



**Te Tari Pūreke**  
Firearms Safety Authority

# Markings (serial numbers) on arms items and parts



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Te Tari Pūreke – Firearms Safety Authority, a business unit of New Zealand Police



## Markings on arms items and parts

- 02 Placement of identification marking on a firearm
- 02 Placement of identification marking on a pistol carbine conversion kit
- 02 Placement of identification marking on a pistol
- 02 Placement of identification marking on a magazine
- 02 Placement of identification marking on major firearm parts
- 03 How to apply serial numbers
- 03 Creating a marking for a single firearm or arms item
- 03 Creating a serial number for multiple firearms or arms items

## Appendix

- 04 Extracts from the Arms Act 1983
- 04 Section 59AAA Marking of a Firearm
- 05 Section 87 Guidance notices
- 05 Extracts from the Arms Regulations 1992 *Part 1 Preliminary Provisions 2(a)*
- 05 Section 12A Power to grant exemptions in respect of identification numbers
- 06 Examples of firearm markings

# Markings on arms items and parts



The Arms Regulations 1992 requires that all firearms<sup>1</sup>, restricted airguns, blank firing guns, restricted firearms, prohibited firearms, prohibited magazines, pistol carbine conversion kits and major firearms parts<sup>2</sup> have an identification marking.

Most firearms and major firearms parts in New Zealand will already have a factory manufacturer's identification marking such as a serial number. A small number of firearms and parts will have no marking or have one that is in a foreign language.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on selecting and applying a marking where one does not already exist or is in a foreign language and needs to be replaced.

## Placement of identification marking on a firearm

A firearm must have a marking (serial number) on the receiver, action, or frame. Where the firearm has an upper and lower receiver both receivers must have the same serial number displayed.

Serial numbers must not be placed on the barrel, stock or any part that can be removed from the rifle.

## Placement of identification marking on a pistol carbine conversion kit

A pistol carbine conversion kit (PCCK) must have a serial number on the outside of the main frame.

Serial numbers must not be on the stock or inside of the frame.

## Placement of identification marking on a pistol

A pistol must have a serial number on the action, or frame.

Serial numbers must not be on the barrel, grip, or cylinder.

## Placement of identification marking on a magazine

A prohibited magazine must have a clearly visible serial number on the outer body or floorplate of the item.

Serial numbers must not be placed inside the magazine, on the magazine spring or on the magazine follower.

## Placement of identification marking on major firearm parts

A major firearm part must have a serial number. A major part is the action (frame, receiver, upper receiver, and lower receiver of a firearm), the frame of a pistol, a calibre conversion component or kit of a pistol.

Serial numbers must not be on the inside of the action, frame, or receiver.

<sup>1</sup> Antique Firearms are not required to have serial numbers. Section 2 (1) of the Arms Act defines an antique firearm. Please refer to this definition. **PLEASE SEE THE APPENDIX for a complete definition.**

<sup>2</sup> A major part is defined as the action (frame, receiver, upper receiver, and lower receiver of a firearm). The frame of a pistol, a calibre conversion component or kit of a pistol. **Arms Regulations 1992 Part 1 Preliminary Provisions 2(a)**

## How to apply serial numbers

Serial numbers must be stamped or engraved.

### Engraving:

The firearm can be engraved using one of the following methods:

- Diamond tipped engraver
- Carbide tipped vibratory engraver
- Laser engraver.

**Note:** A laser marker is not a laser engraver, and it will not provide the required permanent marking.

### Stamping:

This will most likely be done with an engineer's stamp<sup>3</sup>, otherwise known as a steel punch.

### All generated markings must be:

- Permanent
- legible in normal light
- a minimum of 2 mm in height
- presented in a sequence together without any significant gaps between characters.

Alternative locations for applying serial numbers can be considered for historical arms items held by a collector<sup>4</sup>. A collector wishing to have an alternative marking location must contact Te Tare Pūreke for approval (refer appendix for more information on approval).

## Creating a marking for a single firearm or arms item

Where a marking must be applied to a firearm, or other arms item, the firearms licence holder or firearms dealer must create a serial number. Creation of the serial number must follow the prescribed format, as shown below:

- Choose any two letters of the alphabet
  - The Licence holder is John Doe
  - The initials of licence holder may be used to personalise the marking
  - Prefix could be JD or any two letters from the alphabet.

