

# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO UK GOVERNMENT'S BAN ON “NINJA SWORDS”

BY LEIGH SIMMS

## THE GUIDE COVERS:

- THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF A “NINJA SWORD”
- WHAT THE NEW LAW IS
- HOW IT INTERACTS WITH THE EXISTING LAWS
- POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING THE NEW LAW

This product is purely for educational purposes and no legal advice is being provided.

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The UK Government has added “ninja swords” to its list of banned offensive weapons, extending laws that previously focused on other weapons, including curved swords (like the “samurai sword”) to now include a specific set of straight-bladed swords.



This legal change, implemented under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) (Amendment, Surrender and Compensation) Order 2025, has important implications for martial artists, collectors, and instructors, not because these weapons could previously be carried around freely (they couldn't unless there was a good reason), but because they are now banned, subject to limited exceptions, in private ownership.



## What was the law before the “ban”?

Before this update took place on 1 August 2025, UK law already prohibited:

- The import, sale, and possession of certain offensive weapons, including curved swords (samurai-style) of a certain length.
- Carrying any kind of sword or bladed article in public without a genuine reason, under the Section 141 Criminal Justice Act 1988.

However, private individuals, including martial artists, could legally own straight-bladed swords (like those often described as “ninja swords”) in private, so long as they weren't carried in public without a genuine reason.

**CARRYING NINJA SWORDS WITHOUT A GENUINE REASON IN PUBLIC WAS ALWAYS ILLEGAL.**

**OWNING THEM IN PRIVATE WAS PREVIOUSLY LEGAL UNTIL NOW.**

# So, what's changed?



The new regulations have now added straight-bladed swords ("ninja swords") to the list of banned offensive weapons. This makes it a criminal offence to:

- own;
- sell;
- manufacture; or
- import

a "Ninja Sword" unless an there is a genuine reason.

## What exactly is a "ninja sword"?

The new legislation, sets out that a "Ninja Sword" is a sword that has:

- A straight blade
- Blade Length of at least 14 inches but no more than 24 inches
- Primary straight cutting edge
- Secondary straight cutting edge
- Blunt spine
- "Tanto" style or reserve "Tanto" style point

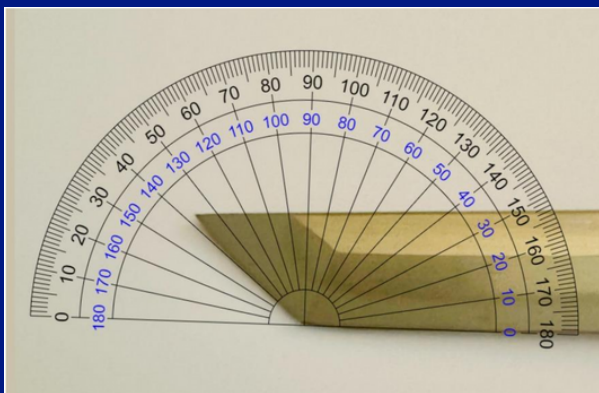


Images from UK Governments:  
*"Guidance for surrender of 'ninja' swords and claiming compensation.  
March 2025"*

# What is a “Tanto” Style Point?

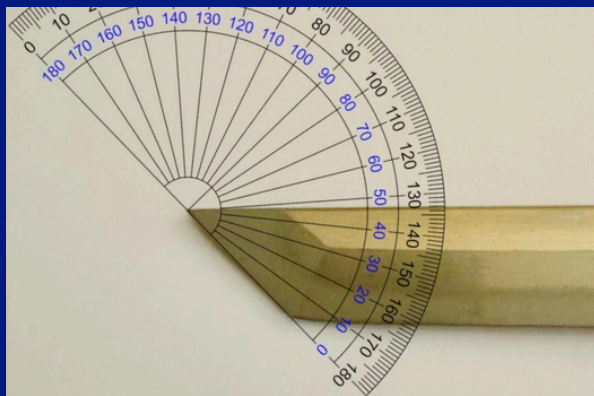
One of the features of a “Ninaj Sword” is that it has a “Tanto” or reverse “Tanto” style point.

Under the new law, a “Tanto” style point means that the angle between the the two cutting edges needs to be more than 90 degrees and the angle between the secondary cutting edge and the blunt spine needs to be less than 90 degrees. See below image taking from the Government’s Guidance which sets out an example of a “Tanto’ style point.



Angle between the cutting edges is over 90 degrees

Its 136 degrees



Angle between the secondary cutting edge and the tip (aka blunt spine) is less 90 degrees

Its 47 degrees

A reverse “Tanto” style point is essentially where the secondary edge the longer of the two edges. The measurements then apply in reverse to what is mentioned above.

# Are there any defences available?

In short, yes. The law already has in place a list of defences (genuine reasons) for owning offensive weapons. The following will apply to “Ninja Swords”: -

- The weapon is antique (over 100 years old).
- Functions carried out on behalf of the Crown or of a visiting force.
- The item being of historical importance.
- Making the weapons available to a museum or gallery in certain circumstances.
- Educational purposes.
- Production of certain films or certain television programmes.
- Theatrical performances and rehearsals of such performances.
- Made before 1954.
- Made at any other time according to the traditional methods of sword making by hand.
- Use in permitted activities (for example a historical re-enactment or sporting activity).
- The weapon is blunt.



**WARNING**

## IMPORTANT CHANGE

Currently, other offensive weapons, also have a defence of owning the weapon for religious reasons. However, this defence is not available for “Ninja Swords”



**WARNING**

# Consequences of breaking this law



Under the current laws anyone found guilty of owning, selling, importing or manufacturing “Ninja Swords” in the UK (without a genuine reason) could face up to six months in prison.

New measures are coming into force shortly that will increase the maximum prison sentence to two years.

## What can I do if I still own a “Ninja Sword”?



If you own a “Ninja Sword” now, without a genuine reason, then your possession will be unlawful. You may be able to surrender your sword at a designated police station, the nearest one to you can be found by checking the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

You must take all reasonable steps when surrendering the weapon to ensure it is safe to travel with and hand over at the police station.

# THE END

Thank you for your support and interest in this topic.

I am to excited to share that I am currently working on several new projects, including a product designed to will assess how well martial artists and self-defence practioners know the law of self-defence and how they are able to implement the same into their classes.

To stay updated on these exciting developments and more, you can register your interest at [www.leighsimms.com](http://www.leighsimms.com).

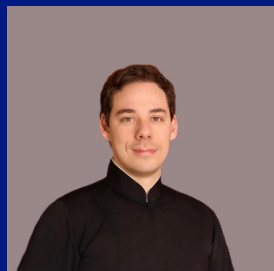
Your continued engagement means the world and I look forward to bringing you more valuable content in the future. Thank you once again for your support!

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## About The Author

I'm Leigh Simms, a martial arts instructor, qualified non-practicing lawyer and author (#1 Best Seller on Amazon) specialising in self-defence law and self-protection training. With over two decades of experience in karate and self-defence instruction, which includes achieving a 5th Dan in Karate recognised by the British Combat Karate Association, I've made it my mission to bridge the gap between effective physical techniques and the legal realities of self-defence in England & Wales.



My work empowers martial arts instructors, professional trainers, and frontline staff to teach and apply self-defence that is not only practical, but legally sound and professionally delivered. I've authored on self-defence law, helped instructors audit their syllabus for legal risk, and now provide legally-compliant training programs for martial arts schools, security companies, and corporate teams across the country.

*"I help you remove legal grey areas, and train with clarity, confidence, and compliance."*

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