

BAN ON LEAD AMMUNITION - END OF SHOOTING IN THE UK

BACKGROUND

I am a target rifle and clay pigeon shooter and I am the Representative of Nottinghamshire Rifle Association on matters concerning the proposed ban on lead ammunition.

Over the past 12 months I have been liaising with shooters of all sorts, clubs, firearms dealers, governing bodies, members of the British Shooting Sports Council (BSSC) and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) in order to understand the risk posed to all disciplines of our sport and, most importantly, to decide how best rank and file shooters can play a part in defending themselves and their sport. **Above all we must be heard and our views respected.**

I make no apology for taking time to set out matters and for being blunt. Our sport is under threat as never before. If decisions are made to ban lead, then the effect on shooting will be catastrophic and the overwhelming majority of us will be left with guns which we can't use.

Please take 5 minutes to read the following and then take action as our sport is under threat as never before.

AFFECTS

- Air guns
- Shotguns: both game and clay pigeon shooting
- .22 RF
- Smokeless centrefire
- Black powder cartridges
- Muzzle loaders

SITUATION

1. Following moves to ban lead ammunition in Europe, the UK is preparing, right now, to take action to "Remove the Threat Posed by Lead".

2. You may hear all sorts of gossip and predictions but the simple facts are:

- There are those who are **working to ban all lead ammunition, without any exceptions.**
- There are those who seek a common-sense approach which accepts that there will be restrictions on the use of lead in ammo.
- There are those who think that 'All will be OK' and 'It won't affect me'.

3. The fact is that the Government (the lawmakers) are taking stock of the situation before deciding what to do. They will base their final decision on the following:

- What happens in Europe? (This is alarming as there are major moves to remove lead in the EU)
- Views expressed by shooting organisations and **anti-lead organisations** and other interested parties, in the UK
- Views of the general public

4. These views are being gathered in a **Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Consultation Document** which will have a major impact on the decision-making process of Government.

5. Time is not on our side as there could be new legislation proposed as soon as next year.

AIM

6. If we want to see shooting sports survive, it is our duty to ourselves and future generations **to get a grip and act now by completing the Consultation Document.**

WAY AHEAD

7. All shooters should complete and submit the Consultation Document ASAP, in order that our views are heard and taken into account when decisions are made.

8. It's a fact that the majority of people don't bother to complete such 'surveys' (Consultation Documents) in the (false) belief that:

- Other people will, so 'I don't need to'.
- The organisation(s) which represent me and my sport will fight on my behalf. (Yes, but they need your support).
- I've heard that these proposals (to ban lead) don't apply to my specific type of activity (type of shooting) so I don't care if some other people lose out. 'Let's be prepared to make a sacrifice as long as it's not me'.
- The 'powers that be' (Government and Civil Service) will be reasonable and take a common-sense view, so 'nothing bad will really happen'. Be under no illusions, the current Government are keen to press on with this matter and who knows who will be in power when a final decision is made and what line of action they will take. It could go from bad to worse.

9. Shooting organisations are working very hard to fight our cause but they ask for and must receive our help. We have 'one shot' at protecting ourselves and fellow shooters. **If we fail, we will lose out in a huge way and, like the pistol ban, there will be no going back.**

ACTION

10. The action that all of us 'rank and file' shooters should take is very simple, yet could be very effective if we do things right.

11. Below you will find a link to the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) Consultation Document. After noting some guidelines set out below please complete the Consultation Document ASAP. It is a long survey but you don't have to complete all the boxes, as most of these are directed at organisations, rather than individuals. The survey should take you less than 5 minutes to complete.

