

# Volunteer Hunter Education Program Instructor Policy and Guidelines



## VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE Last Updated August 2022

Vermont Hunter Education Program  
Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department  
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Dewey Building  
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**Subject:** Department Acknowledgment

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This Volunteer Hunter Education Program Instructor Policy and Guidelines manual is the reference book for the Vermont Hunter Education Program. The procedures, guidelines, and Code of Conduct described in this manual also represent the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department policy. I urge you to review this new manual completely.

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Alison Thomas, Director of Outreach

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Date

Nicole Meier, Hunter Education Program Coordinator

Nathan Lafont, Hunter Education Training Coordinator

**Subject:** Instructor Code of Conduct

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As a Certified Vermont Hunter Education Instructor, acting as an agent of the Department of Fish & Wildlife **I will:**

- Represent the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department with professionalism, dignity, and pride.
- Conduct myself in a respectful manner, exhibit sporting conduct in the field, and be a positive role model for my students.
- Display respect and courtesy for Department employees, other volunteers, program participants, visitors, property, property owners, and public trust resources including fish, wildlife and their habitats.
- Provide a safe environment by not harming anyone in any way, whether through discrimination, sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, or other harmful actions.
- Respect the privacy of persons served by the Department and hold in confidence sensitive, private, and personal information.
- Keep classes within the guidelines set forth in the Volunteer Hunter Education Program Instructor Policy and Guidelines manual.
- Use appropriate actions regarding misbehavior by students. These actions will be fair and reflect the values of the state.
- Notify the Department immediately if I become involved in a Fish & Wildlife violation or other illegal act.

And, as a Certified Vermont Hunter Education Instructor, acting as an agent of the Department of Fish & Wildlife, while exercising my duties, **I will not:**

- Use vulgar or inappropriate language during class.
- Solicit gratuities, gifts, or bequests for personal or professional benefit.
- Use or be under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- Discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Engage in inappropriate sexual misconduct, bullying, or any other form of harassment.
- Engage in any political or commercial activities, or speech of a political or commercial nature.
- Make statements or other comments that would degrade the Vermont Hunter Education Program, the Warden force, the Fish & Wildlife Department, the State of Vermont, or the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

I have read and agree to abide by the Vermont Hunter Education Program's Code of Conduct. I understand that not following these guidelines institutes corrective action that could include dismissal.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** Table of Contents

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# INTRODUCTION

**Subject:** Introduction

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Welcome to the Vermont Hunter Education Program. The work of the volunteer Hunter Education Instructor is demanding, and the hours are often long and inconvenient. However, these efforts contribute directly to the future of hunting in Vermont and the preservation of our abundant natural resources.

All instructors must meet the guidelines and standards outlined in this manual and as detailed in the specific course instructor and student manuals. Non-compliance can result in instructor dismissal and the Vermont Hunter Education Program losing its federal aid funding. It can also jeopardize the Department's federal aid dollars.

Many Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife programs, including Hunter Education, receive federal aid through the Wildlife Restoration Program. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or handicap. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility described above, or if you desire further information, please contact the ANR Civil Rights Coordinator at:

[anr.civilrights@vermont.gov](mailto:anr.civilrights@vermont.gov)

802-636-7827

ANR Civil Rights Coordinator

1 National Life Drive

Davis 2

Montpelier VT 05620-0301

Or visit <http://www.anr.vermont.gov/>

## **Notice of Non-Discrimination:**

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) operates its programs, services, and activities without discriminating on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, place of birth, disability, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or breastfeeding (mother and child). We will not tolerate discrimination, intimidation, threats, coercion, or retaliation

against any individual or group because they have exercised their rights protected by federal or state law.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Subject:** Why Be a Hunter Education Instructor?

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You are about to join several hundred like-minded volunteers who are working together to ensure the future of hunting and trapping in Vermont.

### **You'll enjoy being a volunteer instructor because:**

- You'll be passing your love of the outdoors on to the next generation.
- You'll be serving your community.
- You'll be promoting safe and responsible hunting.
- You'll be able to choose your level of involvement.
- You'll be teaching students using a standardized curriculum that has a proven record of success.
- You'll receive in-service training.

### **What's the commitment? In order to retain certification, you must:**

- Teach or assist in one class every other year.
- Attend one day of in-service training every other year.

### **What are the benefits?**

- Making new friends and hunting companions
- Community recognition
- Exposure to new experiences
- Advanced training opportunities
- Discount offers from the hunting industry
- Enhanced instructional and communication skills

# INTRODUCTION

**Subject:** Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife Mission and Overview

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The mission of the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife is the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

## **Department Overview**

The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife provides a broad range of services to the public:

- Wildlife management
- Fisheries management
- Law enforcement
- Habitat conservation
- Educational programs

The Department is one of three departments in the Agency of Natural Resources. We are primarily funded through hunting and fishing license fees plus federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment and boating fuels. A small portion of our annual budget comes from general funds.

The Department has a history that extends back to 1866 when the Legislature appointed a Board of Fish Commissioners. A decade later this Board was given authority over game birds and mammals, and in 1892 the Board of Fish Commissioners was renamed the Fish and Game Commission.

These actions were the culmination of increasing public concern about fish, wildlife, and their habitats. After European colonization, many species declined in abundance because of unrestricted harvests, poorly enforced laws, and severe habitat loss. By the 1850s only 25% of Vermont was covered by forest due to extensive land clearing for farming. Today, almost 80% of the state is covered by forest, and many wildlife species have been restored.

Even though the initial focus was on game, Department personnel have always had a commitment to all fish and wildlife species. This was formally recognized in 1983 when the Department's name was changed from Fish and Game to "Fish and Wildlife." The Department is responsible for the conservation of wildlife in its broadest sense; 41



species of reptiles and amphibians, 89 species of fish, 193 species of breeding birds, 58 species of mammals, more than 15,000 insect species, and 2,000 higher plant species, plus fungi, algae, and 75 different types of natural communities. Of this staggering total, the Department regulates the hunting and/or trapping of only 27 mammals and 36 birds, including 30 species of waterfowl normally found in Vermont.

The Department is staffed by more than 125 full-time employees and more than 60 seasonal employees, with most working out of district offices and fish culture facilities. The Department is also supported by more than 400 volunteers assisting with many activities. The job duties of these volunteers are diverse and include such things as collecting fish and wildlife population data, protecting important wildlife habitats, raising fish, enforcing laws, developing educational materials, and providing customer service by mail and over the phone. As of July 2022, the Department owns or operates 197 fishing access areas, 101 wildlife management areas totaling roughly 135,000 acres, five fish culture stations, and two conservation education camps. The Department's annual budget is primarily funded through user-based fees such as licenses and excise taxes on boat fuel and on hunting and fishing equipment.