- Year the serial number is being created
  - In 2023, must shorten to 23
  - In 2024, must shorten to 24 and so on
- Any four numbers from the licence holder's firearms licence.
  - Licence holder is John Doe
  - John Doe's licence number is X987654
  - Could use 9876 or 4759 etc.

If using the licence holders initials, the marking could look like, JD239876.

If using two random letters, the marking could look like, ZA234567

## Creating a serial number for multiple firearms or arms items

Where the licence holder is applying serial numbers to more than one firearm or arms item at a time

- Apply the formula above for the first item resulting in serial number JD239876
- For each subsequent item insert a dash (-) and suffix (individual number) after the serial number
  - › First additional item apply -01. This item's serial number is JD239876-01
  - › Second additional item apply -02. This item's serial number is JD239876-02
  - › Repeat as many times as needed until all arms items have serial numbers.

**Note:** These guidelines are issued by the Commissioner of Police under the following Legislation and Regulations. Please see the appendix for a complete definition.

Section 87  
Arms Act 1983  
and  
Section 12  
Arms Regulations 1992

<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the stamp is to create a permanent making. This is done by displacing metal when the surface of the stamp impacts the surface of the metal. This happens when pressure from a hammer, or similar heavy object, hits the stamp pushing it into the surface of the metal item.

<sup>4</sup> A Collector as defined in Section 29 (2) (b) (c) (d) of the Arms Act 1983.

# Examples of firearm markings

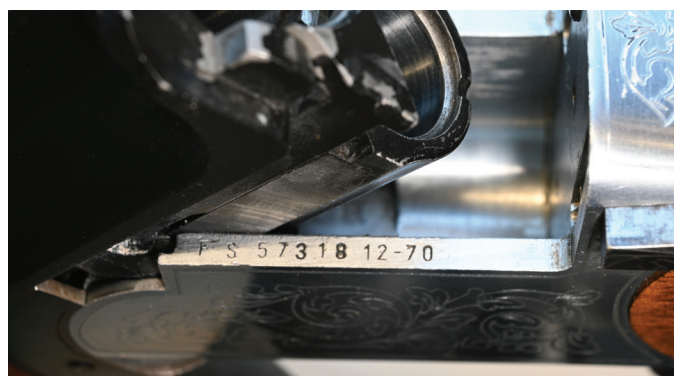


*A Remington Targetmaster 510 without a serial number on the receiver.*



*The same rifle with a serial number engraved.*

## Examples of manufacturer serial numbers and placement on the firearm





## Extracts from the Arms Act 1983

### firearm—

*(Definition section of the Act – Section 2, Interpretation)*

- (a) means anything from which any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile can be discharged by force of explosive; and
- (b) includes—
  - (i) anything that has been adapted so that it can be used to discharge a shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile by force of explosive; and
  - (ii) anything which is not for the time being capable of discharging any shot, bullet, missile, or other projectile but which, by its completion or the replacement of any component part or parts or the correction or repair of any defect or defects, would be a firearm within the meaning of paragraph (a) or subparagraph (i); and
  - (iii) anything (being a firearm within the meaning of paragraph (a) or subparagraph (i)) which is for the time being dismantled or partially dismantled; and
  - (iv) any specially dangerous airgun

### antique firearm—

*(Definition section of the Act – Section 2, Interpretation)*

- (a) means—
  - (i) any firearm that—
    - (A) is held in the possession of any person solely as an antique (but not as a copy or replica of an antique); and
    - (B) is not designed for firing, and is not capable of firing, rimfire or centrefire cartridge ammunition; or
  - (ii) any firearm declared by regulations made under this Act to be an antique firearm for the purposes of this Act; but
- (b) does not include any firearm manufactured after 1899

## 2B Meaning of prohibited magazine

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, **prohibited magazine**,—

- (a) in relation to a shotgun, means a magazine, whether or not detachable, that is capable of holding more than 5 cartridges commensurate with that shotgun's chamber size:
- (b) in relation to any other firearm (except a pistol described in section 2A(1)(a)(i)(C) or (D)),—
  - (i) means any detachable magazine—
    - (A) that is capable of holding 0.22 calibre or lower rimfire cartridges and that is capable of holding more than 10 of those cartridges:
    - (B) that is capable of holding more than 10 cartridges and being used with a semi-automatic or fully automatic firearm:
  - (ii) means any other magazine, whether or not detachable, that is capable of holding more than 10 cartridges:
- (c) includes any other magazine declared by Order in Council made under section 74A to be a prohibited magazine for the purposes of this Act.

