



South Africa

Limits

- Maximum of four (4) rifles/shotguns allowed per hunter.
- Semi-automatic shotguns and handguns for hunting require special permitting.
- No automatic or military-style firearms.
- No handguns for self-defense.
- Firearms must have a manufacturer's serial number or other mark of identification stamped on the barrel, frame or receiver.
- Only one firearm per caliber or gauge.
- Only two hundred (200) rounds of ammunition per firearm and the caliber/gauges must match the firearms being imported.

Fees

There is no charge for a temporary firearm import permit. However, there are several services that for a fee will handle your import permit, meet you upon arrival, walk you through clearance and/or ensure your firearms are placed on your next flight. Such services expedite the entire process. Their fees range between \$100-\$300 depending on what you contract them for.

Timeframe

Temporary import permits can be issued upon your arrival in South Africa. Have your SAPS 520 form filled out in triplicate. Do not sign it until you are before the SAPS officer. Keep in mind that the time required to get your permit depends on the number of hunters in line ahead of you. At the peak of safari season that could be as many as 70 people.

For online applications your application must be submitted at least 21 days in advance of your arrival in South Africa. If you are using a firearm transport service, you will need to submit your application and supporting documents to them five (5) to six (6) weeks in advance.

For semi-automatics and handguns, you will need to submit required documentation at least five (5) to six (6) weeks in advance.

Requirements

You must fill out a SAPS 520 form in black ink. **Any other color ink will result in the rejection of your application.** See instructions further below on filling out the form. Following is the additional documentation you must provide with your application.

- A notarized copy of your passport certifying it is a true copy of your original.
- A notarized copy of your license, certificate, permit or other documentary proof confirming lawful possession of the firearm, and certifying it is a true copy of the original. Alternatively, an invoice from the shop where you purchased the firearm or an affidavit from your local police chief confirming ownership. US citizens may use a Customs Form 4457*.
- If you have someone in South Africa apply for you (such as a firearm transport service), you must provide a letter of appointment giving them the authority to do so.
- Written authorization permitting export from the country of origin, either an export permit or letter from a government official or agency from your country. (US citizens may use a Customs Form 4457*.)
- Copy of your air travel itinerary or tickets showing your departure date.
- If you are transiting South Africa on your way to another destination in Africa (or elsewhere) you must also provide an import permit or written authorization from the country where you are going to hunt.
- A letter of invitation on company letterhead from your professional hunter or safari operator in South Africa providing the following information. (If you are transiting South Africa to hunt elsewhere, you will need this letter from your PH or safari operator there.)
 - the purpose of your visit.
 - dates of your hunt
 - where you are hunting
 - species you are hunting.
 - operator/PH's license/registration number
 - operator's full contact details and address
- If applying for a semi-automatic shotgun or handgun, you must also provide a motivation letter stating the specific reasons that make the firearm necessary for your trip and that it will be used for hunting purposes only. Your operator will need to state the same in his letter of invitation.
- Hunters under the age of 21 must provide a motivational letter and evidence of proficiency as a hunter. Supporting letters from third parties are helpful as well as hunter education certificates.

Transiting Hunters

If you are traveling through South Africa on your way to another destination and you plan to overnight or you must claim your bags to check onto your next flight, you will need a South African firearm transit permit. Fill out the SAPS 520 form, gather all the documents listed above and follow the directions that continue below. Remember that to get a transit permit you will be held to the South African restrictions on the quantity and kinds of firearms and amounts of ammunition, no matter what your actual hunting destination allows.

Because of this, it is important that you confirm with your airlines whether your bags will be checked through to your final destination or must be claimed upon arrival in South Africa. Whenever traveling with firearms, always confirm that all of your intended airlines have what is called an interline baggage agreement and that you can check your bags all the way through to your final destination.

***Important Note about US Customs Form 4457**

Make sure you have the most current issue of the form. South African Police will not accept older versions or forms with a passed expire date on them. Your US Customs Form 4457 must be stamped and dated for the year of importation. That means if you are hunting in South Africa in 2020, your Customs Form 4457 must be dated for 2020.