# INTRODUCTION

**Subject:** Vermont Hunter Education Program Goals

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**The Hunter Education Program aims to contribute to the mission of the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife through education and outreach by:**

1. Offering quality hunter, bowhunter, and trapper education courses that improve the knowledge, skills, and level of responsibility of the participants. These courses emphasize safe, legal, and ethical hunting practices in Vermont.
2. Ensuring that hunting, bowhunting, and trapping are conducted in a safe manner by the public.
3. Utilizing a corps of highly trained, certified instructors to deliver comprehensive training programs.
4. Building awareness, interest, and support in regulated hunting and trapping, and promoting lifelong participation in these outdoor activities.
5. Building an understanding of and support for conservation and wildlife management in Vermont.

# INTRODUCTION

**Subject:** Hunter Education Program History

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## **A. Overview**

The first mandatory hunter safety law was passed in New York in 1949, and by 1970, 33 states were offering hunter safety courses. Today, all U.S. states and Canadian provinces have mandatory hunter education requirements.

## **B. Detail**

In 1974, the Vermont legislature passed 10 VSA § 4254, making hunter education mandatory for new hunters. This law went into effect in 1975. Read the full law here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/105/04254>

### **§ 4254. Fishing and Hunting Licenses: Eligibility**

(b) Hunting licenses. A resident or nonresident hunting license, combination fishing and hunting license, or archery license may be issued to any person, provided that the applicant prior to issue first presents:

(1) a certificate of satisfactory completion of a Vermont hunter safety course, bow hunter education course as applicable, or an equivalent approved by the Commissioner; or

(2) a certificate of satisfactory completion of a hunter safety course, or bow hunter education course as applicable, in another state or a province of Canada which is approved by the Commissioner; or

(3) a hunting license, a combination hunting and fishing license, or archery license, if applicable, issued for this State or any other state or a province of Canada and valid for any license year; or

(4) other satisfactory proof that the applicant has previously held a hunting, or combination hunting and fishing license or archery license, if applicable. A hunting license or archery license may be issued to a person aged 15 or under only with the written consent of the applicant's parent or legal guardian given in the presence of the agent issuing the license.

(c) Hunter Education. The Commissioner shall provide for a course of basic instruction in the safe handling of firearms, survival training, and first aid training and a course in bow hunter education. For this purpose, the Commissioner may cooperate with any reputable association, organization, or agency, and he or she may designate any person found by him or her to be competent to give such instruction. A person satisfactorily completing the course of instruction shall receive from the instructor a certificate in evidence thereof. No fee shall be charged for a course of instruction provided under this subsection.

The Bowhunter Education Program was started in 1981, and the Trapper Education Program was launched in 1985. Both were voluntary classes. In 1989, the trapper education course became mandatory for all first-time trappers, and a license was required for all trappers — regardless of age. Bowhunter education became mandatory in 2001.

### **C. Hunting-Related Shootings**

Mandatory hunter education in Vermont has its roots in the 1950s when the state was averaging 30 hunting-related shootings a year. As a result, the then Fish and Game Department decided to adopt a formal hunter safety program. In 1960, Vermont game wardens and representatives of many sporting clubs met at the Randolph Fish and Game Club for the first instructor training. National Rifle Association instructors conducted the course and certified this group of pioneer educators as Hunter Safety Instructors.

The fledgling course was voluntary, and as a result, its effectiveness in reducing hunting-related shootings was negligible. In 1974, the accident numbers were still too high, and the legislature made hunter education mandatory for all first-time hunters. As the number of the hunter education graduates grew, the number of hunting-related shootings decreased. By 2001, the state was averaging four shootings a year. Even one is too many, but this represented a 75% per year reduction since hunter education had become mandatory. Then in 2010, the state recorded its safest year ever, with just two relatively minor incidents. The years 2012, 2014, and 2021 were all accident-free years.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Acknowledgments

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**POLICY:** The Vermont Hunter Education Program is part of an international effort to provide instruction in the safe handling of firearms while hunting or engaging in other outdoor activities related to hunting and firearm use in cooperation with, but not limited to the following organizations.

- Ducks Unlimited
- National Rifle Association
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- University of Vermont Cooperative Extension (4-H)
- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
- Vermont Outdoor Guides Association
- Vermont Trappers Association

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Hunter Education Instructor Certification Requirements

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**POLICY:** Any individual certified as a Volunteer Hunter Education Program Instructor shall meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Have no felony convictions;
- Have no misdemeanor convictions within the past three (3) years;
- Have no Fish & Wildlife convictions that resulted in the revocation of hunting or trapping license privileges within the last five (5) years; other violations of the Fish & Wildlife code are subject to review and may result in the rejection of any application.
- Pass the background investigations;
- Be a graduate of a student-level hunter education course; the student-level course must be within the specific course of instruction in which the individual desires certification;
- Assist with the instruction of a student-level hunter education course within an 18-month period prior to or after the date of application;
- Be experienced in hunting, trapping, or the related subjects taught in the specific course of instruction for which the individual desires certification;
- Complete successfully a Department training workshop for new instructors for the specific course in which the individual desires certification;
- Assist a Chief Instructor in one (1) or more class demonstrations until gaining the Chief Instructor's endorsement for certification. If a Chief Instructor is not available or conveniently accessible, an applicant can assist another Hunter Education Instructor after receiving prior approval from Hunter Education staff. An applicant should contact Hunter Education staff if they have concerns with or feel aggrieved by the mentoring Chief Instructor or approved Hunter Education Instructor.
- Not be a defendant in a Relief from Abuse Order or Domestic Relations Order from any state, after a final hearing has been held.

Prospective instructors will be certified upon completion of the above requirements.

## **Rejection of Applications**

Certified Hunter Education Program Instructors serve at the discretion of the Commissioner. As a result, the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife reserves the right to reject any application submitted by any applicant who does not meet the minimum requirements as outlined by this policy. The Department also reserves the right to accept the application of any applicant who does not meet the minimum requirements and also reject the application of anyone who does meet the minimum requirements. Those rejected applicants will be notified in writing.

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES**

**Subject:** New Instructor Training Workshops

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**POLICY:** The Department will periodically conduct new instructor training workshops.

The one-day workshop covers all the basics of becoming a certified and effective hunter education instructor, including policies, procedures, and teaching techniques. All applicants attending the trainings must complete homework assigned ahead of time.

Workshops can be conducted in locations convenient for groups of volunteers who are currently assisting a Chief Instructor or Hunter Education Instructors with their courses.



## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES**

**Subject:**           Liability

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**POLICY:** While teaching an official and approved Hunter, Bowhunter, or Trapper Education class, all volunteers are covered under the same liability insurance as State of Vermont employees. This only applies if all policies and procedures presented in this manual are followed and volunteers are not guilty of any acts of negligence or intentional misconduct.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Certified Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor  
Job Descriptions

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**Job Title:** **Hunter Education Instructor Apprentice**  
**Responsible To:** Chief Instructor/Hunter Education Program Staff  
**Definition:** Performs volunteer instruction in all aspects of hunter education as prescribed by the curriculum provided in the instructor manual and as mandated by state laws governing hunter education. Instruction may be limited to area of expertise as designated by a Chief Instructor and agreed upon by both parties.

