

# **NSW WILDLIFE COUNCIL INC.**

## **FIREARMS SAFETY BRIEF**

**(Notes for Wildlife Group Firearms  
Coordinators & Instructors)**



# Document Control

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## Introduction

The NSW Wildlife Council (NWC) Firearms Safety Brief has been introduced to provide a safe operating environment for both NWC member group volunteers and members of the public when it is necessary to euthanase an injured animal using a firearm.

The intent of the NWC Firearms Safety Brief is to ensure a new applicant has an excellent knowledge of safety issues associated with the euthanasia of wildlife using a firearm in a public place; control of a situation; and points of aim.

The NWC Firearms Safety Brief introduces a knowledge test to ensure an applicant can recall essential information. The knowledge test is reproduced at Attachment 1 with the expected answers.

The training given is to be reflected in a wildlife group "letter of support" and as part of the Firearm's Registry application process

The NWC Firearms Safety Brief and necessary refresher training must be conducted by an experienced wildlife group Firearms Coordinator (minimum of five years experience) or a qualified Firearms Instructor.

## Notes to Firearms Coordinators & Instructors

It is necessary for an applicant to correctly answer all of the questions contained in the knowledge test. Variation in how an applicant describes an answer is acceptable, however the Firearms Coordinator or Instructor needs to judge that an applicant has answered correctly.

The Firearms Coordinator or Instructor needs to use the knowledge test questions and answers to assess that an applicant has an excellent knowledge of the NWC Firearms Safety Brief. Only if all of the questions are answered correctly shall the applicant be deemed to have passed the test.

The knowledge test is to be a written test. This will provide a record for the wildlife group and documentation for a compliance audit should that be needed.

The NWC Firearms Safety Brief may be provided to an applicant in advance of the practical Brief being conducted.

An applicant who is unable to answer all of the questions correctly can be re-briefed and tested at a later date.

## Attachment 1

### **NWC Firearms Safety Brief - Knowledge Test Questions & Answers**

1. What are the most important factors to take into account when preparing to discharge a firearm in a public place?
  - *Public safety is paramount with regard to shooting in the proximity of dwellings, public thoroughfares, passers by, stock and other animals.*
  - *There must be a particular focus on target backdrop and the potential for a bullet to ricochet to the extent of its range. Other factors to be considered include:*
    - *Being aware of potential vehicle accidents when an injured, but mobile animal, is on or near a roadway;*
    - *Never blocking a traffic lane when parking to attend to an animal, unless assistance is available to flag down traffic;*
    - *When attending an animal which is located on a bend or a crest of a roadway, ensure that the rescuer's vehicle is parked completely off the road or otherwise away from the bend or crest to minimise any chance of an accident;*
    - *Ensure authorities are advised when firearms might be used;*
    - *If in doubt, seek help from other experienced wildlife volunteers, local National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) rangers, veterinarians or the Police; and*
    - *Assess the incident site and consider other options. An incident in a suburban area will require a different approach to that in a rural location. Euthanasia by a firearm may not be safe and other available methods should be considered i.e. referral to RSPCA staff, NPWS rangers and Police. Consider the availability and use of a dart gun.*
  
2. What other authorities can be contacted to help in euthanasing an animal in a public place?
  - *RSPCA staff*
  - *NPWS Rangers*
  - *Police Officers*
  
3. What are the requirements needed in order to be authorised to use firearms in a public place in terms of wildlife group membership, ID, licencing etc?
  - *Be a member of a wildlife group licensed by OEH;*
  - *Be authorised by their wildlife group management committee and carry a current wildlife group identification card;*
  - *Hold the appropriate NSW firearms licence/permit and firearm registration;*
  - *Wear appropriate clothing to identify oneself and maintain personal safety i.e. wear a high visibility safety vest, and appropriate footwear and PPE.*
  - *Comply with the requirements for the safekeeping and transport of firearms;*
  - *Understand the Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of kangaroos, wallabies and wombats; and*

- *Acknowledge there are serious penalties applicable to the misuse of firearms with respect to the NSW Crimes Act Firearms legislation (section 93G).*
  - *Comply with wildlife group policies and procedures.*
  - *Ensure the Police are informed.*
4. Can you shoot accurately - what are your personal limitations?
- *Discuss an applicant's capability and experience. Judge whether there is a need to see an applicant demonstrate his/her ability to fire a firearm on an authorised range.*
  - *A shooter's accuracy may be improved by using a solid object to assist stability e.g. leaning on a car door, tree, fence post.*
5. How often do you need to do refresher training?
- *At least once every two years.*
6. If you assess the risk of euthanasing an animal with a firearm is too great, what can you do?
- *The Police (RSPCA staff or an NPWS ranger) can be asked to attend to carry out a euthanasia.*
  - *A more experienced shooter or wildlife volunteer can be asked to attend an incident to make an assessment.*
  - *Consider contacting a shooter licensed to use a dart gun.*
7. What circumstance would you consider 'High Risk'. Who would you contact?
- *Built-up areas.*
  - *Risk to members of the public and property.*
  - *Where necessary contact the Police, RSPCA staff, NPWS Ranger or a more experienced wildlife volunteer.*
8. What are some of the considerations on arriving at the scene of an incident?
- *Ensure that the area is safe, in terms of risk and danger to bystanders and other members of the public; road safety; property damage; and animal wellbeing.*
  - *Park well off the road.*
  - *Consider the use of vehicle hazard lights and headlights.*
  - *Wear a reflective vest. Earmuffs and safety glasses might also be used.*
  - *Assess the animal's condition; consider its mobility and risks.*
  - *Move bystanders and any accompanying companion animals away from the animal.*
  - *If necessary, and where safe to do so (enough people present and given clear visibility), stop or slow traffic until the animal is secured.*
  - *If an animal has some mobility, keep a good distance until all the risks and line of approach are determined.*
  - *Approach on foot in a direction that is less likely to herd the animal onto the road.*
  - *Be aware of other animals in the locality and ensure that they do not present a safety risk.*

9. What is the preferred ammunition when using a .22 longarm to euthanase kangaroos and wallabies?
- *Hollow point bullets.*
10. What are the points of aim to euthanase kangaroos, wallabies and wombats?
- *Kangaroos & Wallabies – the point of aim to ensure an accurate brain shot is the intersecting point of two lines, one drawn between the centre of the animal's left eye and the base of its right ear, and the second drawn between the centre of its right eye and the base of its left ear. A shot can be made from the side or behind to lower the risk of damage to a pouched joey.*
  - *Wombat - to ensure an accurate brain shot is the intersecting point of two lines, one drawn between the centre of the animals left eye and the base of its right ear, and the second drawn between the centre of its right eye and the base of its left ear.*
11. How can you minimise risk in terms of ricochet and missed shot when deciding upon the line of fire?
- *Ensure there is no likelihood of hitting another object (i.e. other than the animal being euthanased), either in the near-range or in the projected path of the bullet.*
  - *Do not shoot at an animal if it is moving.*
  - *Reduce the potential for a bullet to ricochet by avoiding having hard or deflecting surfaces in the line of fire, such as rocks, bodies of water (including dams), steel fence posts.*
  - *Consider the firearm's safety trace and ensure a safe line of fire is selected.*
  - *Do not shoot in a direction where someone or something could quickly come into the path of a bullet.*
  - *Do not shoot directly up the crest of a hill or road.*
  - *Ideally arrange the line of fire into soft material.*
12. How do you deal with bystanders?
- *Move bystanders on.*
  - *Keep bystanders well away from an injured animal and out of the line of fire.*