

Alcohol conviction no obstacle to gun licence - judge

In a judgment seen as ground-breaking by gun owners unable to have their licences renewed because of a conviction for an offence such as driving while exceeding the alcohol limit, a North Gauteng High Court judge has said the use of alcohol in itself is not an abuse, notes a [Pretoria News](#) report.

Acting Judge JRG Polsen said the abuse of alcohol must be relevant and connected to the use of a firearm before the authorities could refuse to renew a gun owner's licence. He ordered that the head of the firearms register issue professional hunter Robbert Timcke with a competency certificate so that he could have his gun licences renewed. The report notes Timcke was banned for life from possessing a firearm after he was convicted in 2006 and fined R2 000 for driving while exceeding the blood-alcohol limit. He was told that he was no longer fit to possess a firearm licence in terms of the Firearms Control Act - as he had been convicted of the abuse of alcohol. But Polsen said a person must first be declared unfit by the court to possess a firearm licence. 'To render such a person automatically unfit to possess a firearm, without supporting legislation, is improper and it impugns on such a person's right to own a firearm.' [Full Pretoria News report](#)