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1 Briefing

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2 Briefing format

The military and emergency services often use a particular format for giving briefings. Here is an example of how it could be applied to an archery event.

A briefing should be given to everyone participating and watching.

2.1 Ground

- Describe the range
 - where the targets are (particularly important for roving or novelty shoots)
 - Any areas which are out of bounds or hazardous etc

2.2 Situation

- What is the shoot?
- Is it a competition, a practice, just for fun?
- How long the shoot is expected to run for
- If the shoot is happening at a time when people may have been drinking (eg afternoon or after dinner, remind people that if they aren't fit to drive, they aren't fit to shoot.

2.3 Mission

- What is the point of the game/competition/practice?
- What does someone need to do to win?

2.4 Execution

- What equipment can be used in this competition?
 - Period equipment only? Is modern equipment allowed?
 - How many arrows are needed for this competition?
- What to do if the archer drops an arrow

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- How much time is allowed, or can archers shoot at their own pace, or is it in volleys?
 - If it is a timed end, can the archer start with an arrow knocked or bolt loaded?
 - Toeing or straddling the line (choose one and be consistent)
 - How many to the line to shoot at once
 - Remind people:
 - Don't nock or loose an arrow or bolt, or throw a weapon while anyone is forward of the shooting line
 - When you have finished, lower your bow or any weapons in hand, step back from the line, and wait for further instructions.
 - You must not go forward of the shooting line while others are shooting, and you must wait until you are told to go and collect your arrows or thrown weapons.
 - Put your bow down somewhere safe before going to collect your arrows.
 - Anything else participants need to know about how the game is played

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- - Who is tallying the scores (the marshal, list keeper or archer)?
 - How points are counted (if relevant)
 - How to count arrows that cut the line, or have bounced out
- Collecting arrows
 - Remind people about collecting arrows safely, asking permission before touching other people's equipment
- Do you have a list keeper collecting scores? - identify them
- What happens if you are eliminated from the competition (if relevant)

2.5 Control and communication

- Identify the Target Archery Marshal in charge, and any assisting.
- Explain that if people don't follow instructions from the marshals about safety or the competition they will be asked to leave
- Range commands
 - Wait for instructions before approaching the line, otherwise stay well back
 - Wait until you are given the all clear to shoot
 - How you will tell people when they are allowed to shoot and when to stop - e.g. "Range is open," "Range is closed." "You may fire at will." "Stop shooting." "Loose when ready." etc.

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- Holds
 - If you see a safety problem on the range, call “Hold!”.
 - If anyone calls “Hold!” Do not shoot! Lower your bow or weapon, carefully remove your arrows or bolt from your weapon, and wait for the Target Archery Marshal to tell you what to do.

2.6 Questions

- Are there any questions?
- You could also ask a few questions to make sure that people understand what you have told them.

2.7 Example briefing for a shoot

Greetings good gentles, welcome to our archery range. I am Captain Shootsalot. We'll be shooting at the three targets at the other end of the range from the lines marked here. Please avoid the area to the right of the range as there are some wombat holes.

We're doing a King's Round today. This afternoon's competition should run until about 4pm. If you've been drinking after lunch, remember that if you aren't fit to drive, you aren't fit to shoot.

The aim of the game is to hit the target with at least one arrow from further and further away. If you fail to hit the target with one of your arrows in a round, you will be eliminated, and the winner will be the last archer remaining.

You can shoot up to six arrows in each round, in your own time. If you hit the target with one of them, you are through to the next round, so you don't need to fire any more arrows. If you are unsure, use one of your remaining arrows. If you miss with all six, you're out. If you drop one over the line, sorry, it's gone. If it bounces off the target, sorry, it won't count.

Looks like we can fit six to the line at once. Please all stand astride the line, and please fill in a gap when an archer steps back.

Remember not to nock or loose when anyone is forward of the line, and wait for the instruction to shoot. I'll call “Range is open, you may fire at will.”

When we are all done, we'll put our bows down, and wait for instructions before going to collect arrows. I'll call “Range is closed, move forward and collect.”

After each round, we'll move back another five yards, if you are still in. If no one hits the target at a particular distance we'll do another round at the same distance until someone hits the target.

When we go to collect arrows, please help find the ones beyond the target, but ask for permission before touching other's equipment.

