

Restrictions on the Sale of Knives and Other Bladed Items

It is illegal to sell knives (and other similar products as defined) to anyone under 18 years old. The legislation is enforced by the police and trading standards, and anyone found selling these items to a person under 18 years old risks a maximum fine of £5,000 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to six months.

Therefore sellers should always verify the age of the purchaser first. Further restrictions are included in the Knives Act 1997 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/21/contents>), which specifically deals with knives advertised for use in 'combat'.

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Underage sales - the legislation

The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/33/contents>), as amended by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/26/contents>), makes it illegal to sell the following items to anyone under 18 years old:

- any knife, knife blade or razor blade
- any axe
- any article that has a blade or is sharply pointed, and which is made or adapted for causing injury to the person

The prohibition does not apply to:

- a folding pocket knife with a blade of less than three inches (7.62cm) or
- a razor blade permanently held in a cartridge or similar housing where less than 2 mm of the blade is exposed

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The prohibition is not intended to apply to articles such as scissors or compasses.

Always ask young people to produce proof of their age. Trading standards services and the Government support the National Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) (<http://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/>). You can be confident that a card issued under the scheme, and bearing the PASS hologram, is an acceptable proof of age. There is a number of card issuers in the scheme - visit the PASS website for more information (<http://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/>).

Card issuers may supply material for you to display in your shop, telling young people where they can obtain a card. This way, if you have cause to refuse a sale, you can give youngsters some positive information. Photo driving licences and passports are also acceptable as proof of age.

Please also see our business leaflet 'Sale of knives on the Internet to under 18s' for more information (http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/sfy26_tcm44-160472.pdf).

Combat knives

Further restrictions are included in the Knives Act 1997 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/21/contents>). This legislation prohibits the marketing of a knife or the publication of marketing material relating to a knife, in a way that:

- indicates or suggests that it is suitable for combat or
- is likely to stimulate or encourage violent behaviour involving the use of the knife as a weapon

The term 'suitable for combat' means that the knife is suitable for use as a weapon for inflicting injury or causing fear of injury to the person.

There are exemptions to allow sales of such items for legitimate purposes, such as for use by armed forces or as collectors' pieces.

Relevant legislation

Criminal Justice Act 1988

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/33/contents>)

Offensive Weapons Act 1996

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/26/contents>)

Knives Act 1997 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/21/contents>)

Where can I get further help?

This leaflet is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance. For further details or clarification contact Derbyshire Trading Standards at:

Chatsworth Hall
Chesterfield Road
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3FW

Telephone:

Businesses:	Call Derbyshire	08 456 058 058
Consumers:	Citizens Advice consumer helpline	08454 040506

Fax: 01629 536197

Website: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

We want everyone to be able to understand us. On request, we will arrange:

- Language interpreters, including for sign language
- Translation of written materials into other languages
- Materials in large print, on tape or in Braille.

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To ensure that you are looking at the most up-to-date version of this leaflet, please visit our website at

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/sfy17_tcm9-8333.pdf

or telephone us on 01629 536166.

