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SOUND MODERATORS AND FLASH SUPPRESSORS

A Good Practice Guide for Transfers and 'Remote' Sales

Reflecting the law from 29 June 2026, when section 44 and Schedule 5 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 came into force in England, Wales and Scotland. This guide follows the format of police RFD good practice guidance but is not police-issued guidance.

Law = requirements of the legislation. **Good practice** = recommended steps, not statutory requirements.

At a glance

Area	Current position
Status	Moderators and flash suppressors are no longer Section 1 firearms.
Certificate control	Possession is lawful for holders of a firearm certificate or shotgun certificate, or where a statutory exemption applies.
Transfers	No certificate entries, police notifications or statutory RFD register entries are required for moderator transactions.
Remote sales	Direct dispatch is not prohibited by the Firearms Acts, but certificate sighting and carrier checks remain sensible good practice.

The change in brief

From 29 June 2026, sound moderators and flash suppressors are no longer defined as firearms under section 57 of the Firearms Act 1968 and are therefore no longer Section 1 firearms. They do not appear on certificates, no variation or unused authority is required to acquire one, and the transfer, notification and record-keeping provisions of the Firearms Acts no longer apply to them.

One control remains (law): under new section 2A of the Firearms Act 1968, it is an offence for a person to possess a "relevant accessory" — an accessory to a Section 1 firearm designed or adapted to diminish the noise or flash caused by firing it — unless that person holds a firearm certificate or a shotgun certificate, or a statutory exemption applies. The offence is summary only, with a maximum fine at level 3 on the standard scale (£1,000).

Registered Firearms Dealers, their servants, and carriers acting in the course of business are covered by the exemptions in the Firearms Act 1968 and the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988, as extended to relevant accessories by Schedule 5 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026.



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Sales in person

The procedure for a face-to-face sale of a moderator is as follows:

1. There is no requirement to see the purchaser's certificate, to check for an unused authority, or to match the moderator to a firearm or calibre held by the purchaser (**law**). The old rule that a sale could not be completed without production of a certificate applied because a moderator was a Section 1 firearm; it no longer applies.
2. Because the purchaser commits an offence under section 2A if they possess the moderator without holding a firearm or shotgun certificate, the dealer should ask to sight a current firearm or shotgun certificate before completing the sale (**good practice**). This protects the customer from committing an offence and the dealer from any suggestion of knowingly assisting one.
3. No entry is required in the register of transactions, no details need be entered on any certificate, and no notification to any Chief Officer of Police is required by either party (**law**). A dealer may keep a voluntary record of moderator sales (**good practice**).

'Remote' sales

'Remote' sales are those made when an RFD sells a moderator to a purchaser who is not present at the moment of sale. Under the previous law the moderator had to be sent to a second RFD for collection in person, with certificate entries and notifications by both dealers and the purchaser. None of that now applies.

1. The seller should ask the purchaser to provide evidence that they hold a current firearm or shotgun certificate — for example an emailed copy or photograph of the certificate — and check the name, expiry date and that the address matches the delivery address (**good practice**). There is no statutory requirement to do this (**law**), but it is the simple safeguard that ensures the purchaser will be in lawful possession on delivery.
2. Having taken payment, the seller may dispatch the moderator direct to the purchaser's address (**law — no provision prohibits this**). The requirement for transfers to take place in person under section 32(2)(a) of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997 applies only to Section 1 firearms and shotguns, which moderators no longer are.
3. Before dispatch, check the carrier's own terms and conditions (**good practice**). Carriage restrictions on firearms or gun parts in carriers' policies are commercial terms, not law, and may not yet have caught up with the change.
4. No register entries, certificate entries, or notifications to police are required by the seller, any intermediate dealer, or the purchaser (**law**). If a second RFD is used for collection, that dealer likewise has no statutory recording duty, though a voluntary record of items passing through the premises is sensible (**good practice**).
5. On delivery, the purchaser must hold a current firearm or shotgun certificate to be in lawful possession (**law — section 2A Firearms Act 1968**). There is no requirement for the moderator to



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be entered on that certificate, no limit on the number a certificate holder may possess, and no statutory requirement for it to be stored in a gun cabinet.

Trade-to-trade transfers and stock

Transfers of moderators between RFDs require no notification or record (law). Dealers, their servants and carriers may possess moderators in the ordinary course of business without holding personal certificates, under the exemptions as amended by Schedule 5 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 (law).

Moderators held as stock are not subject to the statutory security requirements applying to firearms, but keeping them within the secure area of the premises remains sensible (good practice).

Points to watch

- Moderators for shotguns and sub-12 ft-lb air weapons are outside section 2A entirely — no certificate is needed to possess them and there is never any recording requirement (law). However, if an air weapon moderator is fitted to a Section 1 firearm, the possessor must hold a firearm or shotgun certificate or fall within an exemption (law — Home Office Circular 004/2026, para. 9).
- Northern Ireland is not covered by these changes; moderators there remain within firearms controls, so dispatches to Northern Ireland should not follow this guide (law).
- Scotland: airgun moderators fall under devolved Scottish airgun legislation and are outside these changes (law).
- Sales to under-18s: the age-restriction offences in sections 22 and 24 of the Firearms Act 1968 apply to firearms and ammunition as defined in section 57; as moderators are no longer within that definition, those provisions no longer apply to them. There is no specific statutory age restriction on the sale of a moderator, though the purchaser must still hold a certificate to possess one (law). Dealers may choose to apply their own age policy (good practice).
- Transactions before 29 June 2026 remain governed by the old law as it stood at the time.

Sources

- Crime and Policing Act 2026, s. 44 and Sch. 5 — legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2026/20
- Firearms Act 1968 (ss. 2A, 3, 8, 9, 32–35 (1997 Act), 40, 57, Sch. 4) — legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1968/27
- Crime and Policing Act 2026 (Commencement No. 1 and Saving Provision) Regulations 2026, SI 2026/689 — legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2026/689
- Home Office Circular 004/2026 — gov.uk

This guide is general information reflecting the legislation in force at the date of writing and is not legal advice. Official guidance from the Home Office and police forces is being developed following the change and should be checked when published.