Only arrows inside the target area will count, if it cuts the line, it's in.

I'll be the Marshal-in-charge for this shoot, but I'll be assisted by Lord John Fletcher, and Lady Jane Bowyer. Please follow our instructions, or if you don't want to, you can leave now.

Make sure you have signed in with our list keeper, Myfanwy. Please wave, Myf! When you have been eliminated, please let her know so she can record your final distance for you.

Remember, if anyone sees any problems, call "Hold!". If you hear anyone call "Hold!", do not shoot! Remove your arrow from your bow, and wait for instructions. It's for your safety.

Does anyone have any questions?

Excellent. Could I have the first six archers to the line? The range is now open, you may shoot at will.

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3 Crossbow legislation

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4 Crossbow legislation

This information is provided as the laws for possession and use of crossbows vary from state to state and between New Zealand and Australia.

The following information is correct as of 13 February 2016.

Archers wishing to use crossbows:

- Need to know their state laws on possession and use of crossbows.
- Must carry a copy of any required permits at all times, while in possession of, carrying or using, a crossbow.
- Must check state laws on the possession and use of crossbows when traveling interstate.

Regardless on the mundane legal ability to use crossbows, SCA Ltd's insurance policy prohibits the use of crossbows on moving targets (including people), or while mounted, in all parts of Australia.

4.1 Australia

4.1.1 Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

Crossbows are a prohibited weapon under the Prohibited Weapons Act 1996 and Prohibited Weapons Regulations 1997, and a permit is required to own, possess or use a crossbow. Any individual without a permit may not have physical possession of, or use, a crossbow.

An individual's ability to acquire a permit to own or use a crossbow in the Australian Capital Territory is entirely independent of membership or participation in the SCA.

The requirements for a permit mean the applicant must be a member of one of five approved archery clubs:

- Canberra Archery Club Incorporated
- Canberra Bowhunters Club Incorporated
- Capital Field Archers
- Tuggeranong Archery Club Incorporated
- Weston Valley Archery Club Incorporated.

The SCA is not an approved club in its own right.

Crossbows may only be used for the purpose of participating in competitions conducted by or in association with one of those clubs, so SCA events involving the use of crossbows will need to be done in association with one of them. This already happens with target archery events in ACT.

You must be the age of 18 years or older to own a crossbow, you must be 16 years or older to use a crossbow.

An individual may apply to the Australian Federal Police for a permit to use, carry or have possession of a crossbow.

At this stage we believe that ACT does NOT recognise permits from other states. Members who hold a crossbow permit from another state, but not ACT may not bring crossbows into ACT, nor transit through ACT with a crossbow in their possession.

4.1.2 New South Wales (NSW)

Crossbows are prohibited weapons under the Weapons Prohibition Act 1998 and the Weapons Prohibition Regulation 2009.

An individual's ability to acquire a permit to own or use a crossbow in New South Wales is entirely independent of membership or participation in the SCA.

Historical re-enactment purposes is NOT a legitimate reason for owning a crossbow in New South Wales. Unless SCA Ltd becomes an affiliated with Archery Australia or its regional governing body in New South Wales, membership with SCA Ltd does NOT qualify our members to apply for a permit to own or use crossbows for sporting purposes. Membership with SCA Ltd also does NOT qualify our members to apply for a permit to own a crossbow as a collector in New South Wales.

New South Wales does NOT recognise permits from other states. Members who hold a crossbow permit from another state, but not NSW, may not bring crossbows into NSW, nor transit through New South Wales with a crossbow in their possession.

A Prohibited Weapons Re-enactment Event Permit specifically states that sporting or collector permit holders cannot use the weapon at an event, only display it, so is not suitable for our purposes.

4.1.3 Northern Territory (NT)

Crossbows are controlled weapons under the Weapons Control Act.

No licence or other authority is required to possess and use crossbows in the Northern Territory. However, a person under 18 years of age must not possess, carry or use a crossbow.

If SCA activities are planned for a public place (or at a school) please notify the Firearms Policy & Records Unit in advance so that Police are aware of the event. By doing this the reasonable & lawful excuse provisions will have been pre-established, which should prevent any response on the day.

Lawful excuse includes sport and recreation, and legitimate collection, display and exhibition.