12. The feedback I get from organisations like BASC, is that very few people complete surveys and this is to their detriment. The more shooters who complete the Consultation Document the better because:

- When 'push comes to shove' the Government will look at how many people in total completed the Document and of these, how many were for a ban on lead and how many weren't. Be under no illusions, those who are anti-shooting in general and/or keen to ban lead, will make sure their voice is heard and they will make their views clear in the document.
- In the closing stages of this process, it's likely that Governing Bodies (shooting) and key players (BASC) will have to fight our corner and the 'ammunition' they need to be able to use on our behalf is as follows:

13. Looking at the Consultation Document the ideal situation would be:

- Of every 100 responses, 90 were from shooters **(and those friends etc., supporting shooters)** and they all expressed how a ban/restriction of lead would seriously affect their sport.
- This is a very powerful argument and will hold considerable weight for those making the law and will be of huge support to those fighting our cause, if matters end up being challenged in court, as will probably be the case.
- The HSE (Government) having asked for your view, cannot ignore it, especially in overwhelming numbers.

KEY POINT

14. I have heard people say that certain sections of the shooting community have differing views and objectives/agendas. We are faced with an unprecedented threat where it's a case of **United We Stand....Divided We Fall**.

15. I am a member of BASC and have received huge support in respect of the lead matter from everyone I've spoken to at BASC, in particular Dr Conor O'Gorman, their Head of Policy and Campaigns. I have been encouraged by them to write for their magazine and they have published my contributions. They are actively encouraging other shooters to voice their opinions via their pages.

16. Given the support I have had and am continuing to receive from BASC, I include below a statement which clearly sets out their position and the one which we should all support.

Whilst this BASC comment relates to all forms of target shooting, from air rifle to full bore, BASC are also fighting the cause of shotgunners, in particular the right to continue to use lead shot on clay pigeon ranges.

17. Once you've read the BASC statement please use the link below to complete the Consultation Document.

You can answer as many, or as few questions, as you like. Many questions don't apply to individuals.

I don't advocate 'cut and paste' wording, so that's why I haven't put any suggested text but, when deciding what to say, bear in mind the following:

- Keep it simple and to the point. Avoid putting any comment that could 'backfire' and be used against our cause. You would be surprised at some comments made to me by shooters which 'pull the rug' from under our arguments. Do not get over technical. Keep it simple.
- Stress how a ban on lead would affect your shooting. For example, there are no viable alternatives for most rifle and pistol bullets and air gun pellets.
- Target shooting with rifles, muskets and pistols, results in bullets being 'captured' in bullet catchers and they can later be removed for safe disposal, therefore no reason to ban lead ammunition.
- On clay pigeon ranges, shot is contained in a designated zone.
- For some forms of shooting (muzzle loading and vintage arms) the actual number of shots fired is very small and the firearms and shotguns being used are only proofed for blackpowder, in conjunction with lead bullets/shot.

CLICK HERE FOR CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

<https://consultations.hse.gov.uk/crd-reach/restriction-proposals-004/consultation/intro/>

THE BASC STATEMENT

BASC is opposed to a proposed ban on the use of lead ammunition for any firearm used for target shooting (including airguns, pistols, shotguns, rifles, muskets and other historic firearms). In its consultation response BASC will be arguing that the proposed restrictions are not justified by the evidence presented and are therefore unnecessary and disproportionate. BASC is also an accredited stakeholder with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and will be using that status to represent target shooters through a stakeholder consultation process, which is separate to the public consultation.

The shooting organisations, including BASC, are also working closely together through the British Shooting Sports Council, in challenging the restriction proposals.

Next year the HSE will submit its recommendations to the Secretary of State. If we have any concerns about the recommendations or subsequent legislative proposals being disproportionate and damaging shooting, we will campaign and lobby for them to be revised.

Note that most of the questions are aimed at manufacturers and organisations and you do not have to answer any of those. Just complete the 'general comments' box on the second page and skip all other questions as you see fit and submit your response on the last page of the survey. You could state that the proposed restrictions for target shooting are not justified by the evidence presented and that they are therefore unnecessary and disproportionate; and add any other feedback as you see fit.

Best wishes,

Conor

Dr Conor O'Gorman
Head of Policy and Campaigns
BASC