

HUNTER & BOWHUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAMS POLICIES & PROCEDURES



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

2017

**Hunter & Bowhunter Education Programs
FWP Communication & Education Division**

Hunter & Bowhunter Education Programs Policies and Procedures For Volunteers

STATEMENT OF INTENT

You, the volunteer instructor, are of the utmost importance to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' (FWP) hunter and bowhunter education programs. Without your efforts, dedication, and expertise these programs would not be possible. The lives you save are priceless and the responsibility you instill in our hunters is invaluable. These programs work well because of your commitment to the future of hunting in Montana.

It is the goal of FWP and the hunter and bowhunter education programs to recruit and retain only those dedicated instructors who demonstrate the highest degree of ethics, professionalism, proficiency, and commitment to our students and programs.

As an instructor, you are in an influential position. Your students will consider you an example and a role model after whom they may pattern their own behavior. This puts a great deal of responsibility on you to be ethical, knowledgeable, and safe at all times-both inside and out of the classroom.

This manual explains your roles and responsibilities to the education programs, the students, and to FWP. It also defines the agency's responsibilities to you and the programs. This manual establishes policies and procedures, guidelines, and standards to ensure that instructors and FWP deliver consistent, fair, and high quality education programs to all students.

Individuals volunteering to be instructors are required to comply with all policies, guidelines, and codes governing the education programs. Any deviation will be investigated and may result in disciplinary actions. These policies and procedures were developed in cooperation with instructors and FWP personnel, including legal staff.

Certification as a volunteer instructor is considered both an honor and a privilege. Both as a group and as individuals, instructors carry on the tradition of citizen involvement. The actions of each individual reflect not only upon fellow volunteers, but also upon FWP and the state of Montana.

We sincerely thank you for your commitment and the passion you bring to the "job."

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Policies and Procedures

POLICY

This Policy shall not be construed in any way as creating an implied or explicit “*employer-employee relationship*” entitling any volunteer to any compensation outside that which is delineated within this policy.

POLICY

FWP will establish and maintain, one, policy and procedure manual for the hunter and bowhunter education programs. Volunteer instructors are required to agree with and abide by these policies and procedures. Failure to follow program policies could result in the termination of the instructor.

Purpose

Hunter and bowhunter education are official programs of the State of Montana and, as such, FWP is required to provide quality, uniform, service to all interested parties.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Hunter and Bowhunter Education Policies and Procedures Manual details, defines, and explains those policies and procedures in order to guide the decisions and actions of our instructors.

While no policy manual can cover all situations that may arise as instructors perform their duties, instructors are required to be familiar with, and adhere to, the Hunter & Bowhunter Education Program Policies and Procedures.

Where any conflict exists between an instructor's personal philosophy and FWP policy, instructors are required to adhere to FWP policies. It is the responsibility of each instructor to seek clarification when necessary. When in doubt about the application or interpretation of any policy, instructors need to, first, consult with their RIEPM (RIEPM) who may then direct them to the program coordinator.

POLICY

FWP will provide instructors with written guidelines to enable them to assist in fulfilling the purposes of the program, which is to:

- Establish and administer the hunter and bowhunter education programs in accordance with state law
- Recruit, train, and administer a corps of volunteer instructors to teach the education programs
- Maintain databases of instructors and successful course participants
- Monitor and evaluate instructor performance
- Provide appropriate instructional materials and teaching aids
- Provide a clear statement of FWP policies, procedures, and standards
- Conduct in-service workshops and publish newsletter(s) to keep instructors informed
- Report program performance to state and federal authorities
- Compile information on hunting accidents and use it to refine the curriculum

Policy Review Required

POLICY

FWP expects all instructors to periodically review this policy manual and any subsequent policy changes. All instructor applicants must read/review this policy manual and successfully pass the FWP approved, open book, written test before being certified.

TEMPORARY POLICY -- expires on December 30, 2017.

All current instructors are required to review this policy and procedure manual and pass the policy and procedure test no later than December 30, 2017. Failure to do so will result in the deactivation of the instructor.

Volunteer Instructor Responsibilities

POLICY

FWP expects instructors to demonstrate safe, responsible, ethical behavior, and to follow the instructor Code of Conduct, in and out of the classroom.

Instructor Code of Conduct

- Not commit a legal violation or demonstrate behavior that is deemed harmful to the program image and/or program or instructor performance.
- Instructors should always bear in mind that they represent not only themselves but also the state of Montana and FWP and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects professional standards and judgment.
- Personal boasting by instructors about violations of the law or the ethics governing hunting or wildlife is unacceptable.
- Instructors shall maintain a professional relationship with other instructors, department personnel, and are not to engage in criticism of others.
- The program supports cooperation with other organizations for the purpose of conducting the training. Instructors are encouraged to seek out and cooperate with such groups when it is compatible and in the best interest of the program and students. However, instructors are not permitted to solicit membership in any organization, club, or program during a class or as a condition of enrollment or certification.
- The education program is not a forum for promoting or advocating any other public or private organization or cause. Instructors shall refrain from promoting private or political programs, principles, or theories. Instructors are to refrain from degrading private or political programs, anti-hunting, or anti-gun organizations. Likewise, instructors shall not promote a retail store, manufacturer, or any other business. Students may be informed in a non-solicitous manner of organizations that support wildlife conservation and hunter safety/responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages shall never be consumed before or during class nor be present during class.
- Smoking or the use of chewing tobacco is prohibited in view of students during class.
- The use of foul language, profanity, sexual innuendo, or any racial, ethnic, or religious slur is prohibited, as is any demeaning reference to disability, gender, or gender orientation. "Off-color" jokes are strictly prohibited.
- Instructors shall maintain standards of good grooming.
- Instructors shall wear the approved program uniform, which consists of a vest with the instructor logo, the FWP denim or polo instructor shirt with embroidered program affiliation, the official FWP nametag, or other program designated garment. No other patches are to be worn on the vest especially those which indicate membership in clubs or organizations or manufacturers' patches.
- Instructors should wear clean clothes that are in good condition.
- Handguns may not be carried or worn during class or any official program activity including the conclusion (field) course. ***This does not apply to sworn law enforcement officers.***
- Instructors who also teach firearms-related or hunting-related classes for a fee or who offer other hunting related services are prohibited from promoting these or any other personal commercial enterprises in class.
- Instructors may not benefit financially or otherwise from participating in the program.
- Any supplies or equipment provided, donated, or loaned to instructors for program use must be returned to the department when the instructor ceases to be active in the program.

Process to Recommend Changes to Policy Manual

POLICY

FWP provides a method for instructors to make formal recommendations to modify this policy and procedure manual. Any currently certified instructor may, at any time, submit recommendations to the program coordinator suggesting changes to the policy and procedure manual. It is the intent of FWP to make only minor modifications to the policy manual annually. Major reviews are planned at five-year intervals. Suggested changes will be reviewed with FWP Hunter Education staff and other instructors before final decisions are made.

Program Organization & Communication Structure

POLICY

FWP has a hierarchical organization & communication structure for the hunter and bowhunter education programs, which is expected to be followed. The first FWP employee point of contact for all volunteers is their respective RIEPM.

Purpose

A hierarchical organization & communication structure is necessary to ensure the smooth and orderly operation of the programs; the timely flow of information, and whenever possible, to keep problem solving at the local level.

Please refer to organizational chart at the end of this manual

Instructor Qualifications

POLICY

FWP's policies establishing the qualifications, application process, and background investigation procedures for volunteer instructor applicants are:

Adult Volunteers

Hunter or bowhunter education (adult) instructors must:

- Possess a valid, Montana issued, driver's license or ID card
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have experience in the use of firearms or archery equipment, hunting, shooting sports, and outdoor skills
- Provide a hunter and/or bowhunter education certification card from Montana or another state
- Pass a background investigation and criminal records/history check
- Have experience in or be comfortable with public speaking to or teaching
- Be eligible under federal law to handle and possess firearms and ammunition

Within the first year of submitting their application, an applicant must successfully complete the following:

- Written Policy & Procedure Test with a score of 90% or better
- Web-based instructor training
- Probationary period

Should FWP implement an Instructor Academy, new instructors would be required to attend such training within the first two-years of certification and the web-based training would be waived.

There may be situations where a resident of a neighboring state or part-time Montana resident desires to become a volunteer instructor. These applications will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

If, after one year from the date of their application submission, these requirements have not been met, the applicant will be dropped from the roster. (The time to attend an Instructor Academy may be extended depending on available offerings.)

POLICY - Exception to online instructor training

FWP may waive the online instructor training requirement for anyone that provides a certified teaching certificate from the state of Montana, Police Officers Standards Training (P.O.S.T.) Instructor Development Certificate, NRA Instructor Certification, 4-H, or other qualifying instructor training certification.

Junior Instructors

POLICY

FWP accepts minors ages 14 to 17 to serve as junior instructors. Applicants must have successfully completed a hunter/bowhunter course, complete an application, and pass the policy & procedure test. Juniors are not subject to the background investigation and criminal records/history check. Junior instructors must be supervised by a certified adult instructor during all presentations and field day activities.

Junior instructors:

- May assist with conclusion (field) courses
- May assist with practical firearms exercises using **inert equipment** only. Juniors may not instruct a live-fire session or have any responsibility for **supervision** or first-line **safety**. However, they are encouraged to observe instruction and assist with setup and teardown.
- May instruct only under the supervision of an experienced (adult) instructor who must be present at all times.
- May assist in class preparation, attend all meetings, and become well versed in the program outlines, instruction guides and all other materials.
- Must observe experienced adult instructors before they are assigned to present any instruction to students. The mentoring process requires communication between the experienced adult and junior instructor to work toward the junior becoming comfortable and confident with the material before presenting instruction.
- Must understand and follow all program guidelines and policies and utilize the materials set forth by education program.

When the experienced adult instructors agree that a junior has sound knowledge of the program materials and curriculum, class leads may then assign portions or segments of the class to them. The presentations must be supervised by an adult instructor at all times. Afterward, the experienced instructor(s) can mentor the junior with constructive analysis of their presentation.

Junior instructors, who wish to remain certified must, before their 19th birthday, re-apply and undergo the background investigation and criminal records/history check. Juniors who do not re-apply will be automatically inactivated and dropped from the roster on their 19th birthday.

Background Investigation, Criminal Records/History Check

POLICY

FWP is responsible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all program participants. This includes, to the extent possible, preventing convicted violators from interacting with students and to ensure that our instructors are of the highest moral and ethical character.

FWP will conduct a background investigation and criminal records/history check on all adult persons applying to become volunteer instructors in the hunter or bowhunter education programs.

Procedure

All interested persons must complete an application and consent to a background investigation. Completed applications and consent forms are submitted to Helena. Upon receiving the completed application, FWP will conduct a background investigation and a criminal records/history check including a check for any wildlife violations. The criminal records/history check includes a check of all violent and sexual offender registries (SVOR). It may also include calling listed references or any other person or entity that may have relevant information as to the character of the applicant.

Should FWP implement a policy requiring a fingerprint-based criminal records/history check; applicants will be required to provide their fingerprints before an application will be considered. Fingerprints must be captured and submitted to FWP only by a law enforcement agency or other authorized entity.

An application may be rejected if the applicant has certain hunting or fishing violations, misdemeanor or felony convictions, have pending criminal charges (see below for further details), or is a registered violent or sexual offender. The applicant will receive written notification of the outcome of the background investigation and criminal records/history check within four to six weeks after receipt of the application.

An applicant may be denied if a criminal records/history check or a review of various hunting and fishing violation databases reveal one or more of the following:

- 1) Conviction of a felony; conviction of a misdemeanor involving the welfare, health, safety, or victimization of a minor
- 2) Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving violence against another
- 3) Prohibition of using firearms as a condition of parole or probation, or possession of a controlled substance
- 4) Falsifying program records and/or documents
- 5) A felony conviction
- 6) Any conviction for a violent crime
- 7) A hunting violation that resulted in privilege suspension
- 8) A violation or behavior deemed harmful to the program image and/or performance
- 9) A finding that any criminal history information is factually incorrect, misleading, or incomplete

An applicant may request a copy of the results obtained from the criminal records/history check and will be provided an opportunity to correct any information, which may have affected the decision to deny the application.

An applicant may request an explanation of why certification was denied. Since FWP uses the application to evaluate a person's suitability to be an instructor with the program, omitting or falsifying information may be used as a reason to deny an applicant.