## **Duties & Responsibilities:**

1. Teach all mandated topics of the curriculum, as prescribed by the Department, under the supervision of a Hunter Education Instructor II or Chief Instructor.
2. Be able to effectively communicate with students of all ages, using proper grammar and terminology.
3. Be able to adapt to different teaching techniques, as required.
4. Follow subject lesson plans provided by the Department.
5. Be able to use teaching aids and equipment effectively.
6. Maintain student discipline and behavior.
7. Attend a workshop conducted by Hunter Education staff
8. Supervise students during field exercises.
9. Conduct and grade final examinations without bias.
10. Assist in submitting required class paperwork and incident reports to the staff within ten (10) days of a final class.
11. Adhere strictly to the Instructor Code of Conduct and Hunter Education Program guidelines.
12. Maintain certification by teaching classes and/or attending instructor workshops.
13. Each Hunter Education Instructor I (Apprentice) will be placed with a mentor following the workshop training.

**Qualifications:** A Hunter Education Instructor I (Apprentice) must:

1. Have a general knowledge of most hunting disciplines.
2. Be able to interact with student of all ages.
3. Have hunting experience.

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES: Job Descriptions, Continued**

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Hunter Education Instructor</b>
<b>Responsible To:</b>	Chief Instructor/Hunter Education Program Staff
<b>Definition:</b>	Performs volunteer instruction in all aspects of hunter education as prescribed by the curriculum provided in the instructor manual and as mandated by state laws governing hunter education. Instruction may be limited to area of expertise as designated by the Chief Instructor and agreed upon by both parties.

### **Duties & Responsibilities:**

1. Teach all mandated topics of the curriculum, as prescribed by the Department.
2. Be able to effectively communicate with students of all ages, using proper grammar and terminology.
3. Be able to adapt to different teaching techniques, as required.
4. Follow subject lesson plans provided by the Department.
5. Be able to use teaching aids and equipment effectively.
6. Maintain student discipline and behavior.
7. Supervise students during field exercises.
8. Conduct and grade final examinations without bias.
9. Submit all required class paperwork to the staff within ten (10) days of a final class.
10. Assist in the preparation of any incident reports.
11. Adhere strictly to the Instructor Code of Conduct and Hunter Education Program guidelines.
12. Maintain certification by teaching classes and attending instructor-training workshops.

**Qualifications:** A Hunter Education Instructor must:

1. Have experience in hunting.
2. Be able to pass an additional background check.
3. Have the ability to work with students of all ages.
4. Have general knowledge of all hunting disciplines.
5. Have completed apprenticeship class(es) under a Chief Instructor.

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES: Job Descriptions, Continued**

**Job Title:** Chief Instructor

**Responsible To:** Hunter Education Program Staff

**Definition:** Assist and oversee administrative tasks required of the Hunter Education Instructors. Evaluate instructing teams, supervise team members, and mentor new instructors as requested.

### **Job Description:**

In addition to the duties and responsibilities of a Hunter Education Instructor, a Chief Instructor shall:

1. Serve as a senior instructor to a teaching team, including supervising and coordinating activities of team members.
2. Act as the primary contact between the teaching team and Hunter Education staff.
3. Organize teaching team prior to offering a class – location, time, and so on.
4. Oversee course administration.
5. Sponsor new instructor applicants.
6. Report any incidents.
7. Mentor new instructors referred by Hunter Education staff.
8. Perform instructor evaluations, if required.
9. Complete an application process, which will include an interview conducted by the Hunter Education Training Coordinator

**Qualifications:** A Hunter Education Chief Instructor must:

1. Have experience in education.
2. Have experience in record keeping.
3. Have extensive overall knowledge of hunting disciplines.
4. Have experience in the evaluation process.
5. Have the ability to work with students of all ages.

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES: Job Descriptions, Continued**

**Job Title:** Hunter Education Junior Instructor

**Responsible To:** Chief Instructor and Field Instructors  
Hunter Education Program staff

**Definition:** Assists with all aspects of instruction as prescribed by the curriculum provided in the instructor manual and as mandated by state laws governing hunter education, under direct supervision of a Hunter Education Instructor II or Chief Instructor. Instruction assistance may be limited to area of expertise.

### **Duties & Responsibilities:**

1. Assist with required areas or portions of the curriculum.
2. Be able to effectively communicate with students of all ages using proper grammar and terminology.
3. Use teaching aids and equipment effectively.
4. Adhere strictly to the Instructor Code of Conduct and Hunter Education Program guidelines.

**Qualifications:** Open to youths 13–18 years old. Junior Instructors must:

1. Be interested in and have experience in hunting or trapping.
2. Be able to pass a background check.
3. Be in good standing with their school and community.

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES**

**Subject:** Certification Renewals

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**POLICY:** To maintain certification in the Hunter Education Program, Hunter Education Instructors must:

- Teach or assist with the instruction of at least one (1) course within their specific certification type every two (2) years; or
- Attend and successfully complete at least one (1) instructor Professional Development event every two (2) years, as described in “Instructor Training” on page 23 of this manual.

Instructor activity will be monitored annually through submitted reports. Instructors who fail to meet the minimum activity requirements outlined above will be notified. They will be removed from the list of active instructors unless they can provide reasonable justification for the temporary inactivity. Reasons could include military deployment, illness, or other life situation changes.

Any instructor who voluntarily resigns or who is removed due to inactivity may reapply within two (2) years of the date of their resignation or termination. Upon approval by the Department, the individual may be recertified following completion of the required application. A new background check and New Instructor Training course might be necessary. Any instructor whose certification was recalled for any reason other than inactivity may not reapply; the Department will not accept an application.

An instructor who has resigned or who is removed due to inactivity may continue to assist with classes as a Non-Certified Volunteer (NCV) as described on page 72. An instructor who has been removed for any other reason may not assist in a course in any capacity.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Instructor Training and Professional Development

---

**POLICY:** In addition to teaching or assisting with hunter education classes, Hunter Education Instructors can maintain their certification by participating in instructor professional development events. This may include:

- Attending instructor workshops;
- Assisting a course taught by a Chief Instructor;
- Assisting at New Instructor Trainings
- Assisting a course led by an instructor or team that one does not generally work with.
- Assisting or leading Hunter Education Seminars, Learn to Hunts, or other continued learning events for students.
- Attending any other function recognized or approved by the Hunter Education Program.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Program Evaluations

---

**POLICY:** Program instructors, curriculum, and classes will be evaluated periodically through:

- Course reviews conducted by Department staff or designees;
- Student questionnaires;
- Instructor self-evaluations; and/or
- Instructor surveys.

The dual purpose of an evaluation is to provide Department staff with feedback about the quality of Vermont's hunter education programs and instructors, and to help instructors improve their teaching techniques. These tools will serve as a means for instructors and students to submit ideas and share strategies with Department staff to improve hunter education and to make certain that best instructional practices are being utilized to ensure student success.

