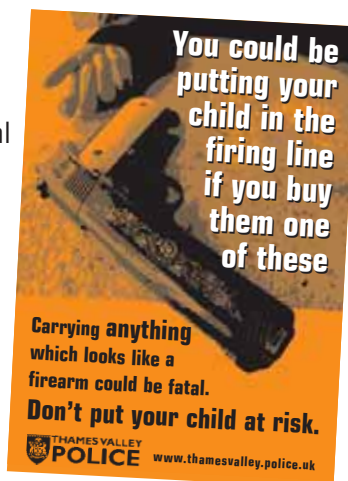


What the law says:

- What the law says
- Carrying an air weapon (and this includes some BB guns) in a public place is an offence unless you have a "reasonable excuse". An example of a reasonable excuse could be that you are taking it home, although you would need to be able to prove this. The maximum penalty for this offence is up to 12 months in jail.
- An imitation firearm is described as anything that has the appearance of a firearm including some toy guns.
- You must be 18 to purchase or hire an air weapon, including some of the more powerful BB guns. This also applies to ammunition for an air weapon. You must also be 18 to sell an air weapon, let one on hire or make a gift of an air weapon,
- It is an offence for anyone to fire an air weapon beyond the boundary of any premises without consent from the person whose land you are firing over or into. Commit this offence and you could face a fine of up to £1,000.
- It is an offence to make, import or sell a realistic imitation firearm and if found guilty of any of these crimes, you could face a term in prison or a large fine. A realistic imitation firearm is one that is so good only an expert or a person who examined it very closely would know it wasn't a real firearm.
- It is an offence to sell an imitation firearm to someone under 18. It is also an offence for someone under 18 to buy an imitation firearm.

The Government has also made it illegal to sell weapons without being a registered dealer. Any weapons sold must also be handed over face-to-face to allow retailers to check the buyer's proof of age. It is illegal to buy and sell weapons over the internet.

Visit our website at
www.thamesvalley.police.uk/saferstreets



Ball bearing (BB) guns and imitation firearms - a guide for parents



Safer Streets



A message from Thames Valley Police:

“Firearms officers in the Thames Valley are routinely being called to incidents involving young people with BB and imitation guns.

“We have serious concerns that a youngster is going to end up being shot by a police officer because it is extremely difficult to tell the difference between a genuine firearm and an imitation.

“If you are thinking about buying your child anything which has the appearance of a genuine firearm then please think again. You could be putting their lives at risk and at the very least they could end up with a criminal record if they take that imitation firearm into a public place.

“A great deal of firearms officers’ time is being wasted attending incidents involving replica guns which look like the real thing. While they are dealing with those incidents they are not available to help those at genuine risk from a real firearm.

“Please help us to keep your communities safe by keeping BB and replica guns off the streets.”



Supt David Elworthy,
Head of Tactical Support.