

POSTING BLADES IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Changes to Royal Mail Access services following introduction of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019

Royal Mail has announced that it will be prohibiting blades from being posted through its access network, on any service. This decision has been made following the Government's recent introduction of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (OWA).

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019

In response to the recent increase in knife and violent crime in the United Kingdom, the Government is introducing new legislation - the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 (OWA). One of the main aims of the OWA is to prohibit the online sale and then delivery of blades or bladed products to persons who are under 18 years of age. The OWA is expected to come fully into force in November this year. Once the OWA becomes law, both a seller who sends blades using couriers and the courier company delivering such blades may be criminally liable if that blade is delivered into the hands of an individual who is under 18 years old.

Definition of a bladed product

A bladed product is defined in the OWA as "a bladed article which (a) is or has a blade, and (b) is capable of causing a serious injury to a person which involves cutting that person's skin".

Why the changes?

It is currently the law that retailers are only permitted to sell blades to individuals aged 18 or over. However, compliance in the online sector is very low. Therefore, one of the main aims of the OWA is to prohibit the online sale and then delivery of blades to persons who are under 18 years of age.

In very simple terms both a retailer who sends blades using couriers and the courier company delivering such blades may be criminally liable if that blade is delivered into the hands of an individual who is under 18 years old. This means Wholesale customers who carry blades for customers may be held criminally liable if handing over such items to Royal Mail Wholesale which are subsequently delivered to an individual who is under 18 years old.

When does this take effect?

Royal Mail will no longer permit blades or bladed products to be posted through its standard services with effect from the commencement date of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 in the United Kingdom or 12 November 2019, whichever is the earlier.

Got any questions?

If you want to know more or are unsure whether these changes affect you, please get in touch. Likewise, for any other account support; we're always happy to hear from you.