

Gun Ownership In Belize

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First, let me give you all a little background on my personal thoughts on gun ownership. I was raised in a very rural area in the Appalachian Mountains...a little ridge known to local folks as Laurel Ridge. I had the most beautiful and safe childhood anyone could wish for. Guns were commonplace; hunting for sustenance was common among my neighbors. Everyone, even girls as young as 4 or 5, knew how to load, shoot, and clean a gun. We used them as tools. As I grew older, I also began to see the benefit of a pistol for protection. I have never had cause to use a gun in that way, but I have always been comfortable knowing that I had the ability to protect myself if the "fit hit the shan!" As I said...it was something that was just normal and sort of a given. Mountain ladies are armed. Hunters pack shotguns and rifles; the women pack revolvers. Culturally, it is the way of life. I know there is a big stink right now in the USA about gun control laws. My opinion...If the government limits legal gun ownership, only the criminals will have guns. Criminals don't buy their guns through legal channels and so even a background check could be ineffective in stopping the gun crimes the US is dealing with. If I had all the right answers for this huge problem, I would be in the States lobbying for MY GUN laws. I don't. I just know that all of my peers, and all of their children are growing up familiar with guns. They know the benefit and the destruction guns can cause and have been ingrained with the respect firearms deserve. Gun safety is taught to children from the time they are old enough to walk. The same way you teach your children to not touch the stove, children are taught to point that thing at the ground! I am most assuredly Pro Gun Ownership.

That being said, there are different laws and customs here. The information I found online was that there are 2 types of gun licenses in Belize. One for hunting, and the other for protection. Never satisfied with someone else's interpretation of the law, I went ahead and found the Firearms Act of Belize. It actually provides four types of licenses, each with different yearly fees. They are as follows:

Special Protection License- \$75 for citizens/ \$500 for non-citizens

Gun Repair License- \$200 for citizens/ \$500 for non-citizens

Sport Hunters License- \$150 for citizens/ \$250 for non-citizens

Farmers Gun License- \$5 for citizens/ \$250 for non-citizens

*For my friends who are gun dealers....the fee for a dealer's license is \$650 for citizens and \$7000 for non-citizens.

As you can see by the fees alone, farmers are allowed to protect their animals with a gun. When a puma comes out of the jungle, for the small yearly sum of \$5...you can eliminate him before he kills off your profit. Some of the provisions in the law state that no one under 16 can own a gun. They also state that if

the police think you're not well suited for gun ownership, they can squash you right. If you've ever had a gun lost or stolen, you no longer have the right to gun ownership. (That one is kind of cock eyed to me...Wouldn't it cause people to NOT report the theft of a gun?!?)

The following are the provisions (as far as I can tell from reading the Firearms Act) as to what type of guns are COMPLETELY PROHIBITED throughout Belize:

- (a) rifle of 7.62 or higher calibre;
- (b) revolver of .44 or higher calibre;
- (c) magnum revolver of .357 caliber;
- (d) sawed-off shotgun of any calibre;
- (e) machine gun of any calibre.

So...I guess my favorite Smith and Wesson .32 Five Screw, would have been OK? The tough part would have been bringing it into the country. Upon entry, all firearms are to be turned over to the police for a period not exceeding 30 days. That is to allow the owner to secure his proper permit and to assure the government that the gun itself meets the requirements of the law. (Again...this is my interpretation of the actual law, I'm not a lawyer. If someone would like to read where I got this information, feel free to message me or comment on this post. I will gladly send you the pdf of the gun laws...)

So...in practice...Here in Dangriga, I have seen a couple people with guns. Once I saw a truck load of guys and all of them were carrying what I thought were .410 rifles. I would assume this was a hunting party. The police (sometimes) carry guns. (Last evening, I saw 3 police persons carrying clubs. I hadn't seen this before and it looked strange to me. Not a "billy club" like you would see the police in the states carry...not a police baton. Actual wooden clubs...like ball bats but skinnier for good grip.) I have seen a guy or two in town with their gun tucked into their waistband. I thought one was a 9mm? Guns are here, but I don't think there are nearly as commonplace as they were in my hometown.

NRA friends...I hope I answered your questions. I currently am unarmed. I will apply for a Special Protection License if I get involved in a business that requires me to handle cash. If I do, I will let you know how easily I get permission to carry. In the meantime, I do indeed feel safe here in Dangriga. The police with the clubs were scarier to me than my neighbors. The police with clubs were scarier than the police with guns.

[Source](#)

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