**A course review may be conducted:**

- 1) In response to a concern about a particular course or instructor. The results of the instructor evaluation may be used in the investigation.
- 2) As an informative, friendly teaching tool to help the instructor and Hunter Education Program staff identify the strengths and weakness of both the curriculum and the teaching methods.
- 3) By course reviewers identified as representatives of the Hunter Education Program. The reviewer will notify the selected Hunter Education Team/Instructor of their review at least one (1) week prior to the beginning of the course. Course reviewers may, at their discretion, choose to attend the course without prior notice.

**The course reviewer shall:**

- Conduct the course evaluation using the "Course Review Checklist" provided by the Department.
- Add specific pertinent comments to support any rating less than satisfactory.



- Conduct a post-evaluation conference with the Hunter Education Team/Instructor within 14 days of having observed the class to discuss ratings.
- Provide the Hunter Education Team/Instructor with a copy of the assessment form, including recommendations and instructor concerns, within 14 days of the course completion.
- Submit a copy of the Hunter Education Course Evaluation to Hunter Education staff within 14 days of course completion.

**Student questionnaires will also be used, as needed.**

- Instructor will give each student/parent attending the course a copy of the “Hunter Education Course Evaluation.” An adult who is not a student will collect the evaluations, place them in the provided Department envelope, and mail them after the class has concluded. The forms should be completed and in the adult’s possession before students take the final exam.

The Hunter Education Coordinator will immediately investigate any unsatisfactory reports. Hunter Education staff will be responsible for resolving the reported issue. For more information, please review “Recall of Instructor Certification” on page 26.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Recall of Instructor Certification

---

**POLICY:** The Department reserves the right to recall the certification of any instructor, at any time, based upon established guidelines, as outlined below. Any instructor whose certification has been recalled will be notified of the recall in writing.

Instructor certifications may be recalled if the instructor is:

- Convicted of any felony or misdemeanor crimes.
- Convicted of any Fish & Wildlife violations.
- Involved in any child abuse incidents.
- Responsible for any unsafe act or actions that may or did result in serious injury to others during a Hunter Education Course.
- Considered to be in violation of any Hunter Education Program policies outlined in this manual.
- Considered to be violating the Code of Conduct.
- Considered to be violating the non-discrimination policy.
- Considered to be teaching outside of the established curriculum.
- Has been documented to engage in behavior that reflects poorly on the Hunter Education Program and the Department.

An instructor whose certification is recalled may be (1) permanently removed from the program, or (2) placed on a period of suspension. Any allegations of the above, may result in a period of suspension. A Certification may be recalled at the discretion of the Commissioner and the initiation or conviction of criminal or civil charges or penalties is not required to recall a certification. If charges are not initiated or are dropped or the individual is found not guilty, the Department will review the information but reserves the right to recall the certification regardless of the outcome, or the nature of the conduct. Terms of any suspension will be outlined, including the duration period of the suspension and conditions for the renewal of an instructor's certification. The information the Department uses to make these determinations is confidential and not available to the instructor.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Instructor Classroom Conduct

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**POLICY:** Instructors presenting a professional image is a very important part of all of the Department's education programs. Always remember that you are an ambassador for the Department, and you may be the first exposure your students have to the Department.

While involved in hunter education activities, instructors are strictly prohibited from:

- Using mind-altering substances (such as drugs or alcohol) before or during any class.
- Smoking or using chewing tobacco during any class.
- Using foul or abusive language; using profanity or making any racial, ethnic or religious slur; or any demeaning reference to physical or mental disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, or other protected class.
- Engaging in political or commercial speech.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate sexual conduct, bullying or harassment. Expressing opinions or comments contrary to those of any established programs or policies of the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife.
- Wearing or carrying personal firearms.
- Selling products or services.
- Receiving or accepting gratuities or gifts

## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES**

**Subject:** Clothing Policy

---

**POLICY:** Hunter Education instructors carry on significant outreach and educational efforts on behalf of the Department. It is in the best interests of both the Department and the instructors that when they are acting in an official capacity they be identified as such to members of the public.

**Procedure:**

The Department shall issue a Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor shirt, hat, patch, and an instructor ID card after successfully completing an apprenticeship with a Chief Instructor. Additional clothing will be issued as needed. If replacement clothing is needed, the instructor should contact the Hunter Education Program.

Department-issued clothing shall be kept in good condition and should be worn when representing the Department. This includes hunter education classes, special events, and other public venues. Instructors shall not wear these clothes in public if they are dirty, torn, or in a condition that reflects badly on the Department. Instructors shall not wear these clothes except when performing official duties, nor shall they defame the Department or voice personal views about Department-related issues when wearing them. Unless the Department rescinds the instructor's certification, the instructor will be allowed to keep the clothing even if he or she becomes inactive.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Instructor Recognition and Awards

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**POLICY:** The Department will regularly host an Instructor Training, Recognition, and Awards Program in honor of our volunteers. Additional training will be provided at this function. However, the program's main purpose is to celebrate the success of the Hunter Education Program and the continuing relationship between staff and volunteers.

**Purpose:** To recognize volunteers/instructors for their service to the Vermont Hunter Education Program. Recognition programs help to motivate and retain instructors and make them feel appreciated for what they do.

## **Award types and descriptions:**

- 1) **Year of Service Awards** – Year of service awards are awarded to certified volunteer instructors for every 5 years of service. Volunteers will receive a certificate in the mail in a certificate holder, and a patch to commemorate that year of service (5, 10, 15, etc.). These will be mailed out by February of their year of service date. For example, if an instructor started teaching in 2015, they would receive their 5 year of service patch and certificate by February 2020.
- 2) **Instructor Hall of Fame/Lifetime Achievement Award** – this is a lifetime achievement award for any current or past hunter education instructor. Anyone is eligible for this award, and it may not be awarded every year, but will be awarded when the right person is nominated. One instructor (past or present) will be awarded each year.
- 3) **Instructor of the Year** – any certified instructor who goes above and beyond for hunter/bowhunter/trapper education can be nominated for this award. 1-5 certified instructors will be awarded each year.
- 4) **Teaching Team of the Year** – any teaching team can be nominated for this award if the team includes one currently certified instructor. 1-5 teaching teams will be awarded each year.
- 5) **Volunteer of the Year** – awarded to any non-certified volunteer who goes above and beyond to assist with hunter/bowhunter/trapper education courses. 1-5 volunteers will be awarded each year.
- 6) **Outstanding Partner to Hunter Education in Vermont** – awarded to any partner for going above and beyond in hunter/bowhunter/trapper education or related seminars. This can be awarded to a local recreation department, local

NWTF chapter, or any other organizations that partner with the Vermont Hunter Education Program. 1-5 partners will be awarded each year.

- 7) **Outstanding Outreach/Innovation Award** – for an instructor or volunteer who has done a great job with an outreach program (such as mentoring, food seminars, etc.). 1-3 volunteers will be awarded each year.

**Call for nominations:**

Nominations for achievement awards will be requested in the yearly winter mailing. Volunteer instructors will nominate and e-mail or mail nominations to the Hunter Education Program Office.