4.1.4 Queensland (QLD)

Crossbows are regulated weapon under the Weapons Act 1990.

Ownership of a crossbow requires a Category M licence. Physical possession and use of crossbows requires a licence, unless the person is under the supervision of a licence holder.

The SCA Ltd is recognised by Queensland Police as an approved organisation for the purposes of crossbow licences.

The police will recognise interstate licences if the person who owns the crossbow is not a resident of Queensland. If they move permanently to Queensland, they will have to apply for a Queensland licence.

Crossbows can only be shot on an approved range. Any event that wishes to have crossbow shooting will need to apply for an approved range status. This can be either permanent or temporary (which is useful for war events). This is a complex process and requires the site to be visited by the weapons bureau to check the safety of the site. The application must include a letter from the local council that they have no objection to the site being used.

Individuals who do not have a licence may use crossbows at an approved range, if they provide the range officer with photographic identification, and sign and date a form providing name, date of birth and residential address, declaring that the person is a licensee or not an excluded person.

Minors who are at least 11 years of age may hold and use a crossbow under the direct supervision of a range officer, or their parent, guardian or person acting as parent or guardian if licensed.

4.1.5 South Australia (SA)

Crossbows are a prohibited weapon under the Summary Offences Act 1953.

Possession and use of crossbows requires an individual to be participating in a lawful and recognised form of recreation or sport that reasonably requires the use or possession of the weapon. Fortunately, target archery in the SCA is a legitimate form of recreation.

Crossbows cannot be supplied to any person under 18 years of age.

4.1.6 Tasmania (TAS)

Crossbows are a restricted weapon under the Police Offences Act 1935.

A person may not use, carry or have possession of a crossbow unless they are authorised in writing by the Commissioner of Police to do so.

For sport and target shooting, you must be a current member of an approved shooting organisation that conducts competitions or activities involving crossbows. To collect,

show and exhibit crossbows, you must belong to a bona fide club and show paperwork relating to same when seeking authorisation.

13 Feb 2016 ? we are currently investigating whether the SCA Ltd can be an approved shooting organisation or is a bona fide club for collection and exhibition purposes.

Currently, an individual's ability to acquire a permit to own or use a crossbow in Tasmania is entirely independent of membership or participation in the SCA.

At this stage we believe that Tasmania does NOT recognise permits from other states. Members who hold a crossbow permit from another state, but not Tasmania, may not bring crossbows into Tasmania.

4.1.7 Victoria (VIC)

Crossbows are a prohibited weapon under the Control of Weapons Act 2000.

Historical re-enactment purposes is NOT a legitimate reason for owning a crossbow in Victoria. Unless SCA Ltd becomes an affiliated with Archery Australia or its regional governing body in Victoria, membership with SCA Ltd does NOT qualify our members to own or use crossbows for sporting purposes. Membership with SCA Ltd also does NOT qualify our members to own a crossbow as a collector in Victoria.

Victoria does NOT recognise permits from other states. Members who hold a crossbow permit from another state, but not Victoria, may not bring crossbows into Victoria, nor transit through Victoria with a crossbow in their possession.

4.1.8 Western Australia (WA)

Crossbows are a prohibited weapon under the Weapons Regulations 1999.

Possession and use of crossbows is prohibited within Western Australia unless you have a notice in writing from the Minister for Police stating you are an Exempt Arbalest.

To obtain this notice you needed to have been a member of Archery Australia (Inc) and possessed a crossbow for the purposes of taking part in crossbow events or competitions before 1 July 2011.

Essentially, no new permits will be issued for Exempt Arbalests in Western Australia.

A person without an exemption may not use a crossbow, even under supervision of an Exempt Arbalest.

At this stage we believe that Western Australia does NOT recognise permits from other states. Members who hold a crossbow permit from another state, but not Western Australia, may not bring crossbows into Western Australia.

4.2 New Zealand

Crossbows and other bows and arrows are offensive weapons under the Crimes Act 1961. Bow and arrows should only be carried or used for a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose, for example archery competition, practice or hunting.

<http://www.police.govt.nz/faq/what-are-the-rules-relating-to-crossbows>

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5 Equipment inspection guidelines

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6 Equipment inspection guidelines

The basic rule for inspecting equipment is: If you are not sure that it is safe, don't pass it.