Persons Assisting with Hunter Education Classes

POLICY

FWP permits only Montana certified instructors to teach hunter or bowhunter education courses. Every person who volunteers, on a regular or semi-regular basis, must, minimally, submit an application, pass a background investigation, criminal records/history check, and the written policy and procedure test prior to assisting with more than one course.

Anyone serving on a one-time basis that provides services such as reading tests, assisting in a classroom, or on a conclusion (field) course do not need to be certified. However, it is the lead instructor's responsibility (in advance of their participation) to ensure that all one-time volunteers are aware of applicable policies, including instructor conduct requirements and student safety and protection standards.

ADA Teaching Standards

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to be physically and mentally able to perform the essential duties of the position with or without reasonable accommodation, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Volunteer Instructor Duties & Responsibilities - Generally

POLICY

FWP has determined that class hours are usually evenings - from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and weekends and instructors generally have the first-line responsibility to or for:

- Organize classes
- Communicate regularly with FWP personnel concerning courses
- Advertise class dates
- Obtain, organize, and handout course related material
- Make calls to students and parents with reminders or answering questions
- Work with students with a variety of disabilities
- Submit accurate employee style timesheets – keeping accurate time records on a daily basis
- Ensure the overall safety and welfare of students
- Evaluate/test students in classroom, written testing, and skill-based performance
- Pass or fail students based upon the evaluations and written test results
- Discipline students (warnings, verbal correction, parent conferences, etc.)
- Submit class records-student grades, instruction hours by topic, student lists, ensure student information is correct, issue certification cards to successful students
- Attend annual training workshops
- Use computers and other electronic equipment
- Oversee proper safety protocols during shooting range activities
- Provide specific instruction on certain topics e.g. firearm and archery safety
- Stay current on relevant course material
- Prepare and present relevant course material
- Secure training facilities / negotiate with school officials for classroom space and dates
- Issued equipment
- Properly care for and secure firearms and ammunition
- Train and supervise junior instructors

POLICY

FWP expects that hunter and bowhunter education instructors will:

- Provide effective and appropriate hunter or bowhunter education instruction as prescribed by FWP
- Evaluate student performance through FWP defined academic and objective, skills-based, testing to determine individual student competency
- Adhere to all hunter education program policies and procedures
- Submit timely, accurate, and complete course related records to FWP
- Maintain instructor training and certification requirements
- Coordinate teaching activities and class schedules with local instructors and their respective RIEPM

POLICY

FWP may periodically assess instructor performance through one or more of the following:

- In-person class visits by FWP personnel
- Student evaluations
- Periodic criminal records/history checks

County Chief/Lead Instructor

POLICY

FWP appoints a chief instructor for each county to provide leadership for the local program activities. In addition, an assistant chief may also be appointed to assist with those duties.

A county chief is appointed for a two-year term. Toward the end of each appointment, FWP, in consultation with area instructors, determines whether to renew the appointment.

Locally, instructors may adopt an apprentice program for new county chiefs.

FWP reserves the right to terminate the appointment of a county chief at any time if that person fails to meet the minimum set for this position in this policy. A county chief may resign at any time.

Instructor Certification Instructor Status

POLICY

FWP will maintain a sufficient number of active and currently trained instructors to provide adequate opportunities for hunter and bowhunter education classroom and conclusion (field) courses throughout the state.

To maintain an active instructor status, instructors must:

1. Attend, one, FWP sponsored instructor workshop in any three consecutive year period, and;
2. Teach or assist with a hunter or bowhunter education classroom or conclusion (field) course for at least eight total hours during any two-consecutive years. The eight hours must be done in increments of no less than two hours.

An instructor's active status remains unaffected if there are no students to teach in the area, if the person is called to active duty, or for any other circumstance beyond the immediate control of the instructor. This part applies only to currently certified instructors.

Instructors are dropped from the active roster after two consecutive years of inactivity or three consecutive years of not attending a regional workshop. A new application must be completed if the person wishes to reactivate. Upon completion of the first year after reactivation, the instructor will be credited with the past years qualifying service. (Non-teaching years leading to the inactivation will not be retroactively counted.)

It is each instructor's responsibility to annually review their service records for accuracy and to immediately bring any discrepancies to the attention of the program assistant. Adjustment requests for additional time more than one-year old will be denied.

Revocation of Instructor Certification

POLICY

FWP will not terminate, take corrective or any other adverse action against any volunteer on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, marital status, religion, ancestry, or disability.

POLICY

FWP will immediately suspend or terminate any volunteer instructor who is charged with or convicted of any felony or domestic violence charge.

POLICY

FWP may take immediate action to terminate or suspend any volunteer instructor in response to any action that is deemed to be incompetent, immoral, dishonest, violates FWP program policies, The Instructor Code of Conduct, or who is convicted of or forfeited bond for certain crimes.

POLICY

FWP and, if necessary, the appropriate law enforcement agency, upon receiving information or allegations of certain criminal activity, will gather information and recommend an appropriate course of action.

POLICY

FWP will evaluate all violations (criminal or policy) of any type, by a volunteer instructor, on an individual basis and may result in the temporary suspension or permanent revocation of certification. The program coordinator may require the instructor to undergo specific remedial training, temporarily suspend or permanently revoke certification for one or more of the following reasons:

- Failure or refusal to comply with program policies or procedures
- Being disrespectful, argumentative, uncooperative, or verbally abusive to students, parents, the public, or FWP staff
- Issuing a certification to anyone who did not attend or complete the course
- Conviction or forfeiture for violations of Montana's or other states' game laws and rules
- Conviction or forfeiture of bail for violations of the fish and wildlife code or laws of the state of Montana or its municipalities or any other state
- Conviction of a felony or conviction of a misdemeanor involving the welfare, health, safety, or victimization of a minor
- Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving violence against another
- Prohibition of using firearms as a condition of parole or probation, or possession of a controlled substance
- While awaiting the judicial outcome of formal criminal charges for certain crimes
- Falsifying program records or documents
- Violation of one or more of The Instructor Code of Conduct
- Demonstrate behavior that is deemed harmful to the program image, the program, or the instructor's ability to effectively perform their duties
- Failure to conduct the training course in the prescribed manner; failure to follow program policies and procedures; or, failure to cooperate with the program coordinator, RIEPM, or the county chief.

POLICY

The program coordinator has final, program level, decision-making authority over any administrative actions or termination (instructors are prohibited from disciplining or terminating another instructor). Administrative actions or termination decisions made by the program coordinator may be appealed to the Conservation Education Bureau Chief. An instructor who has had their certification revoked shall not be eligible for reinstatement.

Self Reporting Fish & Game Violations

POLICY

It is the responsibility of each instructor to inform the RIEPM and the program coordinator of any hunting, fishing, or trapping citations; any criminal misdemeanor (except for minor traffic infractions); or felony charges or convictions within two weeks (14-days) of being charged, cited, or convicted. Convictions include bond forfeiture or any plea (excluding not guilty) that results in a conviction with any court. Failure to inform the appropriate parties within two weeks following a conviction or bond forfeiture may result in termination.

Volunteer Instructor Personnel Records

POLICY

FWP will maintain a personnel file for each instructor. The personnel files will be located in the Hunter Education Office in Helena. An instructor may, upon request to the program coordinator or program assistant, review or receive a copy of his or her personnel file. Other than the persons to whom the files pertain, only certain FWP employees shall have access.

Public Complaints

POLICY

FWP will investigate and respond to all instructor misconduct or course related complaints made by the public or another instructor.

FWP will thoroughly evaluate and investigate all verbal or written complaints lodged against an instructor in a timely manner to determine if the complaint has merit and if further investigation is warranted. Only complaints determined to have merit will be documented in the instructor's personnel file.

In the event further investigation is warranted, FWP may do one or more of the following:

- Initiate a formal investigation, which may be conducted by one or more of the following: the program coordinator; RIEPM; FWP enforcement officer; or an outside law enforcement agency.
- Unless circumstances require otherwise, FWP will notify the instructor of the complaint either in person, by telephone, or in writing, and the instructor will be given the opportunity to provide formal comments or responses for inclusion in the investigative file.
- Place an instructor on administrative suspension (leave) until the investigation is completed. While on administrative suspension, the instructor may not participate in any educational or training activities or attend instructor meetings.
- Any instructor who is placed on administrative suspension, will be notified of the administrative action in writing and, when possible, in-person, or by telephone.
- The results of an investigation and action taken will be documented in the instructors personnel file.

Instructor Resignation

POLICY

An instructor has the right to resign his or her position at any time.

Procedure

Instructors desiring to relinquish their instructor status may do so by:

- Notifying the RIEPM
- Returning all assigned uniforms, equipment, and materials to the regional office within ten (10) business days after tendering their resignation

Volunteer Instructor Liability Protection

POLICY

FWP provides volunteers coverage under the Montana State Tort Claims Act (MCA § 2-9-101 et seq.) during all times that a volunteer is performing work authorized by the Department.

The State of Montana provides limited coverage for volunteers who may cause an injury that arises from an act or omission of an action occurring during the performance of his or her FWP related volunteer responsibilities.

- *"Coverage" means that the State may assume the costs of the defense of any action against its volunteer, as well as for judgments and settlements of claims against State volunteer. Volunteers will normally be covered under the state Tort Claims Act for liability claims resulting while acting within the course and scope of the volunteer's assigned State activity.*
- *Official state business means "Activities performed by an authorized volunteer, in order to accomplish state programs or as required by the duties of his or her position or office."*

Liability insurance coverage is provided for active instructors subject to the following conditions and limitations:

- All activities must be part of a FWP authorized course or training.
- Training activities must be in accordance with the policies and procedures described by FWP.
- Activities outside the reasonable interpretation of these guidelines (policy) may not be covered by the state's insurance.

POLICY

In the event of an injury to a course participant or damage to property, the instructor must notify the RIEPM and the program coordinator within 24 hours.

Depending on the specific circumstances, the instructor may be required to contact local law enforcement officials to have the incident formally reported and investigated.

Instructors are required to document as much of the incident as possible and provide written copies to the RIEPM and the program coordinator within 48-hours of the occurrence.

Worker's Compensation Coverage

POLICY

FWP will pay premiums to the Workers' Compensation Division to ensure that volunteer's are covered under Workers' Compensation for any work related injuries incurred while acting within the course and scope of the volunteer's FWP assigned activity. Volunteers are covered under worker's compensation for medical purposes only. Volunteers are not eligible to participate in state employee group benefit plans.

POLICY

FWP does not consider special hunting opportunities for students or other activities outside the hunter or bowhunter education courses as official state business and as such instructors are not covered under Workers' Compensation, state liability, or medical benefit protection.

Personal Vehicle Liability Requirement

POLICY

FWP requires personal liability insurance to be maintained by volunteers using personal vehicles while on official state business e.g., traveling to and from hunter or bowhunter education classes or attending FWP sponsored training.

POLICY

The department may authorize properly licensed volunteers to operate Department motor vehicles or tow department trailers to and from hunter or bowhunter education courses or other department approved events when necessary.

Stolen or Lost Property Personal, FWP, or State Owned

POLICY

FWP requires a police report to be filed for any personal, State, or FWP owned property that is stolen or lost during any FWP approved activity. The RIEPM and the program coordinator must also be notified immediately of the loss. A copy of the police report must also be sent to the program coordinator in Helena.

If an instructor wishes to be considered for reimbursement of lost or stolen personal property, a request for reimbursement must accompany a copy of the police report and sent to Helena.

First-Aid Requirements

POLICY

FWP encourages all instructors to become Basic First-Aid and CPR-certified. When requested, FWP shall provide basic First-Aid equipment to qualified instructors for use at any hunter or bowhunter education course. Instructors may request to attend First-Aid training from their FWP RIEPM.

Instructors are encouraged to have at least one Basic First-Aid qualified person present during conclusion (field) courses and live-fire activities.

Unsafe Actions Prohibited

POLICY

Instructors shall not knowingly or recklessly perform any act that would endanger students, parents, instructors, or bystanders. All hunter and bowhunter education instructors are expected to follow all rules of firearm and archery safety, even when demonstrating safety lessons in the classroom with inert equipment.

POLICY

Proper Preparation for Risk – Activities with elements of risk are not to be undertaken without proper preparation, safety equipment, instruction, clothing, supervision, and safety measures in place.

POLICY

Violation of safety protocols or an incident that results in an injury or the reasonable apprehension of serious injury must be documented immediately, in writing, and a copy forwarded to the RIEPM and the program coordinator.

