



Matsuri Safaris

Quality Hunting safaris in Limpopo, South Africa

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Importing a Firearm into South Africa

Visitors bringing firearms into South Africa for hunting purposes, will be asked to fill in a SAP 520 – Temporary Import Application which can be downloaded here ([download SAP 520 Form](#)), or which can be filled out on arrival. We would suggest filling in the form beforehand.

Instructions for Filling in SAP 520 Form

1. Black ink must be used to fill in the form.
2. The form must be left **unsigned** until the document is finalized in front of the police official issuing the actual permit.
3. Please note that not all sections of the form apply. Visitors bringing their own firearms in for hunting purposes should concentrate on filling in the following:
Section D – (temporary import or export permit)
Section E – 1 – 25.4
Section G
Section I – (Must fill in all details requested)
Section J - (remember do not sign until in front of police officer at firearm office)

Additional Requirements along with the SAP 520 are the following:

1. **Identity and Flight Details**
 - a. Passport
 - b. Return Airline Ticket/Travel Itinerary
2. **Other Supporting Documentation**
 - a. **Proof of Ownership**
Firearm licenses, documentary proof, etc. For USA Citizens, Customs Declaration Form 4457 (officially stamped) is acceptable
 - b. **Proof of Export**
Documentary proof of export from the country of origin.
U.S. Citizens see “a” above.
 - c. **Invitation Letter from the Hunting Outfitter**

Firearms will be physically inspected to ensure the serial number(s) match those of the licenses (proof of ownership) and the application form. Ammunition will also be inspected.

For visitors clearing customs at the Johannesburg International Airport, please take note of the following procedure to be followed on arrival:

1. Clear passport control in the Terminal where your flight arrives (generally SAA and its co-partners at Terminal 2 and all other airlines at Terminal 1).
2. Proceed to baggage claim at the respective carousel. Pick up general baggage, then proceed to the respective Airline Help Desk to pick up firearm/s from the airline company and sign a receipt for the firearm/s. Ask the Airline Help Desk to direct you to the South African Police Firearm Office. Depending on the terminal where you arrive, they may need to escort you to the Office.
3. Proceed to the South African Police Firearm Office (Do not at this point proceed to customs)
4. On receipt of the temporary import permit at the SAPS Firearm Office, proceed to Customs, the Red Zone, where you declare the firearm/s and finish other custom clearance procedures.

For those visitors clearing customs at any of the other international points of entry, please take note of the relevant information made above which relates to documentation requirements, etc.

Please insure sufficient time is allowed to go through the temporary importation process and to clear customs. During the busy periods of the hunting season, particularly end of May through August, up to seventy clients may be needing permits at the same time. We would therefore recommend at least five (5) hours be set aside for this procedure and between connecting flights.

Firearm / Ammunition Allowances and Specifications

1. No more than one firearm per calibre and 200 rounds per firearm will be permitted. No ammunition for other rifle calibres will be permitted.

An exception to this may apply for shotguns where more than one of the same calibre may be allowed for bird hunting purposes if the client produces on arrival at the SAPS Gun Office an acceptable written motivation as to why more than one is required.

2. Firearms must bear the manufacturer's serial number or any other mark by which the firearm can be identified. The identification number must be stamped and the mark affixed in the prescribed manner on the barrel or the frame or the receiver of the firearm.
3. **Handguns** will be allowed into the country, but **only for hunting purposes**. Any visitor wanting to bring in a handgun in this regard needs to write a letter of intent, stating the handgun will be used for hunting purposes. **See No. 5 for more details.**

4. **Prohibited** firearms which may **NOT** be imported into South Africa include:
 - a. Any fully automatic weapon
 - b. Any semi-automatic weapon
 - c. Handgun/s for self-defense
 - d. Weapons which fall under military categories
5. **Handguns and semi-automatics** will be allowed into the country, but only for **hunting purposes**. Any visitor wanting to bring a handgun or semi-automatic shotgun must submit with their SAPS 520 a letter of intent, stating the handgun will be used only for hunting purposes. All applications for the import of handguns or semi-automatic rifles or shotguns must be submitted at least 21 days before arrival to the Central Firearms

Control Register for consideration. Contact details are: The Head Central Firearms Register, Private Bag X 811, Pretoria, South Africa 0001. Fax: 011-27-012-3536041. E-Mail: cfr.imports@saps.org.za.