**Selection and notification of award winners:**

Award winners will be selected by early May through a committee award review process. The committee will be comprised of Hunter Education staff. Award plaques/statues will be ordered immediately after the committee makes its decisions, and award plaques will be mailed out as soon as possible or distributed at an annual instructor training/recognition event.

Award winners will be notified via letter and email by the end of June. Award winners will also be announced in the summer newsletter, at the annual instructor gathering(s), and in the following winter mailing.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Youth Protection and Sexual Harassment

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**POLICY:** To protect students from being victimized, and to protect instructors from unwarranted allegations of abuse or harassment, all instructors must adhere to the following:

**Two-Deep Instruction:** Two Certified Hunter Education Instructors or one Certified Instructor and a parent or other adult student, who is be 18 years of age or older, must be present for all portions of a hunter education class. The only exception is a course taught by a school teacher acting as a Certified Hunter Education Instructor in school, whether during regular school hours or as an after-school program.

**No One-on-One Touching:** One-on-one contact between an instructor and a student is prohibited. In situations that require personal conferences, special testing, test reviews, instruction, and so on, these contacts shall be conducted in full view of others. Instructors are not permitted to meet with students alone before, during, or after class.

**Use of Appropriate Contact:** In those instances where physical contact with a student may be required as part of the instruction (live-fire activities, firearm handling, and so on), physical contact shall be made in full view of others. Instructors should request the student's permission before touching the student. As part of the instruction, physical contact should be limited to the back, arms, and shoulders.

**Respect of Privacy:** Instructors must respect the privacy of students in situations such as restroom breaks and should only intrude in the event of an emergency. Instructors should protect their privacy in a similar fashion.

**No Hazing:** Physical or mental hazing for any reason is prohibited. Secret organizations or activities are also prohibited. All aspects of the Hunter Education Program shall be open to public view at all times.

**Bullying:** Physical aggression or mental intimidation of any kind, by anyone participating in a Vermont Hunter Education Program course or event, is prohibited.

**Use of Discipline:** Corporal punishment is prohibited. Discipline used in hunter education shall be constructive and reflect the values of the program.

If an instructor is suspected of engaging in any of the acts listed above, the instructor is subject to suspension or revocation of certification.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Due to their sensitive nature, alleged abuse situations should not be investigated by instructors. Whenever an instructor suspects or receives a report of an alleged child abuse or sexual abuse situation, the instructor shall immediately notify the Hunter Education staff, who in turn, will notify the Family Services Division (FSD) of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. The Hunter Education Program is a mandatory reporter.

If any instructor is alleged to be involved in a situation involving abuse or harassment, the instructor shall be immediately suspended, pending further investigation. In the event the investigation reveals the instructor's innocence, the instructor may be reinstated, at the discretion of the Department. If an investigation results in the prosecution and conviction of an instructor, the instructor's certification will be recalled immediately and the instructor will be prohibited from any future participation in any Department education program.



## **INSTRUCTOR POLICIES**

**Subject:** Instructor Assistance and Support

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**POLICY:** Hunting and shooting are very safe in Vermont and getting safer. However, incidents still occur, and they could involve a hunter who was certified by a Vermont Hunter Education Instructor. This student may or may not be known to the instructor, but news of this incident could prove traumatic.

Hunting-related shooting incident information, including hunter education status, is reported to the Hunter Education Program. When they receive this information, Hunter Education staff will contact the instructor(s) who may have been connected with the student to offer any support or assistance that is within the Department's ability to provide. This may include, but not be limited to, assistance obtaining pertinent training documents, a debriefing with Hunter Education staff, assistance preparing for court appearances, and any other instructor needs.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Student Conduct and Discipline

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**POLICY:** Hunter education students generally come to class eager to learn. However, on occasion, a student may not have the interest or be mature enough to be fully attentive or involved in the learning process. To minimize class disruptions and provide for effective and appropriate student discipline, instructors shall follow the policy described below:

## **Student Conduct**

Students are responsible for their own behavior and for the consequences of any misbehavior. Horseplay or disruptions shall not be tolerated at any time.

- Explain class rules to the students at the beginning of class. While instructors are free to set their own rules, student input and discussion is encouraged, within reason, to increase ownership.
- Explain class rules again to any student who is disruptive.
- Be steady, consistent, and firm. Remember that disruptive behavior is often caused by stress, frustration, or even boredom.
- If they continue to disobey the rules, students should be expelled from the course before the final examination.
- When a student is expelled for disciplinary reasons, the instructor must document in writing the reasons why and the events that led up to the dismissal; in the case of a juvenile student, the parents or guardian should be notified before the next class or as soon as possible.

Under no circumstances, shall an instructor strike or otherwise physically discipline a student. In the event of extreme disruption, local law enforcement authorities should be called for assistance.

## **Discipline Techniques**

Instructors can use many techniques to gain students' attention and maintain classroom order. Recommended techniques include:

- Address the disruption immediately, individually, and directly. Be specific about the behavior that is disruptive and set a boundary. For example, "If you continue talking in the class, I will have to ask you to leave and not come back for the rest of the course."
- Pausing and waiting in silence to focus attention on the disrupter.
- Separating the offender from the rest of the group and having the student sit close to the instructor.
- Removing the disruptive student from the class and discussing the situation and your concerns with the student and a parent or guardian.

If these techniques are not successful, further discipline may be required. Firm and decisive action will ensure compliance and help the class progress smoothly.

Hunter Education Instructors shall:

- Be courteous, but firm in following through on the stated class rules.
- Be careful not to embarrass the offending student in front of the class — use discretion.
- Have authority to fail students based upon behavior or expel continually disruptive students who refuse to follow class rules or ignore any attempts to correct their disruptive behavior.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Equal Opportunity, Accessibility, & Special Needs Requirements

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**POLICY:** In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, all Department education programs shall provide access to all persons desiring to participate in the program regardless of age, race, sex, color, religion, language, national origin, or physical ability.

During the first class meeting, a Hunter Education Instructor shall note that the Department intends to promote the success of every student in a hunter education course. As a result, assistance is available to meet the needs of all students, especially those who have learning disabilities, reading problems, limited English proficiency, hearing or sight impairment, or physical disability. In addition, the instructor shall also note that requests for special assistance can be made discreetly.

If possible, instructors may contact students ahead of time (via e-mail addresses provided on the Event Manager roster) to ask if students need any special accommodations. Students are also made aware that accommodations can be made when they sign up for the class on Event Manager. It is the student's responsibility to make the instructor or Department staff aware that accommodations are needed. Requests must be made with enough advanced notice to make the necessary adjustments.

For more information, or if a student has requested accommodations, contact the Hunter Education Program office at 802-828-1193.

Resources for students are available through the Vermont Assistive Technology Program. Students can access that information here: <https://atp.vermont.gov/services/borrow-at>

## **Special Needs Students:**

**Students with disabilities; people with mobility impairments** — All class facilities utilized for hunter education purposes should be accessible to any person with a physical disability. Reasonable accommodation shall be made as may be required to meet the needs of such persons.