MCA § 27-1-721 - Immunity of certain firearms and hunter safety or hunter education instructors.

A person who is designated as an instructor by the Montana department of fish, wildlife, and parks under 87-2-105 MCA or certified as an instructor by a national firearms association, who trains people in the lawful use of firearms, and who is not employed by a governmental entity is not liable for the conduct, acts, or omissions of a student handling firearms, unless the instructor exhibits gross negligence giving rise to causation of the damages.

Student Age

POLICY

HUNTER EDUCATION - Any person who is at least 10-years-old by the first day of class may attend a hunter education course. Everyone who successfully meets all of the course requirements will be issued a certificate upon graduation.

BOWHUNTER EDUCATION - Any person who is at least 11-years-old by the first day of class may attend a bowhunter education course. Everyone who successfully meets all of the course requirements will be certified and issued a certificate upon graduation.

Parental Attendance Required

POLICY

If, due to student behavior reasons, a parent or guardian is required to attend classes with their student, the instructor must provide written documentation to the RIEPM, prior to the next class, clearly stating the reason(s) for this requirement.

Youth Protection and Prevention of Physical or Emotional Harassment

Appropriate Physical Contact

POLICY

The state of Montana policy on sexual abuse and harassment applies to instructors. An investigation will be initiated for allegations of any suspected child abuse or sexual harassment. Parties involved in an investigation shall be protected from coercion, intimidation, retaliation, interference, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation.

POLICY

Sexual Harassment or Bullying - FWP prohibits all forms of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, verbal harassment, verbal abuse, or bullying, between students and/or instructors in the workplace, classroom, or conclusion (field) course(s). Instructors who observe or are made aware of any inappropriate behavior involving other instructors or students are to intervene and talk to the offending person. Instructors are to report the incident to the appropriate authority (e.g. parent, law enforcement, RIEPM, etc.) at the earliest time possible.

POLICY

Two-deep Instruction – Two certified instructors or one certified instructor and another adult (an adult taking the class is acceptable but only to the extent that there are no other instructors available), both of whom must be 18 years of age or older, are required to be present for all classes, conclusion (field) courses, or outings. The use of non-certified adults in classrooms or conclusion (field) courses is discouraged. For the purposes of this section, utilizing a junior instructor as a second instructor is not permitted.

POLICY

No One-on-One Contact - One-on-one contact between an instructor and a student is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as reviews and evaluations, the meeting is to be conducted in full view of another adult.

POLICY

Respect of Privacy - Instructors must respect the privacy of all participants in situations such as restroom breaks and may intrude only to the extent that health or safety requires. Instructors need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

POLICY

Constructive Discipline - Corporal punishment of any form is never permitted. Discipline used during the course shall be constructive and reflect values of the program and FWP (i.e. respect, courtesy, responsibility, etc.) Only in the case of self-defense or to prohibit the physical harm of others, shall an instructor use physical force and then only to the extent that is reasonably necessary to neutralize the threat.

POLICY

Physical Restraint

In the event of an extreme situation, instructors should request immediate assistance from the parent(s) and/or local law enforcement authorities. Only in the case of protecting one's self or others may an instructor use physical restraint against a student. In this situation, the instructor must immediately contact local law enforcement officials.

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to obtain permission from the student and, if present their parent, before touching a student for any reason, including demonstrating the proper way to shoulder a firearm or use archery tackle.

Procedure

Some students may need physical assistance to master the safe and skillful handling of firearms. If such assistance is required;

- (1) It must be done in the presence of another instructor, student, or adult, except for emergency situations,
- (2) The instructor must first ask the student for permission to provide the coaching session, and explain that it could include physical contact.

If, during a live-fire exercise, the safety of a student or others is in jeopardy, the instructor's first priority must be to control the muzzle of the firearm. Instructors must be within touch-distance of students at all times while the students are shooting firearms.

If an instructor suspects that an issue may arise from the touching of a student during any portion of a course, the incident must be documented in writing and a copy forwarded to the RIEPM and the program coordinator.

Suspected Abuse Reporting

POLICY

FWP requires an instructor who suspects that any student is endangered or has been subjected to physical, mental, or sexual abuse, regardless of where it may have occurred, the instructor must report it immediately by calling 911, local police, or the Department Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). The instructor must also advise their RIEPM and program coordinator.

Instructors are to supply the following information, if known: name, address and age of the child; name and address of parents; guardians or other persons having custody of the child; nature and extent of alleged injuries; nature of alleged neglect; any alleged sexual abuse; any evidence of previous injuries; any other information that may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's injury and the identity of the alleged perpetrator(s).

Felons and Referrals from the Judicial System

POLICY

FWP requires that any violator who is court ordered to "talk to an education class" be referred to the program coordinator in Helena prior to being accepted into a class.

Remedial Hunter Education

In many cases, game violators will be required to take the Remedial Hunter Education (RHE) course rather than to participate in a standard hunter education classroom course. Occasionally, a student may show up to "re-take" hunter education thinking they are meeting the RHE requirement. In those instances, refer them to the Helena office for further direction.

Felons and persons convicted of certain domestic violence offenses are prohibited from possessing or being in the vicinity of weapons or ammunition. Instructors may not put any type of firearm, weapon, or ammunition in the area of such individuals. Weapons include muzzleloaders, inert firearms, archery equipment, and knives with blades in excess of 4 inches. Under this definition, a felon attending a hunter education course would be in violation.

Equal Opportunity

POLICY

FWP ensures that the hunter and bowhunter education programs are accessible to all interested individuals. Discrimination based on ethnic origin, religious beliefs, race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability is prohibited. Any victim, witness, or other person acting on behalf of the witness or victim must report any incident or accusation of discrimination to the RIEPM or the program coordinator.

Purpose

The education programs receive Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program funds pursuant to the Pittman-Robertson Act. Under Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the U.S. Department of Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, or disability. Any instructor, student, or other person who believes they have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility; or who wishes further information regarding Title 6, should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240; Montana Human Rights Commission, 616 Helena Ave., Suite 302, Helena MT 59601, or the FWP Personnel Office, 1420 East 6th Ave., Helena MT 59620.

Students with Special Needs or Disabilities Physically, Mentally, Visually, or Hearing Impaired Students

POLICY

FWP makes every effort to ensure that students with disabilities or special needs that desire to hunt in Montana are afforded every reasonable accommodation to be able to attend and successfully complete a hunter or bowhunter education course. Instructors are required to consult with their respective RIEPM to assist with providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or special needs.

Procedure

If a student has a special need (e.g., a physical, mental, or developmental disability), the instructor, student, and parent(s) must agree to a strategy for delivering course information to the student. It's the responsibility of the parent, guardian and/or the student to inform the instructor about a student's special need. Under conditions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, FWP will provide an interpreter, at department expense, for those who are hearing impaired (if one does not already accompany a student).

FWP will not reimburse any services contracted directly by the person with a disability.

In the case of a student who is disabled and not capable of shooting or hunting without assistance, certification is nonetheless achievable. Please contact the Helena office for more information.

POLICY

FWP requires that each student's knowledge must be evaluated based on a written examination provided by FWP. To ensure that those students with poor reading skills are not discriminated against, an instructor or a parent may read the test to them. In special cases, students may be allowed to answer orally as well. Students who fail to achieve the minimum score on the written exam should be interviewed to ascertain whether their failure was due to a lack of knowledge, a failure to understand the test questions, or a learning disability. If the instructor believes that the student missed questions because of a learning disability or a failure to understand the question, he or she should ask the same questions orally (but phrased in a different way). If the student can answer correctly, he or she should be given a "correct" on that question.

Non-English-Speaking Students

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to consult with their RIEPM to provide a reasonable accommodation for foreign-language students. However, not all foreign language requests can be granted.

Purpose

The ability to read and/or write the English language is not required for hunter or bowhunter education. Instructors shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate students with limited use of the English language. If a student does not read English, the student may take the written exam orally. Whenever possible, program staff may request relatives or friends familiar with both English and the student's native language to assist in class. The translator may translate as long as it does not disrupt the class.

Instructors to Teach Specific Subjects

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to closely follow the lessons developed or approved by FWP for the hunter and bowhunter education courses. Instructors are permitted to determine class size, class nights, sequence in which material is presented, seating arrangements, breaks, level of parental involvement, daily class hours, etc. Instructors may not omit sections from the curriculum without prior approval; however, they may, within policy guidelines, expand upon certain topics.

Hours and Class Size

POLICY

FWP requires that the classroom portion of a course not exceed twelve (12) total hours of instruction; and must be taught over at least a two-day period¹. One-day classes are prohibited. No one-day may exceed eight (8) hours of instruction time. Registration/orientation, final (written) test time and (separate specific) field days are not considered as classroom time. Lunch breaks of 30 minutes or more are not considered class time.

POLICY

FWP recommends that maximum classroom student numbers (for a two person teaching team) is between 25-30 students.

Instructors Event Manager Use

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to be trained in the use of the Kalkomey Event Manager system. The training may be acquired from the RIEPM, Helena staff, county chief, or another approved instructor.

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to utilize the Kalkomey Event Manager system for posting, advertising, student registration, student records, issuance of certification cards, and class reporting. All courses must be publicly posted and advertised at least 14-days prior to the first class.

POLICY

FWP requires all course records to be submitted through the Event Manager within 14-days of course completion.

POLICY

Forms and records that document classes and training activities are official state records and, as such, must be maintained by FWP for audit purposes.

POLICY

FWP requires all instructors to utilize the timekeeping feature in the Event Manager to record their daily hours for each course in which they participate. Hours do not need to be entered each day to comply with this policy. Once hours are recorded in the Event Manager, the individual timesheets are printed and each instructor must sign their timesheet. The class lead is responsible to gather and submit all the signed timesheets to Helena.

Time Reporting –

Time must be reported within 14-days after the conclusion of a class. Time is recorded on a per-day basis for each instructor and can be broken into one or several categories:

Class hours - are to reflect the actual daily class hours (or field day hours)

Prep hours - includes round trip travel to and from class, time spent arranging venues, gathering supplies, or other closely related activities

Training hours - are time spent at workshops; traveling to and from workshops; local instructor gatherings when determining class schedules and assigning instructors; or local training

¹ A classroom course with a separate field day is considered to be a two-day class e.g. classroom of 7- hours on Saturday and a 4-hour field course on Sunday is a two-day class. Adult field day courses are not included in this definition.

Course Materials

POLICY

FWP requires that all instructors use the materials and audio-visual aids approved or provided by FWP. Instructors are encouraged to review any additional materials and recommend them to FWP for inclusion in the program. Bowhunter education instructors are required to teach the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) course and use NBEF instructional materials (audio-visual materials may be the exception).

Notification of Classes

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to notify the county chief and their respective RIEPM as far in advance as possible of the date, time, and location of scheduled classes.

Reciprocity with Other Jurisdictions

POLICY

Statutorily, (MCA § 82-2-105) Montana accepts all hunter education certificates from every State and Canadian Province. Montana also accepts all bowhunter certifications from any state or Canadian Province issued by the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) program.

Course Fees

POLICY

FWP requires that all in-person hunter and bowhunter education courses be free of charge. FWP requires instructors to make every attempt to hold courses at facilities that are free of charge to the program. In the event a fee is required, it will be in an amount not to exceed the actual costs of non-program offerings e.g., meals, lodging, site rentals, etc. **Any fee must be pre-approved by the program coordinator.**

Donations

POLICY

FWP authorizes instructors to accept donations on behalf of the program. FWP, in cases where individuals wish to make donations to the program, encourages donations to be made in the form of items that could be used in the local program. All donations are tax deductible.

FWP authorizes instructors to accept cash donations on behalf of the program. Cash donations must be submitted immediately to either your RIEPM or the program coordinator. Donations are to be used in the area and for the purpose for which they were designated. Instructors shall not require or solicit a donation as part of the student enrollment and/or certification process.

Instructor Reimbursement

POLICY

FWP will reimburse instructors for travel and certain, pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses.

Procedure

With prior approval, out-of-pocket expenses incurred by instructors to provide a course or attend FWP sponsored workshops are covered and reimbursed. Mileage expenses are reimbursed at a rate of \$0.35 cents per mile based on the round trip. Meals and lodging will be reimbursed at the rate allotted to state employees. Instructors must submit all reimbursement requests on the *Request for Reimbursement* form along with a completed W9 tax form. The forms can be picked up at the regional office or requested from the Helena office.