6.1 Damage to bows

Have the archer string the bow before inspection.

Bows should be free of cracks and gouges.

- Have the archer draw the bow and then slowly release the tension. Never dry fire a bow! Watch the back and sides of the bow for cracks that might show up under tension. Cracks are least serious in areas close to the handle of the bow and most dangerous in areas of high bending.
- Bows that show major cracks or that have cracks that go across the limbs should be rejected as they can break.
- Small cracks should be marked at the ends and watched. If they have grown after two or three test arrows, fail the bow. If they seem stable, pass the bow, but re-check it throughout the competition or practice.
- Laminated bows sometimes have small cracks in the fiberglass running up and down the limbs. This condition is not serious, unless the crack goes through both the wood and fiberglass.

Bows shouldn't be excessively warped or twisted. Recurve bows can have this problem, especially when strung by bending the bow around a leg.

- Look down the string to see if the bow limbs are parallel. If a limb is excessively twisted, then the bow is unsafe.
- Have the archer draw the bow and then slowly release the tension twice and repeat the inspection. If the string is not in the grooves on the limbs, then the bow is warped.
- If the warping is constant (and the string remains in the same position after each shot) the bow is usable. If the string keeps moving sideways with each shot, the bow should be failed.

6.2 Strings

Bowstrings shouldn't have many frayed or broken strands. If several strands of the string are broken or otherwise damaged, fail the bow.

The string should be the proper length for the bow. Pass a bow with an improper string unless it is so short that using it will overstress the bow.

The serving on the string should be secure and not unraveling.

If the string shows small hairs and looks fuzzy, it is dried out and needs some bow wax. Pass it, but tell the archer that the string will have a short life expectancy.

6.3 Arrows and bolts

The shaft should be free of cracks or deep gouges.

- Bend the arrow a little while rotating it between your fingers. This will cause any invisible cracks to open up.

The tips, nocks and fletches must be securely fastened.

The nocks must not be cracked.

6.4 Thrown Weapons

An axe blade should be sharp enough to stick in the target, rather than bouncing off.

Check axes and spears for cracks and splinters in the handle. The head must be securely fastened.

7 Suggested period equipment standards

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8 Suggested period equipment standards

The Society Target Archery Marshal's Handbook (October 2016) includes an appendix of standards for period equipment. They are included here in plain English.

These are not hard and fast rules, and the Target Archery Marshal-in-charge of the competition can set their own requirements for period equipment, including costume.

8.1 General standards

If the style and construction of your bow can be documented to pre-17th century, then it can be defined as period bow. Bows which don't meet these requirements can still shoot in the open division of a competition, if available.

If you want to use uncommon equipment, you should bring documentation to support its use. The Target Archery Marshal-in-Charge has the final say, unless the Deputy Earl Marshal for Archery or their designated duty is present. If approval is given, we recommend that you get it in writing and keep it with your documentation and the equipment for future reference.

Your bow may not have to conform to your persona or costume. Marshals running period competitions can have stricter equipment requirements, such as asking your costume to match your equipment.

Modern materials such as plastics, or synthetic glues, finishes, fibers (strings) or artificial sinew, etc. are allowed, as long as they don't give you an unfair advantage in performance over period materials. Composite bows (of different woods or backed with sinew or rawhide, etc.) are allowed. Whatever the bow is made of, it must look like a period bow.

8.2 Bows

1. Your bow shouldn't have any modern features, such as full or partial center-cut handles or built-in shelves. Many modern longbows have some center-cut on their handle part (riser in a recurve), which means the bow wouldn't qualify as a period bow. Hand bows with grips narrower than the limbs are not considered to be center-cut.
2. Your bow shouldn't have anything added solely for sighting/aiming.

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3. Your bow shouldn't have modern-style attachable arrow rests. However, you can use a protruding rest made from layers of leather, or other period material, added to the handle.
 4. You can use simple modern metal nocking points or tied on string or other documented period-style nocking point. Some competitions may not allow any form of arrow rest or nocking point.
 5. You can use any period-style release appropriate for your bow, e.g. a thumb ring for an Eastern-style bow, but you aren't required to do so.