General Provisions:

1. Temporary Import Permits:
 - a.. May only be issued to a foreign visitor for the purpose of hunting
 - b. Will be issued subject to the requirements of the Act with regard to the carrying, storage, safe custody and transport of a firearm and ammunition
 - c. Subject to the use of the firearm only for the purpose set out in the permit
 - d. Subject to the fact that no person who holds a temporary import permit is allowed to transfer the firearm to another person in South Africa without prior written permission having been obtained from the Central Firearm Register.
 - e. Whenever the holder of a temporary import permit leaves the Republic of South Africa, the firearm in respect of which the permit is issued must accompany the holder of the permit
 - f. Possession of no more than the quantity of cartridges determined by the Registrar and specified on the permit for each firearm in respect of which the temporary import permit applies
 - g. A Temporary Import Permit shall not be issued for a period exceeding six months at a time
 - h. Applicant must be **21** or over
 - i. Should a firearm not be declared on arrival and a temporary import permit not issued, you will face severe penalties and possible arrest on departure from South Africa.
2. Applications for Temporary Import Permits can be made in advance to the Central Firearm Register. Ask your Hunting Outfitter to assist you in this regard, or contact the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (www.phasa.co.za).
3. Please ensure that your firearm/s arrive on the same flight as you do. This must be done with the airline company on departure. Your firearm/s may only be signed for by you and **will not** be released to your outfitter or professional hunter should it/they arrive on a separate flight. If the firearm/s do not arrive with the passenger, the passenger must proceed to his final destination in South Africa and apply at the closest Police Station for a Temporary Import Permit. When the Temporary Import Permit has been issued, the original permit with the keys to the rifle case must be couriered to the Border Post of entry. A Transport Agent with transport permit must be appointed by the passenger. This Transport Agent must have a letter from the passenger instructing him/her to transport the firearm/s to the passenger in person. The firearm/s will be inspected by the Police at the Port of entry and the firearm/s and permit will be handed to the transporter to be transported to the passenger.
4. Please do not pay for any service regarding the handling of firearms at Johannesburg International Airport, or any port of entry. The issuing of the SAP 520 is a **free service** and the South African Police Service asks clients not to pay anybody involved in handling firearms from the time of arrival in South Africa right through until you receive your firearm/s and the permit from the SAPS. Clients that are paying the various airline staff, security staff, or porters involved are actually creating a problem. Please note however there is a handling fee charged by airlines and/or security companies for the handling of handguns, and some airlines have started charging a handling fee for all firearms. We suggest checking with your airline with regard to any "official" fees that may be required.

5. There is **no** permit required, nor any charge by the South African Police Service for **abow**. Handling fees are charged by airline and/or security companies for **bows and handguns**.
6. **If your application for a temporary import permit is refused your firearms and ammunition will be confiscated and returned upon your departure to your country of residence.**

In Transit Passengers (Transiting South Africa)

It is **critical** that you check with and confirm with the airline/s involved before departure to make sure what their procedure is for the transfer of baggage and/or firearms.

If the airline does transfer your baggage/firearms, and you have booked them through to the final destination, and you stay in the in-transit area and do not clear South African customs, then you need not go through the temporary import process.

If your airline company will not transfer your baggage/guns to your connecting airline/flight, then you must collect your baggage/firearm/s and go through the entire entry process. If this is the case, the South African limitations, requirements, etc. will apply.

This also applies if you are overnighing in South Africa before flying on to your country of destination.