Instructor Recognition

POLICY

FWP shall recognize the contributions instructors make to the hunter and bowhunter education programs through periodic incentives and honorariums to instructors through an in-service incentive and honorarium program.

FWP will provide reasonable incentives and honorariums to instructors and special guests as an expression of appreciation and recognition for the contributions they provide to the program.

POLICY

The Longevity Incentive Program recognizes volunteer service at five-year increments. Service in another state's program is not transferable. Junior instructors (14 through 17) are also recognized under this system.

Scheduled incentives and honorariums based on years of service

Five -----	Plaque
Ten -----	Plaque & Engraved Knife
Fifteen -----	Plaque
Twenty -----	Plaque & Belt buckle
Twenty-five --	Plaque
Thirty -----	Plaque & \$500
Thirty-five ----	Plaque
Forty -----	Plaque & Coat
Forty-five -----	Plaque & Filson vest
Fifty -----	Plaque, cap, name on regional Hall of Fame plaque & \$500
Fifty-five -----	Plaque & Shirt
Sixty -----	Plaque – TBD

Student Certification

POLICY

FWP requires the written consent of a parent or legal guardian for any minor (less than 18 years of age) to enroll in a course. The instructor must receive a signed Consent & Acknowledgment of Risk form (furnished by the department) from all course participants by the end of the first night of class.

POLICY

Course Workbook Prerequisite – When students are required to complete the hunter or bowhunter education course Student Manual (answer all end of chapter quizzes) prior to the first class, instructors may deny a student's further participation (in that specific course) for failing to have completed their workbook.

POLICY

Class Attendance – FWP permits students to be certified only after successfully completing all classes of instruction, skills-based evaluation, and the final written examination. A student may miss some instruction due to illness, family emergencies, or religious activities. A student may miss instruction for other reasons if prior arrangements have been made with the instructor; unexcused absences may result in a student's dismissal or failure.

Student Certificates – Duplicates

POLICY

Duplicate hunter & bowhunter education certificates may be issued only by FWP personnel or via FWP's website. Instructors shall not issue a new certificate in lieu of a duplicate. Requests for duplicate certificates should be directed to the FWP web site at <http://fwp.mt.gov/education/hunter/getCertificate.html>

Student Failure Instructor Documentation

POLICY

FWP grants the authority to the instructor to pass or fail a student. However, both must be consistent with established program guidelines. In situations where extenuating circumstances exist, the instructor should first contact their RIEPM for assistance. Final action must be consistent with FWP program policies.

POLICY

FWP grants instructors the authority to refuse to certify or fail any disruptive or uncooperative student. Any student, who continually disrupts class activities, uses drugs, tobacco or alcohol, or refuses to respond to an instructor's directions can be denied further participation.

Procedure

Occasionally, the need to discipline a student arises during a class. Instructors are expected to be courteous but firm in any matter involving unacceptable behavior. Discipline used during FWP education courses shall be constructive and respect the values of the program. For a first offense, a student should be warned and advised of what behavior changes need to be made. If an additional offense occurs, instructors should discuss the problem with a parent and advise them that the student may be expelled. A third offense is grounds for expulsion. The first, second, or third student behavior offenses do not have to be the same. Some offenses may rise to a level that the first occurrence is sufficient to warrant immediate expulsion.

Instructors should document all behavior issues and utilize the warning cards as a means of assisting with that documentation. Unacceptable behavior can be displayed in a wide variety of ways. **Corporal punishment is never permitted.**

POLICY

FWP supports all instructors who exercise sound judgment in failing a student. FWP requires that student failures for reasons other than written test scores be contained in a written account clearly providing the reasons for the failure and forwarded to the RIEPM.

Any failure for attitude or behavioral reasons must include details of specific warnings given to the student and/or parent and steps that the instructor took to remedy the situation.

Any failure for safety reasons must include the specific act(s) that gave rise for the failure and any corrective actions(s) that were taken by the instructor.

POLICY

FWP requires instructors to be responsible for each student, including expelled students, until transferred to parental care or law enforcement custody (i.e., a student may not be sent home early unless a parent has been personally notified by the instructor). Instructors are to document any of these situations and provide a copy to the RIEPM and program coordinator within 48-hours of the occurrence.

POLICY

FWP permits an instructor to immediately fail any person for cheating in any hunter or bowhunter education course. Instructors should inform students in advance about this policy. Student cheating may include unauthorized use of notes, copying, plagiarism or substituting a test candidate (stand-in).

If the student is a minor, the instructor is responsible to contact the parent or guardian and to inform them of the incident giving rise to the dismissal and ensuring that the student is released to the proper family member.

Appeal Process for Student Failures

POLICY

FWP permits students and parents to appeal an instructor's decision to fail or dismiss a student. Individuals who fail a hunter or bowhunter education course may have the decision reviewed by FWP. If the decision to fail a student is based correctly on program standards and policies, FWP will uphold the instructor's decision. If it is found that any student was failed based on arbitrary standards (such as student age, spelling, omitted words on a written test, or marksmanship skills), then the RIEPM or program coordinator may overrule the instructor's decision.

Procedure

Students and parents must first appeal an instructor's decision to the RIEPM. They may appeal the Regional Information and Education Program Manager's decision to the program coordinator in Helena.

Awards for Students

POLICY

FWP provides students with a certification card, student patch, and/or a hunter orange vest acknowledging course completion. FWP permits instructors to provide awards to students. However, any instructor choosing to issue an award to a student or students does so at his or her own expense.

Military Exemption from Conclusion Course (Field Day)

HUNTER EDUCATION ONLY

POLICY

Active-duty members of the United States military, who pass the online hunter education examination, are exempt from the conclusion (field) course requirement. **There is no exemption from the bowhunter conclusion (field) course requirement.**

This only applies to **active duty military** who are using the resident exemption under 87-2-102 (1)(a)(ii) MCA "the member is currently stationed in and assigned to active duty in Montana, has resided in Montana for at least 30 days, and presents official assignment orders etc..." This waiver of the conclusion (field) course **does not apply to National Guard** or Active duty members not under orders to Montana. For example, an active duty nonresident born after January 1, 1985, stationed in Idaho would still be required to take the conclusion (field) course.

Active duty members assigned to Montana are still required to complete hunter education. If they take the online hunter education course, the conclusion (field) course requirement may be waived.

Prohibited Classroom Items

POLICY

Except for factory loaded ammunition used in outdoor live-fire activities, FWP prohibits the use or possession of primers, powders, or any other explosives during any training. Additionally, the use of any live ammunition is prohibited for ALL indoor courses.

Powder-Burning Demonstrations Prohibited

POLICY

FWP prohibits powder-burning demonstrations during all hunter education training courses. The no-powder prohibition applies to Pyrodex and black-powder substitutes.

Use of Reloaded Ammunition Prohibited

POLICY

FWP requires that only factory-loaded ammunition may be used for any hunter education live-fire conclusion (field) course.

Use of Dummy (Inert) Ammunition

POLICY

Only FWP provided or approved inert ammunition may be used in classrooms or for demonstrations. Snap caps are considered an approved inert ammunition and may be used by instructors during hunter education training exercises.

FWP will provide inert ammunition to instructors. Instructors are prohibited from developing or using their own inert ammunition without specific, written, approval from the program coordinator.

Department Firearms or Equipment

POLICY

FWP strictly prohibits the personal use of FWP property. Computers or other digital equipment or electronic devices, decoys, targets, ammunition, arrows, firearms, and archery equipment provided to instructors by the department, whether loaned or transferred, are provided solely for use in the education programs sponsored or supported by the department.

POLICY

Computers or other digital equipment may be issued to instructors for the sole purpose of more effectively teaching a hunter or bowhunter education course. The computers can run software such as HETools, PowerPoint and videos. They may also have WiFi capability and may be used to access the Event Manager.

- Authorized users of computers or other digital equipment are required to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the computers or other digital equipment.
- Only software or programs that have been approved by FWP may be loaded onto the computer.
- Users are to abide by all copyright laws and licensing agreements in their use of computer programs and software.
- FWP computers or other digital equipment may be used only for appropriate FWP purposes.
- Problems with a FWP computer or other digital equipment must be reported immediately to the RIEPM.

- Lost or stolen FWP computers or other digital equipment must be reported immediately to the RIEPM.
- FWP computers or other digital equipment remain the property of FWP.
- The RIEPM will maintain a log of the computer or other digital equipment, instructor name, and date of all borrowed and returned computers.

POLICY

FWP requires that any person who has assigned custody of FWP equipment is responsible for maintaining a record of its current location. Instructors with semi-permanent custody are required to certify the accuracy of inventory records annually.

POLICY

FWP requires that FWP owned equipment and firearms are secured in a suitable location. Firearms [if possible] should be stored in a safe or in a case and with an action lock (trigger or cable). Firearms must be properly cared for when stored-cleaned and lightly oiled.

POLICY

FWP requires that when in transit, functioning firearms are to be secured in the vehicle and transported in a gun case with an action lock. Under no circumstances may firearms be stored or transported loaded. Department firearms may be used for live-fire; however, it is the responsibility of the instructor to verify that they are in a safe working condition before use. Instructors who use firearms in live-fire exercises are responsible for cleaning after EACH use.

Firearms in Classrooms Inert Firearms

POLICY

FWP permits only the use of FWP provided or approved inert firearms (long guns) during any portion of a classroom course.

Purpose

FWP's intentions are to provide consistent information to both students and instructors; provide the safest possible learning environment; and to mitigate the potential for mishaps or damage to personal firearms

FWP recommends and encourages that students use the inert firearms during field days.

POLICY

FWP and the hunter education program will provide a consistent and safe course of instruction in use of the five basic firearm actions—semi-auto, bolt, lever, break or hinge, and pump to hunter education students.

FWP has identified that the best method for consistent training of both instructors and students is to provide sufficient numbers of inert firearm training kits, containing, one-each, of the same five action types for classroom use statewide.

FWP has identified that the safest firearms for use in classroom teaching are actual firearms that have been rendered inert by the manufacturer or a FWP approved gunsmith.

FWP has purchased sufficient inert firearms training kits that contain one-each of the five actions types for use in the classrooms and conclusion (field) courses.

FWP acknowledges that the provided firearms do not cover every possible variant in each action type, nor is it reasonable to cover every possible variant or expect every instructor to be familiar with every variant.

FWP has identified that the safest ammunition for classroom use is factory manufactured inert ammunition.

POLICY

FWP expects instructors and students to follow the four gun-safety rules at all times. All firearm actions are to be kept open at all times except required otherwise i.e. during classroom demonstrations or conclusion (field) course activities.

FWP requires that only inert ammunition may be used during any portion of a classroom or conclusion (field) course (excluding a live-fire exercise) or for demonstration purposes. Under no circumstance shall an instructor (or student) bring live ammunition to class.

FWP requires students to be advised of this policy at, or prior to, the first class meeting. Any live ammunition found in a student's possession, except as authorized during live-fire, may result in the student's immediate dismissal from the course.

FWP requires that all functioning firearms are to be checked (**PROVE**) at the start of each training session and periodically throughout to ensure they contain no ammunition in the chamber, magazine, or feed path. The safety check requires at least two persons to verify the safe condition. The second person may be a student, parent, or another instructor.

POLICY

FWP requires that all **inert** firearm training kits are checked-out and checked-in by the instructor and FWP staff.

Procedure

Inert firearm training kits may be checked out for use from the Regional FWP Office. Each kit contains uniquely serialized firearms that are assigned to unique containers. Instructors shall sign a receipt for each kit acknowledging that the correct firearms are in the correct container. A copy of the receipt is given to the instructor for use when the containers are returned. The original is kept on file at the regional office. The instructor and the FWP staff person shall sign the receipt.

The same process is used when the kits are returned. FWP staff is obligated to also verify that the correct firearms are in the correct container.

POLICY

FWP requires that all FWP owned **functioning** firearms and archery tackle are checked-out and checked-in by the instructor and FWP staff. The same basic procedure is used as for the inert firearms kits.

POLICY

FWP prohibits handguns in any form in hunter education classrooms. Students are prohibited from handling or firing handguns at any FWP hunter education function, including conclusion (field) courses.

FWP encourages instruction on general handgun safety and firearm and ammunition storage in the home. FWP encourages the use of animated visual aids, such as **HETools**, to help explain the various handgun types and their function.