8.3 Crossbows

To qualify as a period crossbow:

1. The stock should be made of wood
2. The stock can't have a modern-style rifle butt
3. The lock and release mechanism should be documentable to pre-17th century. The mechanism should be made of any suitable material.
4. It shouldn't have front sights
5. The prod can be made of any material
6. Strings can be made of any material, except metal
7. Whatever the materials, the crossbow must look like a period crossbow
8. Your crossbow can be shot from any position. However, you can only hold your crossbow in your hands, not resting on a sandbag, or similar, unless the rules of a competition specifically allow the use of period-style shooting benches, rests, or similar.
9. Slings shouldn't be used for shooting, but can be used to carry the crossbow.

8.4 Arrows and bolts

1. Some period arrowheads can cause excessive damage to the target or backstop, so you may not be allowed to use them. Check with the owner of the target.
2. Nocks can be either self or reinforced self, or period-style insert nocks. They should be of materials that are similar in appearance to period materials, and also similar in style.

9 Suggested range dimensions

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10 Suggested range dimensions

These are suggested dimensions for the range and safety zones for target and specialty competitions. They are general guidelines. The actual sizes can vary, depending on terrain, the archers, and other conditions. It is better to err on the side of safety with too much space than not enough.

10.1 Target Shoots

1. We recommend that the safety zone behind the farthest target extends at least 40 yards (36.5m) back, or for half the distance from the line to the farthest target, whichever is greater.
2. For shoots of 50 yards (45.7m) or less, the safety zone to the sides of the shooting line and targets should extend outward at a 30- to 45-degree angle from both ends of the shooting line to a line even with the furthest target, and continue straight back from there.
3. For shoots of over 50 yards (45.7m), the safety zone to the sides of the shooting line and targets should extend outward at a 30- to 45-degree angle from both ends of the shooting line to a line 50 yards (45.7m) away or one-quarter the distance to the far end of the safety zone, whichever is greater, and continue straight back from there.

10.2 Specialty Shoots

1. For clout shoots, we recommend that the safety zone extends beyond the target for at least half the target distance, and to each side for at least one-fifth the target distance. We recommend that the Target Archery Marshal arrange for any archers who are not familiar with clout shooting to practice in advance. They should start with their bows aimed at a low angle and work their way up to help prevent overshooting the safety zone.
2. For flight shoots, we recommend that the safety zone distance be at least 300 yards (274.3m), or the maximum range of the heaviest bow allowed. We don't recommend holding a flight shoot if space is limited.
3. For roving courses, we recommend that the safety zone distance be at least one and one-half times the distance to the target. Include special consideration for the angles and distances required for the other targets in the course. Don't place targets within line of sight with another target.

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11 Thrown Weapon legislation

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12 Thrown Weapon legislation

The information on this website does not constitute legal advice. It is provided on a best-efforts basis, and was believed to be correct at the time of publication. Links to other websites were current at the time of publication, but the reader should not assume that links to legislation refer to the most recent amendments. Readers are encouraged to seek formal legal advice from qualified personnel if they believe that any of the issues discussed on this website may apply to them.

This information is provided as the laws for possession and use of thrown weapons vary from state to state and between New Zealand and Australia.

The following information is correct as of 10 June 2025.

Those wishing to use thrown weapons:

- Need to know their state laws on possession and use of thrown weapons, bearing in mind that different types of thrown weapons may fall under different restrictions.
- Must carry a copy of any required permits at all times, while in possession of, carrying or using, a thrown weapon.
- Must check state laws on the possession and use of thrown weapons when traveling interstate.

This document will largely focus on throwing knives, and throwing axes, as legislation most often makes mention of those weapons.

Furthermore, this article will not go into depth on the legislation regarding the sale of thrown weapons, as the scope of this page is for weapon possession and usage.

12.1 Australia

12.1.1 Federal Regulations

Under the Customs Act 1901, the importation into Australia of throwing blades, throwing knives or throwing axes is prohibited unless the importation is in accordance with certain requirements.

A Police Certification test is applicable to Throwing Knives, Throwing Blades and Throwing Axes. For weapons subject to the police certification test, importers should obtain a B709B form signed by the relevant police weapons registry in their state or

territory. The completed and signed B709B form notifies the Australian Border Force that:

- the applicant holds a licence or authorisation under state/territory law to possess the goods or
- a licence or authorisation to possess the goods is not required under state/territory law

You must contact your state or territory police weapons registry to make an application to import weapons under the police certification test.

