

Digital blueprints of firearms and firearm parts

Note: This information sheet does not constitute legal advice and is for general information purposes only. Applicants and licensees are required to understand and comply with the Firearms Act 1996 ("the Act") and associated Regulations, which are available on the Tasmanian legislation website – www.legislation.tas.gov.au. This document was prepared in March 2024 based on the relevant legislation at that time.

Tasmania Police is committed to the prevention of unlawfully manufactured firearms. An emerging issue is that of dangerous and unregulated homemade firearms and firearm parts using a 3D printer or electronic milling machine. As of **1 July 2024**, it is a criminal offence to possess a digital blueprint for the manufacture, on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine, of a firearm, firearm part or sound suppressor.

FAQs (Frequently asked questions)

WHAT IS A DIGITAL BLUEPRINT?

In general terms, a digital blueprint means an electronic file that can be used to create an item. It includes any type of digital, electronic or photographic reproduction of a technical drawing of the design of an object, or any electronic coding that can be applied to manufacture an object. It is a specific type of file that is used for manufacturing. Not all 'digital blueprints' are automatically unlawful.

WHAT KINDS OF DIGITAL BLUEPRINTS ARE UNLAWFUL?

A digital blueprint is only unlawful if it is **for the manufacture, on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine, of a firearm, a firearm part or a firearm sound suppressor.**

This includes digital files or code that can be input into a 3D printer or electronic milling machine to manufacture a firearm or part.

If a digital file meets the definition of a digital blueprint, but it is not for the **manufacture** of a firearm, firearm part or sound suppressor **on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine**, then there is no breach of the new offence.



HOW WILL THIS AFFECT COLLECTIONS, DIAGRAMS OR DRAWINGS OF FIREARMS BLUEPRINTS AND SCHEMATICS? WHAT ABOUT A PICTURE OF A DIAGRAM, TAKEN ON A SMARTPHONE?

Collections, diagrams and drawings of firearms, for example, photographs of books or historic diagrams showing an 'exploded view' of a firearm are not captured by the new possession of digital blueprint offence.

This is because even if these collections, diagrams and drawings of firearms are 'digital blueprints', they are only covered by the offence if they can be used for the manufacture of a firearm, firearm part or sound suppressor on a **3D printer or on an electronic milling machine**.

For example, an exploded diagram of a firearm in a book would only become unlawful if it was converted into a digital file or 3D image that can be fed directly into a 3D printer to create a firearm or part. Until it can be used in a 3D printer to manufacture a firearm or part, it is not unlawful.

WHAT IS THIS OFFENCE DESIGNED TO TARGET?

It is useful to think of the offence in a similar way to the regulation of precursor chemicals that can be used to create illicit substances or drugs. Targeting blueprints is necessary because it is not always possible to catch a person in the act of making a homemade firearm. The offence then covers the means to manufacture homemade firearms.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT FIREARMS MANUFACTURERS, LICENSED DEALERS AND GUNSMITHS?

Authorised firearms manufacturers, licensed dealers and gunsmiths are exempt from the new offence. That means authorised manufacturers can possess digital firearm blueprints and so can their employees in the course of their employment.



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