POLICY

FWP prohibits a hunter education program to be provided or promoted **solely** as training or certification for concealed carry applicants.

Firearm Handling Live-Fire Activity

POLICY

FWP requires each hunter education student to demonstrate safe firearm-handling skills to be certified. Instructors are required to demonstrate the proper operation of each firearm type in the inert firearm kit and provide each student ample opportunity to practice, build, and demonstrate safe firearm-handling skills. An instructor may deny certification to any student who, after being properly instructed and corrected, continues to handle a firearm in an unsafe manner.

POLICY

For consistency and to bolster student confidence, instructors are encouraged to have students use the inert firearms on the trail carry and other relevant portions of the conclusion (field) course. However, absent sufficient numbers of inert firearms, an instructor may allow students to bring their personal firearms to a field exercise for the explicit and exclusive purpose of practicing and demonstrating safe firearm-handling. However, students **may not** use personal firearms at any live-fire exercise.

Prior to any firearm handling exercise, each firearm must be checked (**PROVE**) to ensure it is unloaded. The safety check requires at least two people to verify the safe condition. The second person may be another instructor, parent, or other adult familiar with firearms.

Instructors may encourage students to participate in a live-fire activity, but refusal to “pull the trigger” or a demonstration of poor marksmanship is not a reason to deny certification.

The live-fire activity may consist of shooting the appropriate size and caliber firearms such as a BB, pellet gun/air rifle, .22 rifle, properly sized center fire rifle, or a shotgun. It is the instructor’s responsibility to select a firearm that is appropriate for a student’s body size and weight. Inappropriate firearms include those that are too heavy in weight or too powerful in caliber or gauge for a student to safely handle.

Handgun shooting is not permitted at any FWP sponsored hunter education course. This includes BB, air, and pellet pistols.

POLICY

FWP requires that only factory ammunition and firearms provided by FWP or a shooting club may be used [shot] at a hunter education live-fire activity.

Procedure

Instructors may acquire ammunition from their RIEPM. Instructors may, with prior approval from the information officer, purchase approved ammunition and request reimbursement. Only factory-manufactured ammunition may be used for live-fire activities (no hand-loaded ammunition is allowed). Prior to the discharge of live ammunition, the instructor shall check the data stamp on the ammunition and firearm to ensure they match.

POLICY

FWP prohibits students from handling live ammunition, except during a controlled live-fire activity at an approved range or other area suitable for the safe and legal discharge of firearms while under the close supervision of an instructor or a shooting range officer (Range Safety Officer).

Prior to a live-fire activity, all students must be asked by the instructor to declare the possession of any live ammunition (the instructor may address the group or ask students individually). Any live ammunition found in a student's possession, except as authorized during live-fire, may result in the student's dismissal from the course.

Every firearm used for live-fire must be checked by an instructor or gunsmith for proper operation and safety prior to a live-fire event. A bore inspection for obstructions should also be performed on the unloaded firearm prior to use.

Range rules, procedures, course of fire, etc. shall be explained to all participants prior to a live-fire exercise. If a class is held at an established range or gun club, the host range rules must be followed. Only paper (bullseye, animal silhouette), metal (animal silhouette), or clay (for shotgun) targets may be used.

During live-fire activities, instructors are required to maintain direct supervision of all students who are on the shooting line and in the staging area. Ideally, a ratio of one instructor to one student (1:1) is recommended; however, no more than a 1:3 ratio is to be maintained on the firing line.

All participants must wear appropriate eye and hearing protection during live-fire activities. This includes students who are waiting and spectators who are close (instructor's judgment) to the firing line.

Any accident or critical safety violation incident must be reported to the program coordinator immediately. The program coordinator may further investigate the circumstance.

Course Content & Student Skills Assessment



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

Course Content Policy & Skills Assessment

POLICY

FWP requires that in addition to a skills-based evaluation each student shall be evaluated based on their individual knowledge. Knowledge is evaluated through the use of a written test developed and provided by FWP. Students who have reading difficulties may be given the test orally. Instructors do not have the authority to alter the test, scoring criteria, or minimum passing grade.

*The intent of any test questions requiring students to write any concepts taught in the classroom (e.g. The Four Safe Gun Handling Rules) is to ensure that the student understands the concept. Answers are not to be marked wrong based on spelling or the omission of a word(s) that do not materially affect the general meaning. For example, not having the word **ALWAYS** would not make the answer wrong.*

POLICY

FWP grants instructors the authority to refuse to certify or fail any disruptive or uncooperative student. Any student, who continually disrupts class activities, uses drugs, tobacco or alcohol, or refuses to respond to an instructor's directions can be denied further participation.

POLICY

Evaluating Student Skill or Knowledge

For each of the field or classroom activities, students who fail to demonstrate or explain one or more of the exercises or processes must take appropriate training, guidance, or direction from the instructor. A single infraction or failure is not necessarily grounds for failure or dismissal from the course provided that it is not an egregious offense or one that continues to be repeated after instructor guidance. Repeated or multiple failures may be grounds for failing the course. Course failure must be documented by the instructor(s).

POLICY

Conclusion Course / Field Day Evaluation Form

FWP requires that instructors use the form (Addendum A) provided by FWP or a substantially similar form to evaluate individual students during their skills-based performance. If necessary, at the completion of the session the instructor(s) can discuss the results of a student's evaluation with the student and their parent/guardian in private.

Addendum A is recommended but not required for every student; however, the evaluation guidelines are required to be applied to each student.

FWP requires that student knowledge, attitude, and performance of skill-based exercises are evaluated based on the judgment of the instructor and consistent with the guidelines provided in the **Evaluation Procedures** section.

POLICY

Conclusion Course / Field Exercise²

A FWP approved skills-based field exercise is required for both hunter & bowhunter education courses. These exercises are used to evaluate student skills and to positively reinforce topics taught in the classroom. Maximum student time spent at any conclusion (field) course is six hours. This applies to both classroom and online courses.

Procedure

Conclusion (field) course scenarios should be planned to include several possible choices related to firearm safety, laws, and ethical decisions. Ideas for scenarios and the set-up required for each should be discussed with your instructor group prior to the field day. The instructor group should set up and rehearse each scenario prior to the field day.

During the conclusion (field) course, the instructor(s) should facilitate discussions of wildlife management and conservation topics, hunter behavior and hunting laws and regulations as the opportunity presents. *Set students up to **succeed**, allow students to think but avoid unrealistic “trick” scenarios.*

Instructors are encouraged to correct student behavior and to evaluate the student’s ability to make safe, legal, and ethical decisions in simulated hunting situations. Students must demonstrate safe firearm handling practices throughout the course.

POLICY

Firearms (functioning) – Safety Check

FWP requires that a minimum of two instructors inspect (**PROVE**) every **functioning** firearm brought to a conclusion (field) course. Instructors will inspect each firearm to ensure that it is unloaded and can be operated safely; a chamber checker or some other indicator should be installed to indicate that it has been checked and is safe. The firearm can then be placed in a dedicated location until the student needs it for the conclusion (field) course scenarios.

Student firearms should be labeled with the student’s name to avoid confusion over ownership. Use removable painters tape to avoid damage to the firearm and attach to the metal parts when possible.

² The conclusion course/field day may consist of either a specific day set aside for the purpose of evaluating the skills taught in the classroom; or the skills evaluation may be incorporated into the classroom portion as separate breakout sessions.

Skills Assessment Guidelines

FWP requires that student knowledge, attitude, and performance of skill-based exercises are evaluated based on the judgment of the instructor and consistent with the following guidelines:

1) *Knowledge*

- a. Attaining a minimum score of 85% on the written exam
 - i. Every test question is assigned the same numeric value.
 - ii. Test questions requiring students to write any concepts taught in the classroom (*The Four Safe Gun Handling Rules*) are not to be marked wrong based on spelling or the omission of a word(s) that do not materially affect the general meaning.
- b. Identify basic parts of a firearm – *Action, Barrel, & Stock*
- c. Identify data stamp and describe basic information – *Correct Ammunition*
- d. Identify the five actions – *Lever, Bolt, Break or Hinge, Pump, and Semi-auto*
- e. Identify game species and their distinguishing features; *elk, mule deer, white tailed deer, black bear, grizzly bear, buck antelope, and doe antelope*
- f. Written Test Scoring Guidelines - **Hunter** education classroom - shot placement portion – questions 77-80
 - i. Shots must be marked in the heart-lungs vital area to be scored as correct
- g. Written Test Scoring Guidelines - **Bowhunter** education classroom-
 - i. Each organ must be correctly identified. Each correctly identified organ is worth one point.
 1. Heart, Lungs, Liver, Diaphragm, and Stomach Cavity

2) *Attitude*

- a. Attentive to instruction
- b. Participation in classroom and hands-on activities
- c. Prepared for classes
- d. Respectful to instructors and classmates
- e. Follow directions
- f. Responsible and ethical attitude³

3) *Skills*

- a. Demonstrate their ability to apply the basic rules of firearm safety by demonstrating the following skills and concepts throughout the course:
 - i. ***Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction***
 - ii. ***Always Treat Every Gun as if it were Loaded***
 - iii. ***Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire***
 - iv. ***Always be Sure of Your Target and Beyond***
- a. Demonstrate the ability to properly and safely load and unload firearms or archery equipment throughout the course (**P.R.O.V.E.**)
- b. Demonstrate the ability to properly and safely handle firearms or archery equipment in the classroom and on the conclusion (field) course e.g. **correct carries, field of fire, navigate obstacles, enter/exit and store/transport firearms in vehicles, passing firearms to another, etc.)**
- c. Generally, conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner throughout the classroom and conclusion (field) course

³ Ethics and ethical behavior are subjective by nature. Students are not to be failed for merely expressing ethics that differ from that of the instructor or what might be considered the "norm." Instructors are encouraged to engage students in, short, positive conversations about ethics and use examples of good ethical choices.

FWP understands that not every skill listed here will be assessed at every conclusion course and that certain locations are not conducive to every activity listed.

Bear Aware /Bear Spray

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper use and deployment of bear spray and proper reaction to a bear encounter.

Practice with inert spray, always carry spray, spray pattern, distance, length (time) of spray, avoid eye contact, avoid aggressive behavior, back away do not run, make noise when possible while walking in bear country, when to fight back, when to "play dead"

Blood Trailing

Student correctly demonstrates or explains that blood trailing is an ethical responsibility anytime an animal is hit and not found immediately.

Students should work together, talk to each other, leapfrog, not damage the "blood" trail, use flagging-toilet paper, ribbon etc.

Cross Obstacles / Fences

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper/safe steps to cross a fence or other obstacle when they are alone or with a partner. Student correctly demonstrates or explains the following steps when crossing:

- Unloading their firearm – **P.R.O.V.E.**
- Laying the firearm under the fence with the muzzle pointing away (with a cap, glove, etc. protecting the muzzle) from where the hunter will cross or handing it to a partner
- Safely picking up (or handing to partner) the firearm
- Checking the muzzle for obstructions
- Reloading if the hunt is to continue

Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction

Always Treat Every Gun as if it were Loaded

Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire

Field Carries

Student correctly demonstrates or explains (if appropriate for the course) all six-field carries *two-handed, cradle, elbow, sling, trail, and shoulder*. While they are demonstrating the various carries, they must also demonstrate proper muzzle control.

Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction

Always Treat Every Gun as if it were Loaded

Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire

Firearms – Actions

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the five main firearm actions.

Lever, Bolt, Break or Hinge, Pump, and Semi-auto

Firearms – Parts

Student correctly identifies the three main parts of a firearm and their purpose.

Barrel- The part through which a projectile or shot travel and may be either smooth or rifled

Action- loads and fires ammunition and ejects the spent case

Stock- supports or carries the action and barrel and is held by the shooter

Firearms Storage

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper method of storing firearms and ammunition in the home.

Firearms stored unloaded and in a locked cabinet or safe. Gun locks on all firearms especially those not in a gun safe

Ammunition stored separately from firearms

Identify Data Stamp on Firearm & Ammo

Student correctly demonstrates or explains where to find the data stamp on a firearm and ammunition, what information it provides, and the significance of that information.

Caliber/gauge, necessary to match ammunition to firearm.

Load/Unload - Open Action/Verify Safe Condition (P.R.O.V.E.)

Student correctly demonstrates or explains - ***Always Treat Every Gun as if it were Loaded*** and correctly demonstrates or explains **P.R.O.V.E.** at each station where required.