US Customs will tell you the form does not expire and that you can use it multiple times from year to year. But the South African Police (SAPS), who handle South Africa firearm importations, demands that the form be renewed every year you travel to South Africa with firearms.

Download the latest form from the [US Customs website](#). Complete the form with your firearm's make, model and serial number, then take it to the nearest Customs office to have it stamped and signed by an agent. Alternatively, you can do this at an international airport before leaving the US, but you will need to allot two to three hours if you are connecting flights there. A US Customs agent must inspect the firearm to verify the serial number and other details written on the 4457 form, requiring you to claim the gun case, take it to Customs and re-check your bag to your hunting destination.

Tips on Filling out the SAPS520 Form

The Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA) has a free online tool that simplifies this process. Go to <http://www.saps520.com>. Alternatively, you can download the form from the SAPS website: <https://www.saps.gov.za/services/flash/firearms/importation.php>. Download instructions on filling out the form at https://www.saps.gov.za/services/flash/firearms/downloads/import_instruct.pdf.

The form is 10 pages long and you must respond to each section meant for you. But there are sections that are meant for the SAPS officer processing your application.

On Page 2 – Section D.

- If you are hunting in South Africa and/or traveling to other African destinations, you should select: 1. Multiple import/export permits. (Note: When transiting through South Africa, you need a transit or import permit both going and returning through the country.)
- If you are transiting through on the way to another destination and are not returning through South Africa, then select 4. In-transit permit.
- If you are hunting only South Africa, then select 5. Temporary import/export permit.

On Page 2 – Section E

- Fill out all personal information requested through 25.4, including information about your spouse, even if your spouse is not traveling with you.
- The rest of Section E is for businesses and not for tourist hunters. You can skip to Section F.

On Page 3 – Section F

- Fill out all the personal information again for questions 2 – 13

On Page 4 – Section G

- Fill out 1 - 9.2.
- Note: 9.1 and 9.2 will be the valid dates of your temporary license. Use the date of your arrival and consider providing an end date that is a week or two after your planned departure in case you choose or need to stay longer.

On Page 4 and 5 – Section H

- If you need to use the services of a firearm transporter to transport and store your guns (for example if you are transiting through but staying some days in South Africa, or if you will be touring without your safari operator) you must provide the company's details here.

On Page 6 and 7 – Section I

- Provide all the requested information about your firearm(s) and the ammunition you are taking.
- Fill out 4.1, .2, sign .3, and fill .4. This section is your declaration that you are the legal owner of the firearms.

On Page 7 – Section J

- DO NOT sign this until you are in the presence of a SAPS officer.

Page 9 – Section M

- This is for parental consent for someone under 21 years of age.

Clearing Your Firearms

- If you fly with South African Airways you will need to present your passport and luggage claim tag to claim your gun case. All others simply pick up their gun cases in the baggage claim area.
- Your safari operator/PH or firearm clearing service agent will meet you at the exit and take you to the SAPS office to turn in your rifle import documents.
- A SAPS officer will inspect your firearms and check the serial numbers against your paperwork.
- If you did not get an import permit in advance, sign the SAPS520 form in front of the officer. Sign the register book.
- When you receive your permit, verify that your name and the serial numbers and departure dates are correct.
- You will need to submit your permit to SAPS in order to exit the country with your rifle.

Special Conditions

- **If you are transiting through South Africa** and are spending the night, you will need to hire a firearm transporter to transport and store your firearms until you depart South Africa.
- **Hunters from non-English speaking countries** must provide all documentation required for a temporary firearm importation permit in English when applying upon arrival at the airport. You

can avoid this issue by applying online in advance or applying through the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa or another firearm transport service.

Tips on Packing Ammo

On flights to and within South Africa, never pack ammunition in your gun case, even if your airline allows it. Air travel regulations in South Africa do not allow ammunition to be packed in gun cases, and some regional airports do not allow ammo packed in your luggage either. Pack all ammo in a lockable case that can be checked as a separate luggage item in addition to the firearms. On flights within South Africa, be prepared to remove your ammo from inside your bags and check it as a separate item. Use a box that can be locked (US hunters should use a TSA accessible lock) and label or tag the box as you would other luggage. This will prevent delays during the bag screening process and ensure your ammo arrives at your final destination.