



***Commission Internationale Permanente
pour l'Épreuve des Armes à Feu Portatives***

Permanent International Commission for Firearms Testing

“Marking Firearms”

And Council Directive 91/477/EEC of 18 June 1991

Introduction

The Permanent International Commission for firearms testing (C.I.P.) is a State International Organisation composed of thirteen countries which agree on the reciprocal acceptance of proof-test marks on firearms as well as ammunition which has passed the safety test.

Firearm safety tests were made compulsory at the beginning of the 20th century and in the various member countries at the times when national proof houses were set up and proof-test marks were introduced.

This led to the establishment of the Permanent International Commission (C.I.P.), the scope of which was to guarantee the safety of civilian firearms, commercial ammunition and all other equipment operating by means of explosive substances.

Proof-test marks are issued by the respective testing authorities. The Permanent International Commission, the C.I.P., has been set up to check the activities of the national proof houses and, in particular, to guarantee the presence in each country of laws and regulations to assure the efficient and uniform testing of firearms and ammunition – which would be confirmed by the proof-test marks.

Technical procedures by which the C.I.P. establishes and updates the various test methods are issued in the form of C.I.P. Decisions and are distributed through diplomatic channels to the supporting countries.

The C.I.P. Decisions are updated, modified and published every two years.

States and Foundations

The member states are as follows:

Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Belgium, Republic of Chile, Czech Republic, Republic of Finland, French Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Republic of Hungary, Republic of Italy, Russian Federation, Slovakian Republic and Kingdom of Spain.

The CIP Convention has the following major precepts:

- There is reciprocal acceptance of each country's proof-test marks, certifying the identity of the firearms and the satisfactory performance of the tests performed in accordance with the pre-set regulations;
- Tests are standardised to guarantee safety and their application methods;
- At least one state-controlled national Proof House exists in each country;
- Every member country enacts a law which makes it compulsory to perform the tests according to the methods, limits and procedures established by the Convention.

The main aims of the C.I.P. are as follows:

1. To select test pressure barrels to measure firing pressure and define the measurement procedures for use by official Proof Houses to determine pressure generated by test cartridges and the commercial cartridges fired by hunting, sport and defensive firearms and in machine tools;
2. To establish the kinds of procedures to be followed in the official tests used for firearms and machine tools to guarantee every degree of safety;
3. To adopt the most modern measuring techniques for the arms and ammunition testing procedures;
4. To encourage standardisation of chamber and cartridge dimensions, testing methods and ammunition testing procedures;
5. To examine laws and regulations issued by member states regarding official tests for firearms and ammunition;
6. To declare which countries act in accordance with standard tests and publish a schedule of the proof-test marks applied by the official testing centres of these countries;
7. In accordance with paragraph 6 above, to retract declarations when necessary, and modify the schedule when conditions are no longer valid.

Proof Houses of the member states are obliged to perform the tests of firearms and relevant ammunition in accordance with decisions taken by CIP. These decisions apply equally to highly-stressed firearm parts.

Proof-Test marks may only be applied when the firearm or the highly stressed parts of it have been tested in accordance with the specified requirements and have satisfactorily passed the test.

Tests

The test includes:

- A check before firing;
- Proof firing;
- Inspection after proof firing.

The check before firing includes, as well as safety aspects, verification of the following identification marks:

- Manufacturer's name, trading name or registered trademark of the manufacturer, or some other mark enabling the firearm to be identified;
- Firearm serial number;
- Calibre.

Marking and record keeping

The following details are recorded after completion of the tests:

- Test number and date;
- Nature of the test firing;
- Identifying features of the firearm's manufacture and or the person requesting the test;
- Firearm identification details;
- In the event of rejection, the reason for it, and nature of the fault.

The proof-test marks which are to be reciprocally accepted by the various countries are shown in Annex 1. It is important to recognise that they are, to all intents and purposes, state identification marks.

