



## ***IMPORTATION OF KNIVES***

Following membership queries about the importation of knives from the USA, we have written this fact sheet to help others who wish to legitimately import knives. This fact sheet does not cover the laws on carriage and use of knives in the UK, such as when in a public place; please see our "Carrying Knives" fact sheet for further details.

Importing a knife from abroad is not an offence nor does it require prior import licensing; you may order knives (folding or fixed blade) from abroad so long as they are not offensive weapons. Anybody who "sells or hires or offers for sale or hire, exposes or has in his possession for the purpose of sale or hire, or lends or gives to any other person", an offensive weapon shall be guilty of an offence. A list of items declared as offensive weapons by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 may be found at the end of this fact sheet.

### Lock knives

A lock knife is a knife with a blade that folds into the handle, is manually opened and locks in place. Lock knives are not prohibited weapons. Lock knives are routinely sought for hunting and fishing etc as they are designed to be folded away when not in use, which is both safe and practical for the owner. However, some lock knives are capable of being opened by making use of centrifugal force.

Under the Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959; anybody who manufactures, sells or hires or offers for sale or hire, or exposes or has in his possession for the purpose of sale or hire or lends or gives to any other person any knife which has a blade which is released from the handle or sheath thereof by the force of gravity or the application of centrifugal force and which, when released, is locked in place by means of a button, spring, lever, or other device, sometimes known as a "gravity knife" is guilty of an offence.

Lock knives are typically designed so that the blade has a resistance that only enables them to be opened by hand, this is UK law compliant. Lock knives that open on application of gravitational or centrifugal force will be viewed as a 'gravity knife' by the UK Border Agency. Importation of these knives is prohibited; once such a knife is detected it will be seized and destroyed.

BASC advises caution when ordering, for example; some companies may make their knives with pivot bearings which allow easy opening. Additionally a genuine lock knife's retaining screws and pins may become loose in transit also allowing the blade to be extended by centrifugal or gravitational force. Should a knife arrive in the UK and be determined as a gravity knife prosecution should only take place if the importer was found to be knowingly importing the knife and attempting to evade the prohibition.

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- (a) a knuckleduster, that is, a band of metal or other hard material worn on one or more fingers, and designed to cause injury, and any weapon incorporating a knuckleduster;
- (b) a swordstick, that is, a hollow walking-stick or cane containing a blade which may be used as a sword;
- (c) the weapon sometimes known as a "handclaw" , being a band of metal or other hard material from which a number of sharp spikes protrude, and worn around the hand;
- (d) the weapon sometimes known as a "belt buckle knife" , being a buckle which incorporates or conceals a knife;
- (e) the weapon sometimes known as a "push dagger" , being a knife the handle of which fits within a clenched fist and the blade of which protrudes from between two fingers;
- (f) the weapon sometimes known as a "hollow kubotan" , being a cylindrical container containing a number of sharp spikes;
- (g) the weapon sometimes known as a "footclaw" , being a bar of metal or other hard material from which a number of sharp spikes protrude, and worn strapped to the foot;
- (h) the weapon sometimes known as a "shuriken" , "shaken" or "death star" , being a hard non-flexible plate having three or more sharp radiating points and designed to be thrown;
- (i) the weapon sometimes known as a "balisong" or "butterfly knife" , being a blade enclosed by its handle, which is designed to split down the middle, without the operation of a spring or other mechanical means, to reveal the blade;
- (j) the weapon sometimes known as a "telescopic truncheon" , being a truncheon which extends automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in or attached to its handle;
- (k) the weapon sometimes known as a "blowpipe" or "blow gun" , being a hollow tube out of which hard pellets or darts are shot by the use of breath;
- (l) the weapon sometimes known as a "kusari gama" , being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a sickle;
- (m) the weapon sometimes known as a "kyoketsu shoge" , being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at one end to a hooked knife;
- (n) the weapon sometimes known as a "manrikigusari" or "kusari" , being a length of rope, cord, wire or chain fastened at each end to a hard weight or hand grip;
- (o) a disguised knife, that is any knife which has a concealed blade or concealed sharp point and is designed to appear to be an everyday object of a kind commonly carried on the person or in a handbag, briefcase, or other hand luggage (such as a comb, brush, writing instrument, cigarette lighter, key, lipstick or telephone).
- (p) a stealth knife, that is a knife or spike, which has a blade, or sharp point, made from a material that is not readily detectable by apparatus used for detecting metal and which is not designed for domestic use or for use in the processing, preparation or consumption of food or as a toy;
- (q) a straight, side-handled or friction-lock truncheon (sometimes known as a baton).
- (r) a sword with a curved blade of 50 centimetres or over in length; and for the purposes of this sub-paragraph, the length of the blade shall be the straight line distance from the top of the handle to the tip of the blade.