information on importing any endangered species into Australia. Every country has different rules on this so check prior to importing.

**8. What is the latest requirements by Australian Quarantine (AQIS) The NSW police Firearms Registry, Australian Airlines and Customs, click on the sites below for further information**

- We have listed the Web sites for those departments and some other helpful organisations that you should browse to keep up with the latest changes to rules and Regs on the subjects above, I know it all seems daunting and problematic but it could save you from a ruined hunt or confiscation of your goods one day.
- The New South Wales Deerstalkers has generated this information as a guide Current as of Dec 2005 you should check with your outfitter and Government Departments prior to making decisions on any of these topics. All of the regulations surrounding this information are in continuous change keep these web sites as favourites if you intend to travel a lot.