**Students who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing** – The Department shall provide, free of charge, any required interpretive services as may be needed.

**Students with learning and developmental disabilities** — Reasonable accommodation shall be made, as may be required, to meet the needs of such persons.

**Non-English speakers or limited English proficiency (LEP)** — The Department shall provide, free of charge, any required interpretive services that may be necessary to meet the needs of students who do not speak English.

# INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

**Subject:** Social Media Use by Vermont Hunter Education Instructors

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**POLICY:** This policy provides guidance for Vermont Hunter Education Volunteer use of social media, which includes blogs, wikis, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, twitter, snapchat, all social networking sites, and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others

## **Procedures:**

The following principles apply to professional use of social media on behalf of Vermont Hunter Education, as well as personal use of social media when referencing Vermont Hunter Education.

- Volunteer Instructors are required to know and adhere to the Policies and Procedures and Code of Conduct when using social media in reference to Vermont Hunter Education.
- The conduct and the postings of Volunteer Instructors have an effect not only on the image of the volunteer instructor and hunter, but on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The information that volunteer instructors post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- Volunteer Instructors should be aware that communications with Hunter Education Staff or other State Employees are considered public record by law. This includes e-mails and may even include social media messages when accessed by a state-owned device such as a computer or cellphone.
- Volunteer Instructors should be aware that Hunter Education staff may observe content and information made available by Volunteers through social media. Volunteer Instructors should use their best judgment and avoid posting content that is inappropriate or reflects poorly on the Vermont Hunter Education Program or on the act of hunting itself.
- Specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include, but are not limited to, posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, pornographic, libelous, or that can create a hostile environment.
- Volunteer Instructors are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, employees should check with Vermont Hunter Education Program staff.

- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Volunteer instructors should refer these inquiries to authorized spokespersons of the Vermont Hunter Education Program.
- If a Volunteer Instructor encounters a situation while using social media that is or is likely to become antagonistic, the Volunteer should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and notify Vermont Hunter Education Program staff.
- The Department reserves the right to release a Volunteer Instructor from the Vermont Hunter Education Program for violations of this policy.
- If a Volunteer Instructor publishes content after-hours that involves work or subjects not associated with Vermont Hunter Education, a disclaimer should be used, such as this: “The postings on this site are my own and may not represent Hunter Education Program’s positions, strategies or opinions.”
- Volunteer instructors shall keep Vermont Hunter Education program-related social media accounts separate from personal accounts, if practical.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Media Interactions

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**POLICY:** Hunter Education Instructors may choose to do media stories or interviews including but not limited to: television news segments, print or digital newspapers, and radio segments. If an instructor is contacted by a member of the media regarding hunter education or any other topic related to the Department and Department work, they should immediately contact the Hunter Education Program Staff. Hunter Education Instructors shall not interact with or provide information to the media regarding the Department and hunter education, unless they make it very clear that they do not represent the Department, or they have coordinated with Department staff have been authorized to speak or present information on behalf of the Department. Hunter Education Program Staff or the Department Public Information Officer (PIO). Hunter Education Staff can direct them to the correct person.



# COURSE PROCEDURES

Subject: Course Types

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**POLICY:** Hunter Education Instructors may choose one of three course styles that best fits their teaching technique, community need, and schedules.

## In Person Course Offerings

1. **Basic Firearm Hunter Education** — Would-be hunters must successfully complete the Basic Firearm Hunter Education course in order to purchase their first hunting license (or activate their lifetime hunting license). Live fire, practical course, and final exam is required.

Students are not permitted to make up classes in other courses toward the above minimum requirements without prior approval from the Hunter Education Coordinator or Hunter Education Training Coordinator. If students do not meet the minimum requirements, they must retake the entire course.

Two types of Basic Firearm Hunter Education class formats exist:

- **Homestudy (Hybrid) Course** – this course is a minimum of 8 hours in-person. The course is usually given over the course of one day. Students are required to complete homework in advance of the course (either the online certificate of completion or the completed workbook). The workbook should be at least 90% completed, but it does not need to be graded. The homework counts toward about 4 hours of class time. This reduces the amount of in-person time the student needs to attend. The homestudy (hybrid) course should be mostly hands-on. Live fire, practical course, and final exam is required.
- **Traditional Classroom-Based Course** – this course is a minimum of 12 hours in-person. Usually given over the course of 1-2 weeknights and one weekend day. No homework is required ahead of this class. Live fire, practical course, and final exam is required.

**Recommended minimum times and topics for traditional Basic Hunter Education Courses:**

Hunter Responsibility	2 hours
Wildlife Management	1 hour
Firearms and Proper Handling	6 hours
Muzzleloading	30 minutes
Outdoor Safety and Medical Self Help	1 hour
Defensive Turkey Hunting	30 minutes
Evaluations and Testing	1 hour
<b>Total minimum hours</b>	<b>12 hours</b>

**The above includes mandatory handling of firearms, live fire, and skill testing.**

2. **Bowhunter Education** — This course is a minimum of 6 hours in-person. Students are required to complete homework in advance of the course (either the online certificate of completion or the completed workbook). The workbook should be at least 90% completed, but it does not need to be graded. Live fire is highly encouraged, final exam is required. See *National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) Bowhunter Instructor Manual* for topics and standards.
  
3. **Combination Hunter/Bowhunter Education Course** – This course aims to combine both hunter and bowhunter courses so that students can become certified in both disciplines together. This course is a minimum of 12 hours in-person. Students are required to complete homework in advance of the course (either the online certificate of completion for both hunter AND bowhunter education, or both the hunter AND bowhunter completed workbooks). The workbooks should be at least 90% completed, but it does not need to be graded. Live fire (firearms), practical course, and final exam is required. Live fire for bows is encouraged.
  - 1) Bowhunting equipment
  - 2) Treestand safety
  - 3) Blood trailing
  - 4) Shot placement
  - 5) Archery live fire (optional)

This additional material should take at least two (2) to four (4) additional hours, depending on the class. See *Today's Bowhunter Instructor Manual* and *Today's Crossbow Addendum* for content.

4. **Trapper Education** — This course is a minimum of 6 hours in-person. Students are required to complete homework in advance of the course (either the online certificate of completion or the completed workbook). The workbook should be at least 90% completed, but it does not need to be graded. Final exam is required. *See Trapper Education Instructor and Student Manuals for topics required.*
- 5.

**Online-Only Course Offerings** – As of March 2020, the Vermont Hunter Education Program authorized free online-only hunter, bowhunter, and trapper education options for Vermont residents aged 12 and older. The Vermont Hunter Education Program is currently reviewing the online courses and may choose to stop offering this option.

Students may access the online courses here:

Basic Hunter Firearms Education: <https://www.hunter-ed.com/vermont/>

Bowhunter Education: <https://www.bowhunter-ed.com/vermont/>

Trapper Education – e-mail [Hunter.Education@vermont.gov](mailto:Hunter.Education@vermont.gov) for directions. Requirements include completing the homework (either online or workbook and manual), completing a laws and regulations exam, and completing a final trapper education exam.