Point, Remove, Observe, Verify, Examine

Muzzle Control

Student correctly demonstrates or explains - ***Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction.***

Range Estimation

Student correctly demonstrates or explains why it is important to be able to estimate distance to the target-

So they can be accurate in taking a shot, ethically responsible

Student should determine if the targets are in range for the firearm or archery equipment they are using.

Incorrect range estimates are not grounds for failure of a station or the course.

Safety - Use of

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper use of the firearm's safety; that they are familiar with the safety location and that it is a mechanical device that can fail.

If the student is not familiar with the safety, the student should ask for assistance. Students who fail to demonstrate or explain the skill must take appropriate training, guidance, or direction from the instructor(s).

Shoot-Don't Shoot

FWP requires that students correctly demonstrate or explain if it is safe to take a shot. They must be able to explain why/why not. If they would shoot, explain which shooting position they would use to take the shot - *standing, kneeling, sitting, or prone*? Is there a better option? Students should point out any background issues, such as skyline, buildings, other people, etc.

Always be Sure of Your Target and Beyond

Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction

Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire

Shooting Positions

Student correctly demonstrates or explains three of the four basic shooting positions and the advantages or disadvantages of each.

Prone, Sitting, Kneeling, Standing

Shot Placement

Student correctly demonstrates or explains proper shot placement and identifies proper and improper shot angles and location of major organs –

Heart, liver, lungs - varying angles in relation to the game, location of large bones in big game, that broadside or quartering away shots are most effective for big game

Student Attitude

Student demonstrates a willingness to learn, take responsibility for their actions, be respectful of other students and instructors, the course facility and rules.

*Attitude or behavior concerns **MUST** always be discussed with parents or guardians prior to, or at the time of, a failure or removal from a class.*

Survival Situation

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the first thing they should do in a survival situation is **S.T.O.P. - Stop, Think, Observe, and Plan** – and describes other items such as:

Hunt plan and who they left it with; food, fire, shelter material, water, first aid items, medication, and signaling devices, map, compass, GPS, batteries, proper clothing-NO COTTON

Tree Stand Safety

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper use of safety equipment and the cause of suspension trauma.

Fall arrest system (FAS), haul line, three points of contact, proper method to haul equipment up & down, certified equipment

Vehicle Safety / Transportation

FWP requires that IF students are required to bring a personal firearm to a conclusion (field) course, an instructor will inspect each firearm either at the student's vehicle or prior to the student entering the conclusion (field) course area, to ensure that it is unloaded and can be operated safely; a chamber checker or some other indicating method should be utilized to indicate that it has been checked and is safe such as red tape over or around the muzzle. The firearm can then be placed in a dedicated location until the time the student needs it for the Conclusion (field) course scenarios.

When the students retrieve their firearms, the instructor should facilitate a discussion of transportation of firearms in a motor vehicle in Montana. Assist students with understanding when a firearm needs to be cased. Students must explain that all firearms must be unloaded and cased while being transported in a vehicle. If available, samples of archery equipment could be placed in the vehicle so discussions of case requirements for their transport can also be facilitated.

P.R.O.V.E.

Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction

Always Treat Every Gun as if it were Loaded

Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire

Zones of Fire

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the zones and, if asked, the appropriate carry for where they are in relation to the others:

Sling, trail, cradle, elbow or side, shoulder, two-handed or "ready"

Always Point the Muzzle in a Safe Direction

Always Keep Your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Fire

Always be Sure of Your Target and Beyond

Online Education Conclusion (Field) Course

POLICY

FWP requires that a conclusion course (field day) for online students consist of a minimum of four-hours⁴ and a maximum of six-hours and must be completed in a single day⁵. Students are required to pass a skills-based conclusion (field) course to be fully certified. Students are required to present their online examination certificate and a valid, state issued, picture ID to the instructor prior to beginning the conclusion (field) course.

FWP requires instructors to evaluate students consistent with the policies and procedures previously set forth in this manual. Only FWP provided and approved written examinations may be administered to online students at conclusion courses.

The conclusion course (field day) for the online **HUNTER** education students must consist of a curriculum that includes the following topics. The listed timeframes are approximations.

General Topic	Approximate Times	
Firearms – Actions & Parts	30	30
Safety – General, P.R.O.V.E.	30	30
Survival/First Aid	15	30
Conservation	15	30
Animal ID	15	30
Sportsmanship / Ethics	15	30
Firearm-Hands-on handling	60	90
Trail Course/Optional Live Fire	60	90
Total	4 HRS	6 HRS

Subtopics and activities could include:

S.T.O.P.	Game Care / Field Dressing
Hands-on with Inert Firearms	Shooting Positions
Negotiating Obstacles/Fences	Blood Trailing
Selecting Correct Ammo/Data Stamps	Bear Spray / Bear Aware
Survival Gear & First Aid Equipment	Shot Placement
Zones of Fire	ID of Mule Deer & White Tailed Deer, Elk & Moose
Field Carries	Use of <i>Today's Hunter Videos</i> for review of specific topics
Landowner/Sportsmen Relations	Live Fire - Optional

Instructors may add or expand training or topics as long as the course does not exceed the maximum of 6-hours.

⁴ **Exception** - There may be times when, due to low student numbers, the specified topics are covered in less than the four hour minimum.

⁵ The four-six hours refers only to student time spent on or at a course.

Bowhunter Education Program

POLICY

Bowhunter education courses may be offered year-around. Course offerings are at the discretion of individual instructors.

POLICY

Bowhunter education is required for everyone who desires to use archery tackle during an archery only season in Montana.

Student knowledge, attitude, and performance of skills-based exercises are evaluated based on the judgment of the instructor and consistent with the policies and procedures previously set forth in this policy manual.

Basic topics for conclusion (field) course should include but are not limited to:

General Topics	Approximate Times	
Animal ID	10	20
Bear Spray / Bear Aware	30	45
Personal Effective Shooting Range	10	15
Landowner/Sportsmen Relations	10	15
Shot Placement	10	20
Survival / Gear / General Safety / S.T.O.P.	30	60
Sportsmanship / Ethics & Ethical shots	20	30
Trail Course Stations		
<i>Blood Trailing</i>		
<i>Range Estimation</i>		
<i>Tree Stand Safety</i>		
<i>Optional - Live Fire</i>		
Trail Course approximate time for the above topics	90	150
Total Time - Hours	3.75	6
Use <i>Today's Bowhunter Videos</i> for review of specific topics		

The listed timeframes are approximations.

Instructors may add or expand training or topics as long as the course does not exceed the maximum of 6-hours.

POLICY

FWP permits only FWP owned archery tackle (Genesis bows and aluminum arrows) to be used by students during live-fire exercises. Students may only use fingers when shooting; the use of a release is prohibited.

Bowhunter Specific Skills Assessment Guidelines

Arrow Types

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the various arrow types that are in use today.

A modern arrow can be described as the delivery system for the arrow's point. Arrows have four parts: the shaft, fletching, the nock, and the arrow points. wood, aluminum, carbon-fiber, fiberglass, or a combination of aluminum and carbon-fiber

Arrow Parts

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the main parts of an arrow and their function.

Fletch, Shaft, Nock, Nock Point

Arrow Spine

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of arrow spine and why it is important to get the properly spined arrow for their bow.

Arrow Stiffness, Matched to Bow, related to "Archer's Paradox" Mismatched arrows may not fly correctly or accurately.

Basic Bow Parts

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the three main parts that make up a bow and their function

Limbs, riser or handle, and string

Blood Trail

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the principles of blood trailing and the importance of honing that skill.

Wait time, Shot location, locating/recovering animals

Broadheads

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the various broadheads, field points, and their respective functions.

Fixed, mechanical / expandable, and removable

Ethics

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of ethics and ethical shots.

The average hunter has a maximum effective range of 30 yards; most bowhunters shoot game from a much closer range. The chance of wounding game increases as distance increases because:

- *It becomes more difficult to hit the vital areas*
- *The arrow may be deflected by unnoticed brush*
- *The longer the arrow is in the air, the greater the chance the animal will move*

Broadheads versus Bullets

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of how broadheads kill versus bullets.

Broadheads cause massive blood loss and/or lack of oxygen by puncturing the lungs, An animal must lose about 1/3 of its blood to die from blood loss

Equipment Safety

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of the importance of regularly checking their equipment.

Checking for cracks, knock points, limbs, sights, bowstring, prevent dry fires

Shot Placement

Student correctly demonstrates or explains an understanding of correct shot placement.

Effective range, angle, vitals, primary target area is the chest cavity, which holds the heart, lungs, and major arteries and veins, shot angle is the angle at which the animal is standing in relation to the bowhunter. Knowing which angles offer the most effective—and least effective—shots is an essential

Tree Stand Safety

Student correctly demonstrates or explains the proper use of safety equipment and the cause of suspension trauma.

Fall arrest system (FAS), haul line, three points of contact, proper method to haul equipment up & down, certified equipment

Basic Range Commands

The following are procedures to follow on a live-fire range

1. The Range Master (RM) is also the Range Safety Officer (RSO) and is in charge of the range, range safety, and ensuring that all safety rules are followed. The RM/RSO is responsible for the safety and oversight of all students and coaches. As such the RM/RSO cannot also be a coach. The RM/RSO will explain all terms and commands to be used, rules to be followed, and the exercise.
2. Once all the students are on the **firing line**, the RM/RSO will explain the first course of fire.
3. All students will make their firearms/bows ready only when instructed by the RM/RSO.
4. The RM/RSO will give the command **"Ready on the firing line?"** The RM/RSO will check the right and left to make sure the line is ready. If the line is not ready, the RM/RSO will say, **"Standby." "The firing line is not ready!"** The command to fire will not be given until the entire line is ready. The RM/RSO will again ask **"Is the firing line ready?"** When the RM/RSO determines the line is ready, the command is given **"The firing line is ready!"**
5. Students may begin their first course of fire when the RM/RSO gives the command **"Fire"** or one short whistle blast.
6. Students/shooters who experience a problem with their firearm/bow or those who do not understand what to do during an exercise will, if possible, open the firearm action, put the firearm down, step back from the firing line, and raise their hand until the line coach has remedied the issue.

In the case of archery equipment, the shooter is to remove (un-nock) the arrow, step back from the firing line, and raise their hand until the line coach has remedied the issue.
7. Anyone who observes a safety problem must call **"CEASE!"** or **"CEASE FIRE!"**
8. After all students have finished the course of fire; the RM/RSO will give the command **"Cease Fire"** or two whistle blasts. All shooters must stop shooting, open the action, lay the firearm down, and step back from the firing line.

In the case of archery equipment, the shooter is to remove (un-nock) the arrow, place all arrows in the holder on the ground, hang or also ground the bow, then step back from the firing line.
9. The RM/RSO will then check all firearms on the line to ensure that the actions are open and no rounds remain in them. The RM/RSO will then declare **"The line is safe."**
10. The RM/RSO then instructs all the students to go down range and check their target or begin the second course of fire. The RM/RSO repeats steps 2 through 9.
11. Once students have completed all courses of fire, and the range is declared safe by the RM/RSO, students may replace their targets and prepare for the next group.

Instructions - Use of Field Day Skills Evaluation Form – Conclusion Course

The Field Skills Evaluation Form (**Addendum A**) or a substantially similar form is used to evaluate student skills during the conclusion (field) course activities and optional live-fire exercises. FWP understands that not every activity on the evaluation form will be offered at every conclusion (field) course e.g., live-fire exercises as such instructors are afforded a certain amount of latitude.

Mark each station that applies with **Yes** or **No** where the student satisfactorily demonstrated or explained that skill. Mark activities that do not apply as **N/A** or leave blank.

