

Gun and Knife Law Fact Sheet (1.d, 1.e, 1.f)

1d. Law fact sheet - knives

Why carry a knife?

Statistically you're more likely to be wounded if you're carrying a knife.

- In the UK it isn't illegal to own a knife, but used in a threatening way, any knife becomes an offensive weapon.
- However the law has decided that flick knives, butterfly knives and disguised knives are prohibited and totally illegal.
- New guidelines for police brought in June 2008 mean that anyone aged 16 or over who carries a knife can be prosecuted.
- It's illegal to buy any knife if you're under 18
- It's an offence to carry any knife in a public place.
 - An exception to this would be a penknife where the blade is less than 3.5 inches and can be folded in and out of the handle without locking
 - Also it's legal to have a knife in public if you need it for your work (e.g. if you're a chef or a carpenter), if you have it for religious reasons (i.e. a Sikh kirpan), or part of a national costume - Scottish 'skean duh' knife
- If caught, you could face two year's imprisonment and a £5,000 fine.
- The maximum sentence for carrying a knife has increased from 2 years to 4 years.
- If you injure someone or use a knife to commit a crime the penalties could be far worse.

1d. Scenario

Your friend has told you that he/she carries a kitchen knife with a six inch blade and has told you not to tell anyone else.

1. How would you feel knowing this information?
2. Would you share this information with anybody?
3. How would you respond to your friend?

1e. Law Fact Sheet - Guns

Why carry a gun?

In the UK, the laws on guns are strict and they're getting tougher. Never carry a gun or knife 'just in case'. If the police find them, you'll be in trouble. And statistically you're more likely to be shot if you're carrying a gun.

The law on guns

- You need a licence to own a gun - there are strict restrictions on getting one.
- Two adults must vouch to the police that you're responsible enough to own a gun.
- If you're aged 14-17 you can use an airgun, which is a gun that does not use bullets, at a gun club or on private property if you have permission.
- If you're over 17 you can buy airguns and ammunition as long as the gun is under the UK legal limit of 12ft.lbs muzzle energy for rifles and 6ft.lbs muzzle energy for pistols.

1e. Scenario

You are at your friend's house and they tell you that they have a shotgun in a cupboard under the stairs.

- 1. How would you feel knowing this information?**
- 2. Would you share this information with anybody?**
- 3. How would you respond to your friend?**

1f. Law Fact Sheet - Other weapons

Why carry other items as weapons?

It's obvious that guns and knives are offensive weapons, but what about other items? In much the same way as a knife or gun might be turned on you the same applies to any other implement used as a weapon. If you play pool and use a cue to assault someone the cue becomes an offensive weapon. It's as simple as this - any item that you use to cause injury is considered a weapon.

If you are stopped by police while carrying something fitting that description, be it a plank of wood, a baseball bat or whatever, it will be up to you to prove that you don't intend to use it to cause harm.

- Claiming that you're carrying a weapon in public for someone else is no excuse.
- Should you be arrested, and found guilty of carrying an offensive weapon in public, you could face a fine, imprisonment, or both.
- If you're found guilty of grievous bodily harm you could face life imprisonment.
- If you're found guilty of manslaughter, attempted murder or murder, your punishment could also be life imprisonment.

1f. Scenario C

Your friend has told you that he has been given a snooker ball in a sock by a friend to look after.

1. **How would you feel knowing this information?**
2. **Would you share this information with anybody?**
3. **How would you respond to your friend?**