## ~~2. Homestudy~~

~~Homestudy courses differ from traditional classroom courses in that the student is almost entirely responsible for learning the written material. As a result, its convenience is balanced by the fact that students generally spend more time with the homestudy course than they would by attending a traditional course. Additionally, this option is generally a one-day field day which is preferable for people travelling longer distances to get to the course. A homestudy course that requires the student to complete the chapter reviews, workbook, or online course reduces the number of classroom hours. When these tools are utilized, the course length can be reduced by four (4) hours which allows most courses to fit into an 8-hour day.~~

~~**Basic Firearm Education** — Students must bring their completed home study workbooks to the field day. Students can also access an online qualifier course:~~

~~<https://www.bowhunter-ed.com/vermont/> and bring the certificate of online completion to the field day. The workbook should be at least 90% – 95% complete in order for a student to attend the field day, but it need not be graded. Instructors may require attendance prior to the field day for sign-up, ethics discussion, and optional study classes or field training. Attendance at the field day and testing are required. *See Appendix for sample Field Day Schedule.*~~

**Trapper Education** — ~~Students must bring their completed home study workbook to the field day. Students can also access an online qualifier course: <https://conservationlearning.org/mod/page/view.php?id=3470> and bring the certificate of online completion to the field day. The workbook should be at least 90% complete with adequately detailed answers in order for the student to attend the field day. Instructors may require attendance prior to the field day for sign-up, ethics discussion, or training. Attendance at the full field day and testing are required.~~

**Bowhunter Education** — ~~Homework, in the form of student manual chapter reviews, can allow more time for field training. Students can also access an online bowhunter education course: <https://www.bowhunter-ed.com/vermont/>~~

~~Students must bring to class their completed workbook and manual or bring documentation showing that they completed the online qualifier course. The online course is designed in such a way that students can only complete these quizzes once they have answered each question correctly, so grading is not necessary.~~

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Hunter Education Program Standards

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**POLICY:** All Vermont Hunter Education Program courses comply with agreed upon national and international standards for content. These standards preserve the program's integrity and ensure course reciprocity among jurisdictions. Consequently, the curriculum and all class materials, including the manuals, follow these standards. Instructors are required to review these standards prior to each course.

*See Appendix for:*

- International Hunter Education Association Hunter Education Standards
- International Hunter Education Association/National Bowhunter Education Foundation Bowhunter Education Standards
- International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Trapper Education Standards and Learning Objectives

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Hunter Education Staff Leading Courses

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**POLICY:** In addition to instructor-organized classes, the Department will, when necessary, arrange regional education classes or seminars. Hunter Education staff will be responsible for student registration, publicity, and providing students with materials. Staff may contact volunteer instructors and NCV's to assist at the course.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Course Fees

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**POLICY:** Charging a fee for hunter, bowhunter, or trapper education classes is prohibited by the State of Vermont.

## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Course Planning: Paperwork, Materials, and Event Manager

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**POLICY:** All hunter education instructors must register courses via the online tool, Event Manager. If the instructor does not have access to the Internet, please contact the Hunter Education Program Office directly to schedule a course. Failure to do so could result in a suspension or dismissal.

All instructor materials should be ordered directly from the Hunter Education Program Office via phone, e-mail, regular mail, or the online Equipment Request tool at: <http://tinyurl.com/VTMuzzleControl>

All material requests must be received at least four (4) weeks before the first class. Estimate how many students will be in the class or determine the maximum number you want in the class and order that many. Extra materials can be saved for the next class or returned.

- Department firearms and special training aids can be delivered to most locations or district offices. Be sure to check their availability before committing yourself to their use.
- Requests for a warden or deputy warden to come to your class should be made directly to the warden or deputy. Warden Contact information can be found at: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/contact/contact-a-warden>. If you need help, contact the District Lieutenants or Hunter Education staff.
- Contact other instructors and assistants and set up the class schedule. Team teaching is required for all courses.
- Reserve classroom and field day locations with the location itself to ensure its availability. Just because a location is available on Event Manager does not mean that it isn't in use by another program or club.
- Remember to submit all material requests via the Online Tool, mail, e-mail, or phone through Hunter Education Staff at the Montpelier office at least four (4) weeks before the first class.

Hunter Education Program: 802-828-1193  
1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05602



## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Using Event Manager

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**POLICY:** All hunter education instructors must register courses via the online tool, Event Manager. If the instructor does not have access to the Internet, please contact the Hunter Education Program Office directly to schedule a course.

A complete user manual can be found on the Instructor USB drive or sent from Hunter Education Staff. It may also be downloaded here: <http://my.register-ed.com/eventtemplate/tutorial> (when prompted, enter your username and password, select “Open” to open the document or “Save” to save it to your computer). The following is a brief summary in how to use the online tool, Event Manager, to schedule classes:

- 1) Contact instructors/your teaching team to ensure they are all available to teach with you on the date(s) you propose. If you don't have a teaching team, try contacting a Chief Instructor in your area, or other instructors in your area. If you are still trying to find instructors, another good resource could be members of local shooting clubs, or instructors/volunteers you have taught with before.
- 2) Once potential dates are nailed down, contact the location where you wish to hold your class to ensure that there are no conflicts with other events (whether or not they are Hunter Education classes). This is mostly to make sure that you have the go-ahead from the owners of the property or location, so that they area clear on your intentions, and know what a Hunter Education class implies.
- 3) After you get the all-clear from the location, you can set up your class in Event Manager. If the location is not available on the list, you can create a new location in Event Manager, and then continue registering your class.
- 4) Once you register your class, a Hunter Education Program staff member will have to look it over and activate it before it goes live to the public. Usually, this only takes a day or two, since staff receives an e-mail to inform us that an instructor has scheduled a class and it needs to be activated.
- 5) If you are the lead/primary instructor, you can add instructors to the class at any time via Event Manager. All instructors must be added before results are submitted. Once all instructors are added to the class, they will see the class on their Event Manager calendar. All instructors have the ability to input instructor hours and student results.
- 6) After the class is activated by staff, the class is live and students can register, or you can choose to register the students yourself.

- 7) After students have registered, you may have walk-ins show up on the day of the class who did not sign up ahead of time. If you have Internet at the location of your course, you can register the walk-ins right there, or you can wait until you have Internet to add them to the class.
- 8) After all students are registered and the course is over, enter all student results. You can also choose to designate someone else to enter student results. Instructor data can also be inputted at this time (or at the time that they have volunteered) by you or by the instructors themselves.
  - Remember: Anyone that volunteers their time must record volunteer hours. This includes but is not limited to certified instructors, guest speakers, Non-Certified Volunteers, and anyone else who may help coordinate or assist with any other duties in any way.
- 9) Submit all data when everything is finished. Hunter Education Program staff will get an e-mail when you have submitted your instructor and student results. Staff will then check over these results to ensure there are no errors.
- 10) Submit all data when everything is finished. Hunter Education Program staff will get an e-mail when you have submitted your instructor and student results. Staff will then check over these results to ensure there are no errors.