Steps taken to correct improper handling skills or attitude must be documented in the "Comments" section. Issues with handling skills or attitude demonstrated by students while moving between stations should be reflected under the next station. *Grounds for student failure include failure to take appropriate training, guidance, or direction from the instructor, which must also be documented in the "Comments" section.*

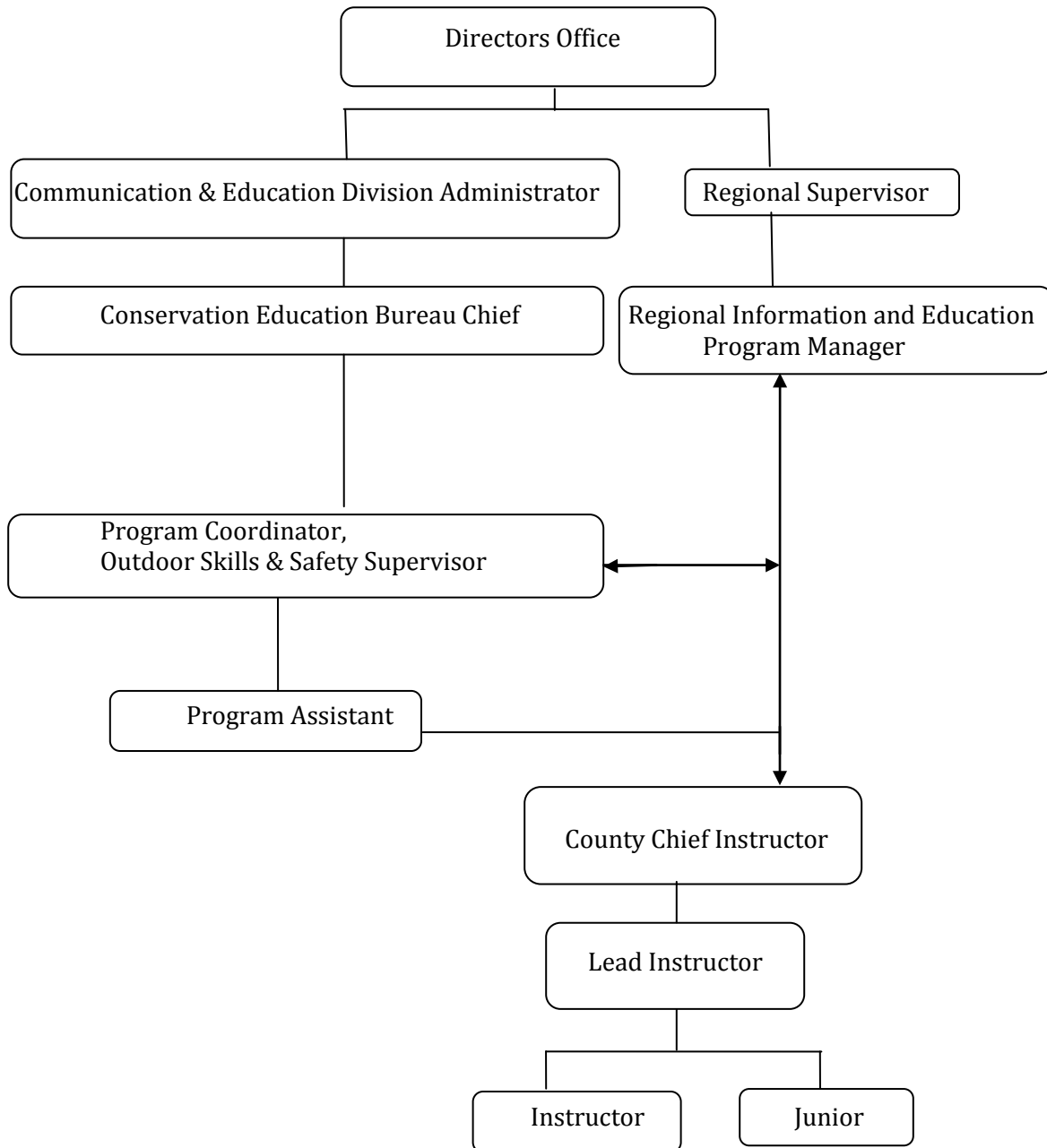
If a student repeats or continues to fail in one or more categories, the instructor will sign in the blank marked **NO** to answer the question-***This student conducted themselves in a safe and responsible manner to the satisfaction of the instructor(s).***

Ensure the reason for the failure is stated in the notes section. Forward the failed student field evaluation card to the RIEPM.

Conclusion Course Field Activities Evaluation Card

Addendum A			
Hunter Education Field Skills Evaluation Form			
Student Name:		Assigned Arrival Time:	
CHECK-IN	YES	NO	Comments
On Time for Field Day			
Came Prepared - Clothes/Equipment/Other			
PROVE Firearm & Did NOT Have Live AMMO			
Demonstrated Safe Gun Handling Skills			
Had Bolt or Magazine for Their Firearm - If Required			
STATION - Livefire	YES	NO	Comments
Identified Data Stamp - Firearm and Ammo			
Demonstrated PROVE / Properly Operated Firearm			
Demonstrated Safe Gun Handling Skills-Generally			
Checked/Properly Used Safety			
Finger Outside Trigger Guard Until Ready to Fire			
Demonstrated Proper Muzzle Control			
Used Proper Carry for Situation			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			
STATION - Bear Spray / Vehicle / Survival	YES	NO	Comments
Attentive to Instruction			
Proper Attitude			
Participated in Hands-on Practice			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			
STATION -	YES	NO	Comments
Attentive to Instruction			
Participated in Hands-on Practice			
Proper Attitude			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			
STATION - Shooting Positions/Zones of Fire/Shot Placement	YES	NO	Comments
Properly PROVE /Operated Firearm			
Identified Data Stamp - Firearm and Ammo			
Demonstrated Several Shooting Positions			
Demonstrated Correct Shot Placement			
Demonstrated Safe Gun Handling Skills-Generally			
Checked/Used Safety			
Demonstrated Finger Outside Trigger Guard at all Times			
Demonstrated Proper Muzzle Control			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			
STATION - Trail Carry	YES	NO	Comments
Identified Data Stamp - Firearm and Ammo			
Properly PROVE /Operated Firearm			
Demonstrated Safe Gun Handling Skills-Generally			
Checked/Used Safety			
Demonstrated Finger Outside Trigger Guard at all Times			
Demonstrated Proper Muzzle Control			
Demonstrated Proper Carry for Situation			
Shoot/Don't Shoot - Made Correct Choices			
Fence-Properly & Safely Crossed - Single			
Fence-Properly & Safely Crossed - Double			
Blood Trail-Communicated, Preserved Blood, Marked Spots			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			
STATION -	YES	NO	Comments
Attentive to Instruction			
Participated in Hands-on Practice			
Proper Attitude			
Student Acted in a Safe and Responsible Manner			

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



FWP CONTACT INFORMATION

FWP Region	Contact	Office Address
Region 1 Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Sanders	John Fraley (406) 751-4564 jfraley@mt.gov	490 North Meridian Rd. Kalispell, MT 59901
Region 2 Deer Lodge, Granite, Mineral, Missoula, Powell, Ravalli	Vivaca Crowser (406) 542-5518 vcrowser@mt.gov	3201 Spurgin Road Missoula, MT 59804
Region 3 Beaverhead, Gallatin, Madison, Park, Butte/Silverbow	Andrea Jones (406) 994-6931 anjones@mt.gov	1400 South 19 th Bozeman, MT 59715
Region 4 Cascade, Choteau, Fergus, Glacier, Judith Basin, Liberty, Meagher, Petroleum, Pondera, Teton, Toole	Bruce Auchly (406) 454-5845 bauchly@mt.gov	4600 Giant Springs Rd. Great Falls, MT 59406
Region 5 Bighorn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Wheatland, Yellowstone	Bob Gibson (406) 247-2950 bgibson@mt.gov	2300 Lake Elmo Dr. Billings, MT 59105
Region 6 Blaine, Daniels, Hill, McCone, Philips, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Valley	Marc Kloker (406) 228-3704 mkloker@mt.gov	Route 1-4210 Glasgow, MT 59230
Region 7 Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Treasure, Wibaux	Marla Prell (406) 234-0900 Main Office	Industrial Site W PO Box 1630 Miles City, MT 59301
Program Coordinator and Region 8 Portions of Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson	Wayde Cooperider (406) 444-9947 wacooperider@mt.gov	1420 East 6 th Ave Helena, MT 59620
Program Assistant	Sara Smith (406) 444-9948 sarsmith@mt.gov	1420 East 6 th Ave Helena, MT 59620

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT – TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Montana's Education Programs receive Federal Aid in Fish and Wildlife Restoration pursuant to the Pittman-Robertson Act. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the U.S. Dept of Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin. Any applicant, instructor, student, or other person who believes they have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility or who desires further information regarding Title VI should contact the following office Chief, Office for Human Resources, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Definitions

Administrative Suspension/Leave

Administrative Suspension/Leave is used to temporarily remove an instructor from his or her capacity as an instructor, usually to permit sufficient time to investigate complaints related to the instructor's actions or behavior. While placed on Administrative Suspension/Leave, the instructor is barred from attending any hunter or bowhunter activities in any capacity that represents FWP or the program. This includes instructor meetings, pre-class meetings, classrooms, or field day activities.

Adult

An adult is anyone who is 18-years of age or older.

Applicant

An applicant is an adult who has applied to become an instructor and passed the background investigation, criminal records/history check, and the Policy & Procedure test.

Apprentice Hunter

Any person who is age 10 through 17 and who may not have completed hunter education.

Apprentice Hunting Certificate

The 2015 Legislature passed HB 140, which created an apprentice hunting certificate available for two years to persons ages 10 through 17 who not have completed⁶ hunter education.

Background Investigation

Includes but is not limited to contacting references, employer, conducting Internet searches, reviewing driving records, or contacting others who may have information about the applicant's character.

Certification - Student

Means passing the state approved hunter or bowhunter education course including any FWP required test or field day. Certification is not the same as *complete*, *completed*, or *completion*. (See Completion of Hunter or Bowhunter Education Course)

Class (course)

A class is any hunter or bowhunter education course consisting of one or more students and a maximum of twelve (12) classroom hours. Conclusion (field) course hours are not considered classroom time.

Class Report – Electronic

Similar to the "old paper" reports; however, they are submitted through the Event Manger. These reports consist of a listing of each student, their certification number, a listing of each participating instructor, the daily hours that each instructor volunteered, and the hours spent on the instruction of various topics (See **Time Reporting** for breakdown).

Completion of a Hunter or Bowhunter Education Course

(a) passing the state approved hunter or bowhunter education course including the required test and field day; and

(b) reaching 12 years of age by January 16 of the current license year.

⁶ Completed means reaching age 12 by January 16 of the current license year.

County chief instructor

The county chief is a volunteer instructor who has taken a leadership role in their county for the hunter or bowhunter education program(s).

Criminal Records/History

Criminal records/history checks include a national name and Social Security Number (SSN) and/or a fingerprint-based search for any criminal records/history related to the applicant.

Documentation

Documentation is a written account of fact. It details the events surrounding any student behavior or discipline that resulted in a student's failure (other than the written test) or dismissal from a class. It must include the student's name; the date, time, and location; names and contact information of other instructors or adults who may have witnessed the behavior; steps that were taken to correct the behavior; and the name(s) of the student's parent(s) or guardian that were interviewed about the behavior. Instructors are to keep a copy of the documentation and forward the original to their RIEPM.

Egregious

Egregious is defined as flagrant, conspicuously bad, offensive, blatant, obvious, or outstandingly bad e.g., intentionally pointing a firearm at another person.

Electronic Class

See **Event Manager**

Event Manager (EM)

The Event Manager (EM) is the online student registration and class management tool to be utilized by all instructors for all classes. EM provides a vehicle for instructors to advertise classes, register students, manage classes, issue certification, print certificates, directly email students, and submit electronic class reports.

Field Course/Day (Conclusion Course) activities

The conclusion course/field day may consist of either a specific day set aside for the purpose of evaluating the skills taught in the classroom; or the skills evaluation may be incorporated into the classroom portion as separate breakout sessions.

FWP

Anywhere in this document that the term *Department* or the abbreviation *FWP* is used it refers to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. When either term is used in this document in reference to policy and procedures it specifically refers to the Montana Hunter and Bowhunter Education Programs policies and procedures.

Functioning Firearm

Functioning firearms are any firearms that are capable of being fired. This does not include the FWP issued inert firearms.

Inert Ammunition

Inert ammunition has been commercially manufactured and is not capable of being discharged in any firearm. It does not contain a primer, powder, or any other propellant. It may be similar in weight and construction to actual ammunition i.e., brass case and lead bullet or shotgun hull with wad and shot.

Inert Firearms

Inert firearms are semi-functional firearms that have been altered by the manufacturer or by a FWP approved professional gunsmith so that they can no longer be fired, nor readily returned to a firing condition. They are used for classroom training, teaching, and field exercise purposes.

Instructor Advisory Group

An instructor advisory group is comprised of six to ten instructors selected from around the state. They act in an advisory capacity to the program coordinator on such matters as policies, training, instructor standards, and ideas to guide the future of the hunter and bowhunter education programs in Montana.