## Section 59AAA Marking of a firearm

- (1)** This section applies to all firearms, parts, pistol carbine conversion kits, and magazines possessed by firearms licence holders, including those manufactured in or imported into New Zealand, but does not apply to antique firearms.
- (2)** Firearms, parts, pistol carbine conversion kits, and magazines to which this section applies must be marked to the extent provided in, and in accordance with, requirements set out in regulations made under section 74.
- (3)** The Crown is not liable to pay compensation in respect of—
  - (a) the loss of value in the case of any firearm, part, pistol carbine conversion kit, or magazine that results from it being marked in accordance with the regulations; or
  - (b) the cost of marking the firearm, part, pistol carbine conversion kit, or magazine.

## Section 87 Guidance notices

- (1) The Commissioner may issue notices that provide guidance or details of an administrative nature that relate to 1 or more of the following:
- (c) the issuing of identifying markings for firearms and magazines manufactured in or imported into New Zealand:

## Extracts from the Arms Regulations 1992

### Part 1 Preliminary Provisions 2(a)

**major firearm part** means—

- (a) the action (frame, receiver, or upper receiver and lower receiver) of a firearm;
- (b) the frame of a pistol;
- (c) a calibre conversion component or kit of a pistol.

### 12 Identification numbers

- (1) A person who imports into New Zealand a firearm, pistol, pistol carbine conversion kit, prohibited firearm, restricted airgun, blank-firing gun, restricted weapon, or major firearm part that does not bear an identification number must stamp or engrave, or cause to be stamped or engraved, in clear view on the frame or receiver, or upper and lower receiver, of that item, within 30 days after the day on which it is imported, a number by which that item may be identified.
- (2) A person who manufactures a firearm, pistol, pistol carbine conversion kit, restricted airgun, blank-firing gun, restricted weapon, or major firearm part must stamp, cast, or engrave an identification number on it at the time of its manufacture.
- (3) A person who imports into New Zealand a prohibited magazine that does not bear an identification number must, within 30 days after the day on which it is imported, stamp or engrave, or cause to be stamped or engraved, in clear view on that magazine, a number by which the magazine may be identified.

- (4) A dealer who receives a firearm, pistol, pistol carbine conversion kit, prohibited firearm, prohibited magazine, restricted airgun, blank-firing gun, restricted weapon, or major firearm part that does not bear an identification number must, within 30 days after the day on which it is received, stamp or engrave or cause to be stamped or engraved in clear view (which must be on the frame or receiver, or upper receiver and lower receiver, of the item if it is a firearm, restricted airgun, pistol, pistol carbine conversion kit, or restricted weapon) a number by which the item may be identified.
- (5) Subclauses (1), (2), and (4) do not apply to—
  - (a) a firearm, pistol, prohibited firearm, or restricted weapon that is an antique firearm; or
  - (b) a major firearm part that is an integrated part of a firearm and the firearm has an identification number; or
  - (c) a restricted airgun designed for use in airsoft or paintball sports.

## Section 12A Power to grant exemptions in respect of identification numbers

- (1) A commissioned officer of Police may, by writing, exempt a dealer from compliance with any of the requirements set out in [regulation 12](#) if the officer is satisfied that, in the circumstances, alternative means of uniquely identifying an arms item can be implemented, including (but not limited to) stamping or engraving the identification number on a non-visible area of the frame, receiver, upper receiver, or lower receiver or by causing a tag with the identification number to be firmly attached to the arms item.
- (2) An exemption under subclause (1) may at any time in the same way be revoked by a commissioned officer of Police.
- (3) An exemption under subclause (1) may be limited as specified in it.