The operational sequence of the test procedure prescribed by C.I.P. (Decision XVII-11 which came into force on 15.10.83) may be summarised as follows:

- a) **identification marks check** (firearm identification): the following marks must be present on at least one of the main firearm pieces:
- b) Name, trade name or registered trademark;
- c) Serial number;
- d) Firearm calibre according to C.I.P. denomination (for example, 12-70, 243 Win., 9.3x74R)

Proof-test marks and data registration

In accordance with C.I.P. Decision XVII-11, the firearm is marked by the proof house with the internationally recognised proof-test marks if it has successfully passed all the previously mentioned tests:

- 1) On all firearms with the exception of revolvers: on each barrel action body, frame or essential item of the closing mechanism;
- 2) For revolvers: on the barrel, cylinder and frame;
- 3) An identification mark showing the year of manufacture will also be indicated on all firearms (this makes it easier to trace the firearm in subsequent years);
- 4) The barrel weight, internal diameter of each barrel and length of cartridge chamber must also be marked on smooth-bore firearms.

These data provide what is necessary to check, in the event of an accident, whether the firearm has been modified after the marking.

Record keeping

All the data relevant to each firearm tested by the Proof House (serial number, manufacturer's name and or company presenting it for testing, calibre, dimensions, date, origin) are shown on the certificate which the testing authority issues, and a copy is kept in the archives of the proof house.

In this manner, the testing authority holds a record with the history of all the firearms tested in the last 100 years.

It is very important to underline the importance of these records, since they generally represent the first step along the investigative path concerning a firearm if it has been used for criminal purposes.

The C.I.P. Proof Houses uses a computerised system for registration of data relevant to the tested firearms. In this manner, the proof-test markings, rejects, output, certification, and billing are registered, as well as the normal items such as date and time of registration and name of test operator.

It is possible in this manner to perform the following in real time:

- Check that registration on a firearm is unequivocal (double registration or same registration on different items – e.g. barrel and action body)
- Check the type of firearm registered
- Chronological recording of all operations performed on firearm
- Immediate tracing of firearm
- Statistical analysis of registered data

Also every part of the firearm present in the proof house is immediately traceable and it is possible in real time to prepare a record card with all the related information: manufacturer, customer, type of firearm, entry date, test date, exit date, billing date and any reasons for rejection.

Thus it can be seen that the function of the proof house does not begin and end with the user's safety check, but it also provides precautionary checks on the manufacture and circulation of firearms which are supplementary to those made by the police force.

In this respect it is worth recalling the importance of the checks which the proof house must carry out regarding the correct presence of the serial number and the manufacturer's mark which enable the product to be identified. If firearms come from abroad, the importer must submit them to the proof authority to perform the same operations envisaged for arms produced within the C.I.P. country. This is not required for the importers of firearms from countries in which the proof-test marks are recognised on the basis of the Brussels Convention of 1st July 1969 and other regulations in force – on the condition that they are provided with all the registration and identification marks as per the firearms manufactured within the C.I.P. country.

If the serial number is missing from the firearm (which is often the case for foreign firearms), the proof authority punches in a progressive number, which is recorded in a register held at the proof house.

In this manner, the origin and the initial history of the firearm can always be reconstructed after testing at the proof house: who made the proof-test mark, when it was presented and to whom it was delivered after the test.

Firearms which do not have testing marks impressed by the testing authority as internationally recognised on the basis of the Brussels Convention are considered to be illegal arms.

Brussels Convention and European Directive No. 91/477 C.E.E. dated 18.06.91

The obligation to test firearms at proof houses in the respective member States is precisely and unequivocally confirmed in EU Directive No. 91/477 dated 18th June, 1991, regarding “control of the purchase and possession of arms”.

The establishment of the European Union and the abolition of all police and customs formalities and other checks at the borders have made the management at their origin (in the country of manufacture) indispensable.

Consequently, the EU Directive No. 91/477 requires that the arms are identified, inspected, undergo testing and are marked in compliance with the Brussels International Convention dated 1st July 1969 in the event of exportation to another member state, even if it is not the final destination.

A member state must at all times and in every case perform inspection tests on arms manufactured in the country to ensure that an illegal arms market is not formed – especially following the abolition of the various border controls.