Instructor – Active Instructor

An instructor is any adult who has passed the requisite background investigation and criminal records/history check, training, and otherwise meets all the requirements to be considered an active instructor. Contextually dependent, the term instructor shall refer to either or both a hunter or bowhunter instructor throughout this manual.

Junior Instructor

A junior instructor is any minor from age 14 through 17 who has passed all the requisite training and meets all the requirements to be considered an active junior instructor. Junior instructors are exempt from the background investigation and criminal records/history check.

Juvenile / Child / Minor

A juvenile is any person who is under the age of 18-years.

Online Conclusion (field) Course

The online conclusion (field) course is for those students who qualify to take the hunter or bowhunter course online through a web-based learning experience and, as an additional requirement to obtain certification, must also attend a field-day exercise.

Online Student

An online student is anyone who is permitted, by department rule or state law, to participate in an approved web-based learning experience in lieu of attending a traditional classroom course. Any person born after January 1, 1985, who takes the online course, is required to attend a conclusion (field) course to obtain certification.

Program Assistant

The program assistant is the FWP employee who is responsible to assist the program coordinator with the hunter and bowhunter education programs; assists instructors with questions, training, Event Manager, and setting up classes; may deal directly with students; responds to requests that cannot otherwise be addressed at the regional level.

Program Coordinator

The program coordinator is the FWP employee who has overall responsibility to administer the statewide operation of the hunter and bowhunter education programs. This person is responsible for ordering program material, organizing regional training, policy decisions, acts as the liaison with Kalkomey, and decision making that exceeds the scope and authority of the RIEPM's authority.

Range Master / Range Safety Officer

The Range Master (RM) / Range Safety Officer (RSO) is in charge of the range (gun or archery), range safety, and for ensuring that all safety rules are followed. The Range Master will explain the complete exercise, all terms and commands to be used, rules to be followed, and will make sure that all present understand the exercise. The RM cannot simultaneously act as a coach.

Regional Information and Education Program Manager (RIEPM)

The FWP employee who is responsible to oversee the regional operation of the hunter and bowhunter education programs. The person is responsible for ensuring that adequate classes are offered, for appointing the county chiefs and lead instructors, for ensuring sufficient class supplies for regional programs are on hand, and for making decisions that exceed the scope and authority of the county chief.

Volunteer - Certified Volunteer

A volunteer is an unpaid person who performs any authorized duties for FWP. A volunteer receives no wages, has successfully passed a FWP background investigation and criminal records/history check, and is authorized by FWP for the purpose of engaging in volunteer service. *Volunteers are considered unpaid employees while engaged in FWP authorized activities and as such are afforded limited workman's comp insurance coverage.*

State Laws Governing Montana Hunter & Bowhunter Education

2-9-101. Definitions. As used in parts 1 through 3 of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Claim" means any claim against a governmental entity, for money damages only, that any person is legally entitled to recover as damages because of personal injury or property damage caused by a negligent or wrongful act or omission committed by any employee of the governmental entity while acting within the scope of employment, under circumstances where the governmental entity, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant for the damages under the laws of the state. For purposes of this section and the limit of liability contained in [2-9-108](#), all claims that arise or derive from personal injury to or death of a single person, or damage to property of a person, regardless of the number of persons or entities claiming damages, are considered one claim.

(2) (a) "Employee" means an officer, employee, or servant of a governmental entity, including elected or appointed officials, and persons acting on behalf of the governmental entity in any official capacity temporarily or permanently in the service of the governmental entity whether with or without compensation.

(b) The term does not mean a person or other legal entity while acting in the capacity of an independent contractor under contract to the governmental entity to which parts 1 through 3 apply in the event of a claim.

(3) "Governmental entity" means the state and political subdivisions.

(4) "Personal injury" means any injury resulting from libel, slander, malicious prosecution, or false arrest and any bodily injury, sickness, disease, or death sustained by any person and caused by an occurrence for which the state may be held liable.

(5) "Political subdivision" means any county, city, municipal corporation, school district, special improvement or taxing district, other political subdivision or public corporation, or any entity created by agreement between two or more political subdivisions.

(6) "Property damage" means injury or destruction to tangible property, including loss of use of the property, caused by an occurrence for which the state may be held liable.

(7) "State" means the state of Montana or any office, department, agency, authority, commission, board, institution, hospital, college, university, or other instrumentality of the state.

27-1-721. Immunity of certain firearms and hunter safety or hunter education instructors. A person who is designated as a hunter safety instructor or hunter education instructor by the department of fish, wildlife, and parks under [87-2-105](#) or certified as an instructor by a national firearms association, who trains people in the lawful use of firearms, and who is not employed by a governmental entity is not liable for the conduct, acts, or omissions of a student handling firearms **unless the instructor exhibits gross negligence giving rise to causation of the damages.**

87-2-105. Safety instruction required. (1) Except for a youth who qualifies for a license pursuant to [87-2-805](#)(4), a hunting license may not be issued to a person who is born after January 1, 1985, unless the person authorized to issue the license determines proof of completion of

(a) a Montana hunter safety and education course established in subsection (4) or (6);

(b) a hunter safety course in any other state or province; or

(c) a Montana hunter safety and education course that qualifies the person for a provisional certificate as provided in [87-2-126](#).

(2) A hunting license may not be issued to a member of the regular armed forces of the United States or to a member of the armed forces of a foreign government attached to the armed forces of the United States who is assigned to active duty in Montana and who is otherwise considered a resident under [87-2-102](#)(1) or to a member's dependents, as defined in [15-30-2115](#), who reside in the member's Montana household, unless the person authorized to issue the license determines proof of completion of a hunter safety course approved by the department or a hunter safety course in any state or province.

(3) A bow and arrow license may not be issued to a resident or nonresident unless the person authorized

to issue the license receives an archery license issued for a prior hunting season or determines proof of completion of a bowhunter education course from the national bowhunter education foundation or any other bowhunter education program approved by the department. Neither the department nor the license agent is required to provide records of past archery license purchases. As part of the department's bow and arrow licensing procedures, the department shall notify the public regarding bowhunter education requirements.

(4) The department shall provide for a hunter safety and education course that includes instruction in the safe handling of firearms and for that purpose may cooperate with any reputable organization having as one of its objectives the promotion of hunter safety and education. The department may designate as an instructor any person it finds to be competent to **give instructions in hunter safety** and education, including the handling of firearms. A person appointed shall give the course of instruction and shall issue a certificate of completion from Montana's hunter safety and education course to a person successfully completing the course.

(5) The department shall provide for a course of instruction from the national bowhunter education foundation or any other bowhunter education program approved by the department and for that purpose may cooperate with any reputable organization having as one of its objectives the promotion of safety in the handling of bow hunting tackle. The department may designate as an instructor any person it finds to be competent to give **bowhunter education instruction. A person appointed shall give the course of instruction and shall issue a certificate of completion to any person successfully completing the course.**

(6) The department may develop an adult hunter safety and education course.

(7) The department may adopt rules regarding how a person authorized to issue a license determines proof of completion of a required course.

87-2-126. Provisional hunter safety and education certificate for person with developmental disability -- conditions of licensure -- definition.

(1) A person with a **diagnosed developmental disability** who satisfactorily completes the classroom portion and conclusion (field) course of the firearms safety course but who is unable to pass the written or an alternate-format exam portion of the course because of a developmental disability may be issued a provisional hunter safety and education certificate. The certificate is valid only when used according to this section.

(2) A person with a developmental disability may obtain a hunting license with a provisional hunter safety and education certificate.

(3) Each person who uses a provisional hunter safety and education certificate must be in the company of and assisted by the person's parent or guardian or by an adult designated by the person or by the person's parent or guardian when hunting and shall conduct all hunting within the terms and conditions of the license issued. A person who is accompanying and assisting a person with a disability

(a) must have successfully completed a hunter safety and education course pursuant to [87-2-105](#)(1);

(b) must have as the sole priority the direct supervision of the person with a disability at all times;

(c) may only be actively engaged in hunting a game animal that may be taken with the license of the person with a disability; and

(d) must be able to immediately intervene and control the firearm of the person with a disability at any time.

(4) (a) This section does not entitle a person to possess a firearm if the person is otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law or a court order.

(b) A person may not knowingly authorize or permit a person with a developmental disability who is incapable of safely possessing a firearm to possess a firearm for hunting in this state.

(5) As used in this section, "developmental disability" means a developmental disability as defined in [53-20-102](#).

87-2-810. Apprentice hunting certificate. (1) A person who is 10 years of age or older and under 18 years of age who has not completed a hunter safety and education course pursuant to [87-2-105](#) is eligible to apply for an apprentice hunting certificate that entitles the holder to obtain and use hunting licenses and permits in accordance with this title and the provisions of this section. A person may obtain an apprentice hunting certificate for no more than 2 license years before the person must complete a Montana hunter safety and education course pursuant to [87-2-105](#).

(2) A person who obtains an apprentice hunting certificate must be in the company of a mentor when hunting and shall conduct all hunting in accordance with this section and within the terms and conditions of the license or permit issued.

(3) To qualify as a mentor who will accompany an apprentice hunter, a person must:

(a) be at least 21 years of age;

(b) be related to the apprentice hunter by blood, adoption, or marriage, be the legal guardian of the apprentice hunter, or be a person designated by a parent or legal guardian as being capable and qualified to assist the apprentice hunter;

(c) have completed a hunter safety and education course pursuant to [87-2-105](#);

(d) have a current Montana hunting license;

(e) have agreed to accompany and supervise the apprentice hunter and remain within sight of and direct voice contact with the apprentice hunter at all times while in the field; and

(f) confirm that the apprentice hunter possesses the physical and psychological capacity to safely and ethically engage in hunting activities.

(4) Subject to the conditions of this section, the department shall issue an apprentice hunting certificate upon payment of a fee of \$5. This fee must be deposited in the state special revenue fund account to the credit of the department for hunter education purposes.

(5) The department shall issue an apprentice hunting certificate that allows an apprentice hunter to be accompanied by multiple mentors.

(6) Except as provided in subsection (7), a person who obtains an apprentice hunting certificate may purchase any unlimited hunting license or permit by any applicable deadline for the fee established pursuant to this chapter, including:

(a) a reduced cost license for which the applicant qualifies. An apprentice hunter who is under 12 years of age is eligible to obtain the unlimited reduced cost licenses available to a person who is 12 years of age.

(b) a wild turkey tag if it is issued in an unlimited number.

(7) A person who obtains an apprentice hunting certificate is not eligible:

(a) to obtain a Class A-2 special bow and arrow license without having completed a bowhunter education course;

(b) to obtain a Class D-3 resident hound training license;

(c) to participate in a drawing with a limited quota;

(d) to obtain a mountain sheep license in any area where the licenses are issued in unlimited numbers;

or

(e) to obtain an elk license if the apprentice hunter is under 15 years of age.

(8) An apprentice hunter who violates the terms of this section or a mentor who violates the terms of this section while accompanying an apprentice hunter is subject to the loss of privileges granted by this section for up to one full license season.

53-20-102. Definitions. As used in this part....

(8) "**Developmental disability**" means a disability that

(a) is attributable to intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or any other neurologically disabling condition closely related to intellectual disability;

(b) requires treatment similar to that required by intellectually disabled individuals;

(c) originated before the individual attained age 18;

(d) has continued or can be expected to continue indefinitely; and

(e) results in the person having a substantial disability.

87-6-915. Remedial hunter education program -- sentencing. (1) The court may sentence a person who is convicted of a hunting violation that results in a mandatory forfeiture of hunting privileges or who is convicted of a hunting violation to complete a remedial hunter education course.

(2) A person who is sentenced by the court to complete a remedial hunter education course shall successfully complete the course before any license privileges may be restored.

(3) The department may not issue a hunting, fishing, or trapping license to a person who is convicted of a hunting violation that results in a mandatory forfeiture of hunting privileges until the person has successfully completed the remedial hunter education course.

(4) If the person who is sentenced by the court to complete the remedial hunter education course is not a resident of the state of Montana, the sentencing court shall require the person to complete a similar remedial hunter education course in the person's state of residence. If a similar course does not exist in the person's state of residence, the person shall complete Montana's course before any Montana hunting, fishing, or trapping license may be issued.

(5) This section does not allow the issuance of any licenses to a person whose hunting or fishing privileges have been revoked for life.