

22. Security and Protection

22.1 Inviolability of Diplomatic Premises

The diplomatic premises of a mission in New Zealand are inviolable in accordance with the provisions of the VCDR. The parts of the consular premises that are used exclusively for the consular function also enjoy limited inviolability as per the VCCR. This does not mean, however, that such premises are sovereign territory of the sending state – a common misapprehension. Any representative of the New Zealand authorities, including the Police, must have the express permission of the Heads of Mission/Post to enter diplomatic/consular premises. Heads of Mission are expected to permit access to premises expeditiously in exceptional circumstances, for instance, in the event of emergency such as fire, a civil disaster, a terrorist threat or similar occurrence. Heads of Post's consent is assumed in such emergencies. In all cases, the relevant New Zealand authorities will act in close consultation with the Heads of Mission/Post, taking account of VCDR/VCCR provisions.

Missions and posts should themselves take appropriate measures to ensure their chanceries and staff houses are adequately protected against fire, burglary and other standard risks.

22.2 Police Protection Services

New Zealand's responsibility to ensure the security and protection of diplomatic/consular premises is discharged by Protection Services of the New Zealand Police. The Protection Services maintains regular contact with each mission/post, and the Inspector in Charge and his/her staff are available to discuss both specific and general security concerns with senior members of any mission/post.

22.3 Protection of Personnel and Premises

Should a mission or post have a reason to believe that the security, peace or dignity of the mission, post, or one of its personnel is likely to come under threat, the mission or post should inform Protocol Division and Protection Services as soon as possible. In an emergency, missions/posts should call 111. The Chief of Protocol and the Protection Services can be contacted outside normal business hours if necessary.

Requests for protection should state the nature of the threat, the method by which the threat was conveyed and other relevant information. They may also include suggestions on measures that could reasonably be taken in response to the situation.

Once notified, Protocol Division, in consultation with other relevant authorities, will obtain an assessment of the threat and, as necessary, authorise the relevant law enforcement authority to take action appropriate to the nature of the threat.

Protocol Division will inform the mission or post concerned of the protective measures being provided. It will also, in conjunction with Protection Services, monitor the effectiveness of such measures and consider the eventual relaxation or removal of the protective measures in consultation with the mission/post.

22.4 Ownership of Firearms

No one is permitted to possess a firearm or restricted weapon in New Zealand except for a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose and unless they are the holder of a Firearms Licence issued by the New Zealand Police.

The New Zealand Arms Act 1983 requires that no person may import a firearm or restricted weapon into New Zealand without an appropriate permit issued by New Zealand Police.

There are different classes of firearms licences depending on the type of weapon. A member of the corps who wishes to bring a firearm into New Zealand must first apply for an import entry permit. If a permit is not obtained prior to entry, the firearm will be taken in charge by the Police at the port of entry and held until licensing procedures have been satisfactorily completed. A personal interview is

involved. The Inspector in charge of the Protection Services will advise on the licensing and registration procedure.

Any person aged over 16 years may apply for a firearms licence but there are strict criteria about who can qualify for a licence, and the circumstances under which the licence may be issued.

Carriage of firearms for self-protection or for security purposes is not a sufficient reason to justify issuance of a firearms licence.

It is contrary to New Zealand law for firearms or ammunition to be carried in the passenger compartment of any commercial passenger aircraft entering, leaving or flying within New Zealand. If a firearm is to be carried on an aircraft it should be declared to airline officials before boarding and will be held under secure storage in the aircraft hold.

Any misuse of a firearm by a member of a mission or post will result in an immediate request for that individual's departure from New Zealand.

22.5 Carriage of Firearms by Foreign Security Personnel

The New Zealand Police assume responsibility for the security of visiting foreign dignitaries. Bodyguards, or other personnel, accompanying visiting dignitaries will not be permitted to carry firearms or other weapons while in New Zealand. There can be no exceptions to this rule. If arms are carried to New Zealand, they must be surrendered immediately on arrival and will be held in safekeeping by the Police until they are returned on departure.

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