This twin aims constitute the basis of the above-mentioned Directive, as well as the Brussels Convention and the internal legislation of the individual countries forming part of the agreement.

On the basis of the above points it appears unquestionable that the omission of arms testing and the relative proof-test mark by the states adhering to the Brussels Convention would be in contrast with the regulations of the Convention itself and the EU Directives and represents a violation which is subject to the consequences in accordance with Art. I, paras. 6 and 7 of the Convention.

It may therefore be seen that violation of the obligations ratified by the Brussels Convention also occurs in the event that arms are exported from a member state to a non-member state if they have not been inspected and proof-test marked.

As has been shown in this brief discussion, the EU Directive very clearly spell out the requirement to ensure that arms cannot simply be transferred from country to country without inspection. The systems already in place, attached to the official proof houses, are both extensive and demanding in their requirements. Any attempt to go around them would be punishable by legal sanctions in all the countries party to the agreement.

NOTE:

The C.I.P.'s Head Office is in Belgium at the following address:

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1.4. PROOF MARKS

1. AUSTRIA

	WIEN	FERLACH
Provisional proof of barrels		
Compulsory definitive proof for Black Powder. All arms		
Compulsory definitive proof with quick-burning powder of all firearms using Smokeless Powder cartridges		
Voluntary superior proof for smoothbore sporting guns		
Inspection of ammunition		
Proof of certain small arms and portable devices using an explosive charge		
Proof „steel shot“ of smoothbore arms		

2001

2. BELGIUM

Muzzleloading smoothbore	Compulsory proof	ordinary	Barrel	
			Locking lever	
		superior	Barrel	
			Locking lever	
Breechloading smoothbore	Voluntary provisional	proof of barrel		
	Compulsory proof	Barrel	ordinary	
		Action	superior	
Salon rifles	Black Powder proof		Barrel	
			Action	
Rifles and carbines	Compulsory proof		Barrel	
			Action	

Belgium (suit)

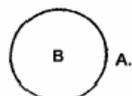
Revolvers	Black Powder proof	Barrel and frame cylinder	 
	Smokeless Powder proof	Barrel, frame and cylinder	
Automatic Pistols	Smokeless Powder proof	Barrel other proved parts	
Pistols using Flobert or revolver cartridges	Black Powder proof	Barrel other proved parts	 
	Smokeless Powder proof	Barrel other proved parts	
Foreign firearms	Barrel other proved parts	ordinary proof	
		superior proof	
Military firearms		Barrel	
		other proved parts	
Hard-tempered parts	may be marked thus		

Belgium (suit)

Inspection of ammunition



Proof of certain small arms and portable devices using an explosive charge



Proof mark identifying the Proof House



Proof „steel shot“ of smoothbore arms



3. CHILE

Proof of firearms and
of portable devices using
an explosive charge



Inspection of ammunition



Proof „steel shot“ of smoothbore arms

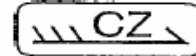


4. CZECH REPUBLIC

Individual proof of warning guns, alarm arms, narcotising arms and other devices using expansive propulsion



Inspection of ammunition for small gas guns



Individual proof of muzzleloading arms using black powder



Individual proof of breechloading smoothbore arms using smokeless powder cartridges



Individual proof of arms for use with shot cartridges-superior proof



Individual proof of breechloading rifled arms using powder cartridges



Homologation of arms and devices using expansion propulsion



Inspection of ammunition



Inspection of powder



Re-Proof of all arms



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms



Proof House Prag



5. FINLAND

Inspection mark for commercial ammunition



Ordinary proof



Black powder proof



Magnum or superior proof



Proof „steel shot“ of smoothbore arms



Voluntary Proof:

Barrels in the finished state: ordinary proof



Barrels in the finished state: double proof



Barrels in the finished state: triple proof



Compulsory Proof:

Devices classified as firearms: sample or modal proof



Guns in the finished state: ordinary black powder proof



Arms in the finished state when proved, i.e. ready for sale (supplementary mark)



