

## Information for Health Practitioners

### Purpose of This Information Sheet

- This information sheet is provided to assist medical practitioners to understand their role in the Firearm Authority Health Assessment (FAHA) process under the *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)*.

### Your Role as a Health Practitioner

- Health practitioners play a supporting role in the firearms licensing process.
- Key points:
  - Health practitioners are not decision-makers in relation to whether a firearm authority is granted or renewed
  - A FAHA is only one component of the overall firearms authority assessment
  - Health practitioners are not obligated to conduct a FAHA
  - FAHA appointments are not covered by Medicare and fees are determined by the medical practice
- The final licensing decision is made by WA Police Force Licensing Services, not by the health practitioner.

### What Is a Firearm Authority Health Assessment (FAHA)

- A FAHA is a health assessment conducted by a registered health practitioner (medical practitioner) to support the firearms licensing process.
- The FAHA assists WA Police Force to understand whether a person's physical, mental and sensory health may affect their ability to safely possess and use a firearm.
- A FAHA is one component of the overall firearm authority assessment and does not determine whether a firearm authority is granted or renewed. The final decision is made by WA Police Force Licensing Services.

### Legislative Basis and Scope of a FAHA

- Under the *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)* and the *Firearms Regulations 2024*, a FAHA is used to assess whether an individual meets the prescribed firearm authority health standard.
- The health standard relates to a person's capacity to:
  - continuously, safely and responsibly possess and use a firearm
  - continuously comply with the conditions of a firearm authority
  - continuously comply with other requirements imposed under the Act in relation to a firearm authority, including requirements relating to firearm security and storage
- In conducting a FAHA, a health practitioner applies their clinical judgment to assess physical, mental and sensory functions relevant to safe firearm possession and use.
- A FAHA does not require a health practitioner to assess legal eligibility, character, or suitability beyond the health standard prescribed under the legislation.

## Who Is Required to Complete a FAHA

- A FAHA is required for:
  - new firearm authority applicants
  - existing firearm authority holders, as part of a phased transition under the Firearms Act 2024
- Assessment frequency:
  - every five years for individuals under 80 years of age
  - annually for individuals 80 years of age or older
- Additional assessments may be required where a medical condition may affect future capability.

## Before the Medical Appointment

- Before attending the appointment, the applicant must:
  - complete Part A – Self-Assessment Questionnaire via their firearms licensing portal account
  - arrange an appointment with a health practitioner of their choice
  - bring or provide the completed FAHA form to the appointment
- Health practitioners are not required to obtain the form themselves.

## During the Medical Appointment

- On the day of the appointment, the applicant must bring:
  - a list of prescribed medications
  - corrective lenses or hearing aids (if used)
  - any relevant prosthesis (if applicable)
- The health practitioner must:
  - review Part A of the FAHA
  - complete Part B – Health Assessment Checklist
  - determine the assessment outcome based on clinical judgment
- The medical appointment allows the health practitioner to apply their usual clinical judgment when considering any health-related factors that may be relevant to safe firearm possession and use.

## Submitting the Assessment Outcome

- After completing the assessment:
  - the health practitioner submits the assessment outcome (Part C) via the dedicated online submission facility
  - Parts A and B are not submitted to WA Police Force
  - FAHA outcomes are valid for 12 months once submitted
- No further action is required by the health practitioner unless contacted by WA Police Force.

## Record Keeping and Privacy

- Health practitioners are encouraged to:
  - retain copies of FAHA documentation in accordance with normal medical record-keeping practices
- WA Police Force will seek any additional information directly from the applicant where required.

## Protections for Health Practitioners

- Health practitioners are protected from criminal, civil and disciplinary action for reports or information provided honestly and in good faith under the *Firearms Act 2024 (WA)*.
- Section 378(1) of the *Firearms Act 2024* provides protection where a health practitioner gives information, makes a report, or provides an opinion for the purposes of the Act, provided it is done in good faith and without negligence.
- Depending on the nature of a health practitioner’s practice and the circumstances of the assessment, additional protections may also apply under other legislation, including:
  - *the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Western Australia) Act 2010*
  - *the Health Services Act 2016*
  - *the Mental Health Act 2014*
- Health practitioners are responsible for maintaining awareness of their professional obligations and any legislative requirements relevant to their scope of practice. Where there is uncertainty, practitioners may wish to seek independent legal or professional advice.

## References to Legislation:

Legislation	Relevant Provision
<b><i>Firearms Act 2024</i></b>	Sections 148, 153, 378(1)
<b><i>Firearms Regulations 2024</i></b>	Regulations 221-222