In some jurisdictions, police may issue a B709X form for certain weapons. The B709X form provides police certification for all residents of the relevant state or territory. It is only applicable where residents do not require a licence or authorisation to possess the weapons listed on the form. Residents of the relevant state or territory can import the weapons listed on the form without applying to the police for a B709B. Australian Border Force officers may require evidence that the importer is a resident of the state or territory that issued the B709X form. Contact your state or territory police firearms and weapons registry to find out if a B709X has been issued in your state or territory.

12.1.2 Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

Under the Prohibited Weapons Act 1996 it is an offence to have unauthorised possession of a “blade, knife or axe that is either made or modified to be thrown” as these are Prohibited Weapons.

12.1.3 New South Wales (NSW)

Under the Summary Offences Act 1988, and the Criminal Legislation Amendment (Knife Crimes) Act 2023 a person shall not, without reasonable excuse (proof of which lies on the person), have in his or her custody an offensive implement in a public place or a school.

A reasonable excuse to have a thrown weapon includes “because it is reasonable necessary for participation in a lawful entertainment, recreation or sport”, and “because it is reasonably necessary during travel to or from or incidental to ” that activity.

12.1.4 Northern Territory (NT)

Under the Weapons Control Regulations 2001, a “throwing blade”, being a knife or axe of any material that is designed to be thrown or modified to enable it to be thrown, is classified as a prohibited weapon.

12.1.5 Queensland (QLD)

Under the Weapons Act 1990:

- A person must not physically possess a knife in a public place or a school, unless the person has a reasonable excuse.
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- It is a reasonable excuse for subsection (1) to physically possess a knife to participate in a lawful entertainment, recreation or sport; or for lawfully exhibiting the knife.

12.1.6 South Australia (SA)

Under the Summary Offences Act 1953, a person who, without lawful excuse, has possession of a knife in a school or public place is guilty of an offence.

A person who manufactures, sells, distributes, supplies or otherwise deals in, prohibited weapons; or uses or has possession of a prohibited weapon, is guilty of an offence.

Thrown weapons aren't prohibited weapons in South Australia, however double-sided blade or spike-style blade daggers are.

As such, single edged throwing weapons may be preferable

Possession and use of prohibited weapons requires an individual to be participating in a lawful and recognised form of recreation or sport that reasonably requires the use or possession of the weapon.

Prohibited weapons cannot be supplied to any person under 18 years of age.

12.1.7 Tasmania (TAS)

First draft. Update Coming Soon.

12.1.8 Victoria (VIC)

Under the Control of Weapons Act 2000 and Control of Weapons Regulations 2011 a Throwing blade, being a knife or axe of any material that is designed or modified to be thrown, is a prohibited weapon.

Control of Weapons Act 1990 EXEMPTION TO POSSESS THROWING BLADES, MACES AND FLAILS ? RE-ENACTMENT ORGANISATIONS

12.1.9 Western Australia (WA)

First draft. Update Coming Soon.

Bows, Spears, Daggers, and "Throwing Blade or Knife" are Controlled Weapons under the Weapons Regulations 1999 [[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_32124.pdf/\\$FILE/Weapons%20Regulations%201999%20-%20%5B03-c0-01%5D.pdf](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_32124.pdf/$FILE/Weapons%20Regulations%201999%20-%20%5B03-c0-01%5D.pdf)

Western Australia Weapons Regulations 1999]. Except as provided in section 10, a person who, without a lawful excuse, carries or possesses a controlled weapon commits an offence. A person who supplies a controlled weapon to a child commits an offence. It is a defence to a charge of an offence under subsection (3) to prove the accused believed on reasonable grounds that the child supplied with the weapon intended to use it only to commit lawful acts in the course of a sporting or recreational activity.

12.2 New Zealand

Throwing knives are legal to possess and use in New Zealand for legitimate purposes (such as competition and practice), it isn't legal to bring them into the country.

Crossbows, bows, and thrown weapons are all offensive weapons under the Crimes Act 1961. They should only be carried or used for a lawful, proper and sufficient purpose, for example throwing weapon competition, practice or hunting.

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