Guns in the finished state: ordinary nitro proof



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms



FRANCE (suit)

Guns in the finished state: superios nitro proof



Proof of long barrelled rifled firearms



Re-proof of long barrelled rifled firearms



Guns in the finished state: ordinary black powder re-proof



Ordinary nitro re-proof



Superior nitro re-proof



Proof of short barrelled firearms



Re-proof of short barrelled firearms



Inspection of ammunition



Mark on rejected firearms



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7. FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Definitiv proof for black powder



Definitive proof for smokeless powder



Superior proof for smokeless powder



Proof of firearms used to fire a substance other than a solid projectile



Reproof



Distinctive proof marks of the different Proof Houses



ULM



BERLIN



KIEL



HANNOVER



MÜNCHEN



MELLRICHSTADT



KÖLN



SUHL

Inspection of ammunition



ULM



HANNOVER



KIEL



MÜNCHEN



MELLRICHSTADT



KÖLN



SUHL

Proof of certain small arms and portable devices using an explosive charge



8. GREAT BRITAIN

	London	Birmingham
Provisional proof of barrel		
On the action		
Definitive proof for use with smokeless powders		
Definitive proof for arms for use with black powder only	 NOT NITRO	 BLACK POWDER
Special superior proof		
Re-proof		
Inspection of ammunition		
Proof of certain small arms and portable divises using an explosive charge		
Proof „steel shot“ of smoothbore arms		

Notes: The pressure in use for which the firearm has been proved is marked on the barrel in tons per square inch. Eg: 3 tons.
The nominal calibre/gauge and chamber length is also marked on the barrel. EG: 12,2 1/2".

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Voluntary provisional proof



Definitive proof of arms in the white or in delivery condition



Reproof



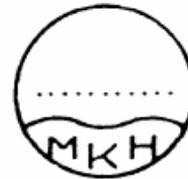
Superior Proof



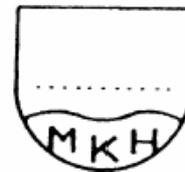
Inspection of ammunition



Proof of alarm devices
 Proof of alarm guns, starting pistols and gas pistols
 Proof of gas or compressed air arms using blank ammunition or ammunition with projectile energy less than 7,5 joules



Proof of certain small arms and portable devices using an explosive charge



Definitive proof with blackpowder



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms



Distinctive proof mark of the Gardone V.T.
Proof House impressed on all firearms



Definitive black powder proof



Definitive smokeless powder proof



Voluntary superior smokeless powder proof



Supplementary mark for arms proved
in delivery condition



Inspection of ammunition



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms



Proof of arms and inspection of ammunition
Proof House of Ijevsk



Proof of arms and inspection of ammunition
Proof House of Klimovsk



Proof of arms and inspection of ammunition
Proof House of Krasnozavodsk



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms



Individual proof of warning guns, alarm arms, narcotizing arms and other devices using expansive explosion



Individual proof of muzzleloading arms using black powder



Individual proof of breechloading arms using smokeless powder



Individual proof of arms - superior proof



Homologation of arms and devices using expansion propulsion



Inspection of ammunition



Inspection of powder



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms

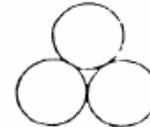


13. SPAIN

Proof mark of Eibar Proof House
Impressed on all arms



Proof of muzzle-loading firearms (Black Powder)



Voluntary black Powder proof of breech-loading
barrels



Compulsory Smokeless Powder proof of
breech-loading smoothbore firearms



Supplementary Smokeless Powder proof of
breech-loading smoothbore firearms



Proof of saloon pistols and saloon rifles
(with the powder normally used)



Proof of foreign firearms not bearing C.I.P.-
approved proof marks



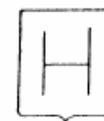
Proof of foreign firearms not bearing C.I.P.-
approved proof marks



Inspection of ammunition



Proof of certain small arms and portable
devices using an explosive charge



Proof "steel shot" of smoothbore arms

