

Changes to Firearms Licensing Requirements in Western Australia

Reading time:

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Background

On 31 March 2025, various changes to the Firearms Act 2024 (WA) came into effect in Western Australia. For an individual to own and operate a firearm, they must be a fit and proper person. Determining whether an individual is fit and proper requires assessment of their health, because some medical conditions, disabilities and medications may adversely impact their ability to safely operate a firearm.

MIPS has received a number of calls from WA members who are understandably concerned about the impact of these new laws on their practice, their relationships with patients, their medicolegal obligations, and their liability if a patient with a firearm commits an offence.

Firearms Authority Health Assessments

The following individuals are required to undergo a firearms authority health assessment (FAHA):

- all first-time applicants for a firearms licence;
- all existing firearm licence holders who are aged under 80 years (every five years)
- all existing firearm licence holders who are aged 80 years and older (annually)

Detailed guidelines on how to undertake a FAHA and the physical and mental attributes required for the safe use of a firearm can be found [here](#).

There are two components to the FAHA. Part 1 is a self-assessment undertaken by the firearms licence holder or applicant. Part 2 is a health assessment undertaken by a health practitioner (usually a General Practitioner).

Following the FAHA, the health practitioner will determine whether the applicant:

- meets the relevant medical criteria without conditions; or
- meets the relevant medical criteria with conditions (eg. wears corrective lenses, hearing aids, prostheses etc); or
- does not meet the relevant medical criteria.

Key medicolegal considerations for members

1. Medical practitioners in Western Australia do not decide whether or not a firearm authority will be granted/renewed. The **decision** still rests with the Commissioner of WA Police. The health of the patient is just one determinant.
2. Members in Western Australia are not under an obligation to conduct a FAHA if a patient requests this.
3. Members in Western Australia are not under an obligation to report patients whom they believe are unfit to hold a firearm authority, but are **protected** from criminal, civil and disciplinary liability if they do so in good faith.
4. If WA Police require further information following a FAHA, they have indicated that they will seek the written consent of the firearm authority applicant/holder first.

Members are reminded that each Australian state and territory has different firearms legislation. In NT, SA and Tasmania, medical practitioners have a mandatory obligation to notify authorities if they believe a firearm licence holder's medical condition poses a threat to themselves or others. In all other Australian jurisdictions, medical practitioners are not mandated to report, but are permitted to do so if they have concerns.

Members are strongly encouraged to contact MIPS if they are asked to complete a FAHA or provide health information in connection with a FAHA and are unsure of their obligations and responsibilities. We are here to assist you 24/7.

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You should seek legal or other professional advice before relying on any content, and practise proper clinical decision making with regard to the individual circumstances.

Information is only current at the date initially published.

If in doubt, contact our claims and 24-hour medico-legal advice and support team on 1300 698 573.

You should consider the appropriateness of the information and read the [Member Handbook Combined PDS and FSG](#) before making a decision on whether to join MIPS.
