

The Atlantic Marksmen Association – Frequently Asked Questions

Question: **Do I need a license to join AMA?**

Answer: You do NOT require a firearms license (a Possession Acquisition License (PAL) or a Possession Only License (POL)) to join AMA. It makes life easier and it is expected that new members would work on the courses and license once you join, but you can join the club first and then obtain your license later.

If you join the club before you have your license, you can still shoot the club's firearms but you will have to arrange with the Range Officer on duty, or another shooter, to provide ammo while you are at the range. As long as you're shooting .22 LR, there will likely be lots of people can help out.

Question: **Do I need to own my own firearm to join AMA?**

Answer: You do NOT need to own your own firearm to join AMA. The club owns a number of 'club firearms' that are usually available for members and guests to use during regular shooting sessions. Provision of club firearms is not guaranteed. Not every RO has access to the club's firearms. The RO on duty also can decide to not provide a club firearm to anyone based on available supervision, experience of the individual, or personal judgment.

Question: **Do I need a firearm license?**

Answer: In Canada there are currently two types of license: a Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) and a Possession Only License (POL). A PAL basically allows the holder to take possession of firearms they currently do not own such as buying a new firearm. A POL basically allows the holder to continue to own/keep firearms they already own. All new licenses being issued now are PALs.

There are two further types of restrictions available on new licenses: Restricted and Non-Restricted. Non-restricted firearms include most rifles and shotguns in Canada. Restricted firearms include handguns and certain specifically designated long guns including some sporting rifles such as the AR-15 rifle. If you want to buy a new firearm, you must ensure you have the correct license for the type you want to buy. Either type of license will allow you to purchase any type of legal ammunition.

Note you need a license to purchase ammunition so it is worthwhile to get your license even if you only plan on borrowing someone else's firearm or using the club's firearms.

Question: How do I obtain a firearms license in Nova Scotia?

Answer: To begin the process, contact the Nova Scotia Community College (www.nsc.ca/Learning_Programs/Customized_Training/Firearms_Safety_Courses.asp or 902-491-4911 in Metro / 1-866-679-6722). If you are in the Halifax Metro Area, contact the Akerley Campus (www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/locations/Akerley/). There are two courses: The Non-Restricted Firearms Safety Course and the Restricted Firearms Safety Course. The first course is needed for a Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) for non-restricted firearms (most long guns like most shotguns and rifles). The second course is for restricted firearms including handguns and some designated long guns including some sporting rifles such as the AR-15.

You'll need the Non-Restricted course before you take the Restricted course. It may be possible to find a combined course that gets you both qualifications - ask the community college.

The safety courses usually don't include actual shooting but they cover the basics of safety, current regulations and laws, and basic handling skills. The NS Community College conducts PAL courses here in Nova Scotia. You can either call your nearest NSCC campus or call the NS Provincial Chief Firearms Office (902-424-6689 or www.gov.ns.ca/just/public_safety/firearms.asp) for details.

Once you have completed your course(s), you can apply for the appropriate PAL. The Canadian Firearms Centre (CFC) website (www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/) can provide the application forms available for download. The CFC website also provides current info on the cost and the photograph, reference and other requirements.

Download the appropriate form from the CFC website, complete the form and mail it in with your photograph, check and information as indicated on the form/web site.

Question: How do I join AMA?

Answer: To join the club just download and fill in the membership application form from our web page. Mail the form with a check to cover the first year's dues PLUS the initiation fee. Mail your completed application as indicated on the form. If you cannot mail your application and fee, you may come to the club's indoor range on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:15 PM (from September to June) and give it to a board member to have processed.

Question: **How long does the application process take?**

Answer: Expect a response within two weeks turnaround time. If your application is accepted, you will be on probation for three months. If you do not break any safety rules in that period, the board will approve you as a permanent member.

Question: **What is the Membership year?**

Answer: The membership year runs from 1 October to 30 September of the following year. If you join as a new member after 1 May, submit the full membership and initiation fees, and your membership will cover you until 30 September of the following calendar year (i.e. just more than one year total).

Existing members pay full renewal fees regardless of what date they send in their membership fees. In other words, if you send in your renewal on 1 September, your membership expires 30 days later.

Question: **Can I visit the club before joining?**

Answer: To find out more about the club, please drop in during a regularly scheduled shooting time: Tuesday evenings around 6:30 to about 8:30 year round at our indoor range, and Saturday afternoons around 1:00 to about 3:00 (indoors during the colder months, outdoors during the warmer months) are your best bet. Wait for a break in the shooting and introduce yourself to the Range Officer (RO) on duty. He or she should be able to show you around, explain how the club works, and answer any questions. Remember the RO is there to run the shooting so you might have to wait a little to get some of their time.

Once you visit the club twice, you are expected to apply for membership. You can continue to shoot at the club while your membership application is being processed.

Question: **Can I rent the range or firearms for a private event?**

Answer: Unfortunately AMA does not have sufficient staff or the insurance/licensing provisions to allow the club and/or its firearms to be rented to private individuals or organizations for private shooting sessions. For example, we CANNOT host your stag party, business outing, etc. We may be able to do this in the future but for now, we cannot.

We do rent our facilities to certain organizations including law enforcement agencies, private security firms, armoured car companies, etc. but they provide their own firearms and technical support and they are covered by their own insurance. For more information, please contact the club.

Question: **Does AMA provide firearm training?**

Answer: We do not at this time offer a course in shooting in general. We do, periodically (every year or so), conduct an introduction to handgun shooting. You will find, however, there are always plenty of knowledgeable members who are more than willing to help a new shooter.

Question: **Which shooting sports does AMA host/conduct?**

Answer: AMA's indoor range hosts casual (i.e. non-league) indoor handgun shooting on Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. During the winter months we conduct both rim fire and centre fire handgun league shoots on Tuesday evenings. We also conduct a youth shooting program using .22 target rifles on Friday evenings.

Our outdoor range hosts the Saturday afternoon handgun shoots during the warmer months. We also have an outdoor rifle range capable of ranges out to 280 yards and a shotgun shack with clay pigeon throwers for shotgun practice.

AMA is an active IPSC club. This is a fun, active handgun discipline and you can find more information on the IPSC Nova Scotia web site (www.ipscns.ca).

On occasion we host rim fire rifle competitions, black powder matches and we have begun hosting Single Action Shooters Society (www.sassnet.com/) matches.