



Responsible and Accountable
Firearm Ownership

Accredited as a Hunting and as Sport-Shooting Association with SAPS (CFR)

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Newsletter

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SAPS AGAIN ACCEPTS TRAINING CERTIFICATES OF SASSETA ACCREDITED TRAINING PROVIDERS

Dear Member

This is an important communication and it is suggest you please take the time to read through it as it impacts on your applications for competency and for licences for new firearms directly !!

In order to try and clean house due to alleged fraudulent operations by some proficiency training providers, delegation of certain of SASSETA's authority were on 5-4-2013 transferred to the South African Professional Firearm Trainers Council (SAPFTC). Proficiency training providers are the people where we all have to do our proficiency training with before we can apply for competency to possess firearms (knowledge of the Act, handguns, rifles, shotguns, carbines, and training to possess black powder firearms).

SAPFTC consists of a group of training providers. This group (SAPFTC) were given the authority to take over the function of the accreditation of training providers, who would now have to seek accreditation with SAPFTC and not with SASSETA anymore. SAPFTC were also given the authority to authenticate proficiency training certificates instead of SASSETA conducting that function. One would thus receive a SAPFTC certificate instead of a SASSETA certificate after completion of one's proficiency training.

The majority of training providers in this country are, however, not accredited to SAPFTC and were not part of the negotiations initiated by SAPFTC to take over the mentioned SASSETA functions.

In light of the above processes; and despite the last mentioned fact; and without taking the effect of his instructions on the law abiding firearm owner into account; and without first communicating anything to the legal firearm owning public at large; Lt Genl. LJ Mothiba (Divisional Commissioner

for Visible Policing), on 22-08-2013, issued a SAPS directive to all DFOs at all stations in the country, with the following instructions:

- I quote -

5.3 SAPS will ... only accept firearm training certificates issued by firearm training providers accredited by SAPFTC.

6. ... firearm training certificates issued by firearm training providers not accredited with the SAPFTC will not be accepted by the SAPS with effect from 2013-09-01.

- close quote -

Thus meaning that if you have completed your proficiency training with a training provider who is not accredited with SAPFTC (no matter when), SAPS would from 1-9-2013 not accept that training provider's training certificate if you would apply for competency or for firearm licences. You would have to re-do your proficiency training at a training provider who is accredited with SAPFTC (or you would have to wait until such time as your training provider could accredit with SAPFTC and issue you with new training certificates – how long that would take nobody knows)

At no stage were accredited associations, nor the public (legal firearms owners) informed of this change in training requirements related to the firearm licensing process. This is strange as SAPS has in the past, always, diligently, responsibly and professionally, negotiated any such drastic changes in implementation of aspects related to the Firearms Control Act with the public, or at least with accredited associations, and at the very least with the accredited training providers as a whole. It is alleged, however, that SAPS were not involved with the negotiations initiated by SAPFTC in the above mentioned transfer of certain authorities from SASSETA to SAPFTC.

Since 1-9-2013 the instruction by General Mothiba thus resulted in DFOs showing people away when they went to apply for competency or for new licences with training providers' certificates who were not accredited to SAPFTC (a number of our members had this very bad experience). These people were instructed by their DFOs to redo their proficiency training with proficiency training providers who are accredited to SAPFTC.

In the meantime, however, this situation also led to serious behind the scenes work by concerned proficiency training providers unaligned to SAPFTC in conjunction with AfriForum. Their combined effort resulted in a court case that might be instituted to firstly stop the implementation of the 22-8-2013 SAPS directive, and secondly to investigate the process through which SAPFTC received the above mentioned delegation from SASSETA (plus a few other issues which are not important to the message of this newsletter).

It therefore, is with sincere gratitude to the SAPFTC unaligned group of training providers and to AfriForum, that one can report the good news that their work has resulted in the initial SAPS directive of 22-8-2013 being withdrawn on 13-9-2013 by a SAPS directive issued by Major General S Pienaar (acting Divisional Commissioner for Visible Policing). In this SAPS directive (13-9-2013) the General informs all DFOs that the directive of 22-8-2013 is withdrawn with immediate effect, and that further communications would be issued in this regard in due course.

Thus meaning that we can all again apply for competency and for new firearm licences as in the past with the proficiency training certificates of training providers who are accredited to SASSETA as we have done since 2004 (the initial accreditation was with POSLEC which became SASSETA)

NSA accepts the fact that the whole confused issue as set out above, was a result of people seriously, and with good intent, trying to weed out the hand full of fraudulent proficiency training providers who have been issuing fraudulent proficiency training certificates or who issued proficiency training certificates without doing any training while still receiving all monies concerned.

But we have to say that as an association, NSA does not support this way of doing business when it concerns serious legal matters pertaining the possession of firearms. We stand by our well stated position that government (in this instance SAPS) should not penalise legal firearm owners as a collective because there are fraudsters who bedevil the process. Go after the fraudsters and rather support legal firearm owners – after all that is who we are, no less and no more, legal firearm owners. We are the people who support all efforts of the SAPS concerning the legal possession of firearms.

Why did you even think of taking us legal firearm owners to task (can you imagine what the effect would be if all of us legal firearm owners had to redo our proficiency training – who would pay for that ? And how legal would the results the instruction be ?). We did not do the fraudulent training – some of us were misled by these fraudsters and will pay a dear price for it. Close down the hand full of fraudsters and give them harsh penalties – in that we would support SAPS wholeheartedly – and even possibly the effort of SAPFTC if their process was driven transparently in the whole of the firearms collective. But don't take legal firearm owners to task for the wrongs of a handful of people as if we are all part of the collective of wrongdoers (that's a military mentality and poor solution to a serious problem – apart from the fact that this manner of action sits very badly within the law abiding sections of our democratic civil society).

To our members we say - in the event that you are shown the door when you submit your application for competency or for a new firearm licence because your proficiency training certificates have not been authenticated by SAPFTC or your training provider is not accredited to SAPFTC, you must please mention the fact of the withdrawal of the directive of 22-8-2013. In the event that your DFO does not want to accept your explanation, please phone the office (012-343-3236 or 012-343-1078) from the DFO's office, and we shall e-mail or fax the relevant SAPS directive of 13-9-2013 to your DFO immediately.

The directive of 13-9-2013 will also be posted on the website as a follow-on to this newsletter soonest.

Dedicated members, please remember dedicated activity reports end November again

Keep safe – be vigilant - protect yourselves at all times – but enjoy your hunting (if there is still some left) but definitely your shooting – now is the time to redo that load which did not work as expected in the hunting field – its also the time of the year to participate in the annual national postal target shooting competition see <http://www.natshoot.co.za/2013postal.php>

Kind regards
Herman Els