

WEAPONS OFFENCES

It's against the law to carry a prohibited or controlled weapon, or a dangerous article.

It's also against the law to buy a weapon if you're under the age of 18.

It can be lawful to carry a controlled weapon or a dangerous article if it's genuinely being used for employment or sport, but it's not lawful to carry it for self defence.

The police can search anyone in a public place without a warrant if they reasonably believe they're carrying a weapon.

The police can also declare a public area like a train station a 'designated area'. They can randomly search anyone in a designated area for weapons without a warrant. If you refuse to be searched or interfere with the search of someone else in a designated area you can be fined.

PROHIBITED WEAPONS

Flick knives, concealed knife blades, knuckle dusters and martial arts weapons

CONTROLLED WEAPONS

Hunting and fishing knives, pocket knives, kitchen knives, crossbows, spear guns, bayonets, swords, cattle prods and imitation firearms

DANGEROUS ARTICLES

Everyday items like tools or sports equipment that have been modified or are being carried with the intention of using them for violence

You can be charged by the police for a weapons offence, or given an on-the-spot fine.

If you're charged by the police for a weapons offence you should talk to a lawyer because you'll have to go to court. If you're found guilty of buying a weapon you can be given a heavy fine. If you're found guilty of carrying a weapon or a dangerous article the maximum penalty can be a prison sentence of 6 months to 2 years. The penalties double if the offence happens in or around a licenced premise.

If you're given an on-the-spot fine for a weapons offence you should pay it within 28 days, otherwise the fine will increase. Talk to a lawyer if you think you've been wrongfully fined, or if you want to make a complaint about a police officer who's done the wrong thing.

WEAPONS SEARCHES

If you're under 18 the police can use a metal detector to search you

If you're under 18 the police can do a pat-down search, search your bag or ask you to empty your pockets or remove outer clothing provided another person is present

Before they search you the police must explain what they're going to do and give you a search notice

The police must give you their name, rank and place of duty if you ask

The police can confiscate any weapons they find during a search