Remember: just because you registered your class does not mean we automatically send you the materials. You **MUST** request materials by e-mail, phone, or regular mail.

Event Manager allows instructors to register classes over multiple days, and instructors may have more than one class active at a time. Instructors also have the power to add, remove, and modify student records to their class roster. Instructors can create private classes that are not to be advertised on the website, and they can use Event Manager to e-mail all students in case of any changes or updates about the class. For more information on how to use Event Manager, download the user manual.

**Event Manager User Manual:**

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/hunter-education/instructor-resources>

# COURSE PROCEDURES

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Planning: Home Study

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## **A. Planning**

- a. ~~Order your materials from the Department. Be sure to specify that it's a home study course and request home study books.~~
- b. ~~Order materials at least four (4) weeks before your field day.~~
- c. ~~Students must have their workbooks two (2) weeks prior to the field day. It will take students between five (5) and twenty (20) hours of work to complete them.~~
- d. ~~Order extra student books. The typical drop-out rate from registration to the field day is one-third to one-half.~~
- e. ~~Reserve the location and line up lots of help for the field day. Don't forget to include people needed to help with paperwork and coordination.~~

## **B. Registration and workbook distribution**

### **Possible scenarios include:**

1. ~~Advertising the course and a location where students can pick up materials after signing up for the class on Event Manager.~~
2. ~~Directing the student to Hunter Education staff for a workbook to be mailed.~~
3. ~~Holding a registration and introduction night. This could include some instruction and/or a film.~~
4. ~~Sending a student letter with materials. This letter explains what to expect and what students have to do to pass the course. It also tells them when and where to go to participate in the field day and any scheduled classes/help nights.~~

~~Home study courses can also be run as longer courses, requiring some classroom time, self-study, and mandatory participation in field day, including live fire. The bottom line is that the standards must be met for certification.~~

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Course Planning: Publicity

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**POLICY:** All public classes are automatically listed online in Event Manager. The Department may publicize your course in the local papers and on radio stations at your request. This service should be requested at least four (4) weeks in advance of your class.

Instructors are welcome to contact their local newspaper or magazine to publicize their classes without Department approval. This often results in better coverage. Be sure to include location, time and date(s), registration link, and name and phone number of person to contact for questions.

- Posters and announcements in local schools and stores can be an effective way to locate students for your course. Posters can be provided by the Hunter Education Program.
- The Event Manager website (<http://www.register-ed.com/programs/vermont>) provides the most up-to-date information about upcoming classes.
- Courses that should not be publicized (i.e. for a school, during school hours) should be designated as “unlisted” via Event Manager. If listed as “public” they will be listed on the website.

**Class schedule information:**

<http://www.register-ed.com/programs/vermont>

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Course Planning: Team Teaching

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**POLICY:** Team teaching (two or more volunteers) is required for Basic Firearm Hunter Education, Bowhunter Education, and Trapper Education courses.

There are two kinds of team-teaching scenarios:

1. One instructor teaches an entire segment of the class, such as firearms handling, and another teaches hunter responsibility, and so on; or
2. “Tag-team Teaching” – One or more instructors share the instruction of a segment. For example, one instructor takes the lecture portion, and another instructor covers the hands-on portion.

Keep in mind that although a certain amount of uniformity is necessary for classes, teaching styles can differ but still be effective. Team teaching may be important to satisfy students’ needs for different learning styles, and to break up the monotony of one style of instruction or one voice teaching the whole course.

Non-certified volunteers satisfy the team-teaching requirement.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Course Planning: Class Size

---

**POLICY:** Instructors must limit the size of their classes, based on space or capabilities. The instructor to student ratio shall never exceed 1 instructor for every 25 students for classroom instruction and 1 instructor for every 10 students for field training, unless prior approval has been obtained from the Hunter Education Coordinator or the Hunter Education Training Coordinator. The best way to limit class size is through preregistration. When you reach the maximum number of students for the class, Event Manager will automatically close the registration. In addition:

- No formal classes may be scheduled for fewer than five (5) students, without prior approval from Hunter Education staff.
- No classes may be held in private homes without prior approval from Hunter Education staff.
- All classes must have a minimum of two (2) volunteer instructors present at all times. This may include a combination of one (1) certified instructor and one NCV.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Course Planning: Course Delivery and Course Introduction

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**POLICY:** To maintain the integrity of the program and protect certified instructors, only Certified Vermont Hunter Education Instructors are permitted to administer or lead a Vermont Hunter Education Program course. Non-Certified Volunteers may lead specific portions of the course under the supervision of the certified lead instructor. *Some exceptions are provided in “Non-Certified Volunteers” on page 72 of this manual.*

## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Course Planning: General Instruction

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While teaching hunter education courses, instructors should:

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before class begins to prepare materials and classroom.
- Ask students to inform them, discreetly, if they need any accommodations or are a convicted felon.
- Use a variety of teaching techniques and classroom strategies.
- Review the lesson they will be teaching prior to class.
- Provide scheduled, routine breaks.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Be relaxed, calm, and patient.
- Invite students to ask questions.
- Use stories sparingly and briefly when they are relevant to the topic.
- Use instructor technology, such as DVDs and PowerPoint efficiently.  
\*Reminder: not all videos must be shown in its entirety in every class.

While teaching hunter education courses, instructors should *avoid*:

- Interrupting other instructors.
- Talking with other instructors or students while another instructor is teaching.
- Reading at length from the student manual, PowerPoint, or another resource.



## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Completion and Submission of Reports via Event Manager

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**POLICY:** To ensure the complete and timely management of Hunter Education Program information, the following procedures for the completion and submission of reports should be followed:

- All students shall register online for their class via Event Manager. If students do not have access to the Internet, they may call the Hunter Education Program Office, go to their local library, or find a friend with Internet to register for a class.
- At the conclusion of the course, instructors must complete student pass/fail data on Event Manager.
- Instructors shall enter their volunteer time via Event Manager for each class conducted.
- Non-certified assistants — those who helped with registration, set-up, and so on are also required to enter time volunteered on Event Manager. This can be done through a certified instructor (for more information on non-certified volunteers, see Non-Certified Volunteer Instructors on page 72).
  - Remember: Anyone that volunteers their time needs to have those volunteer hours recorded. This includes but is not limited to certified instructors, guest speakers, Non-Certified Volunteers, and anyone else who may help coordinate or assist with any other duties in any way.
- All class information shall be entered and submitted via Event Manager to the Hunter Education staff within thirty (30) days following completion of the course.
- If you do not have access to the Internet, please call the Hunter Education Program Office, and we can work with you to ensure that your students' information and instructor hours are entered properly.

# COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Student Evaluation and Certification

---

**POLICY:** A student should be passed or failed based on the composite of a written test, a performance evaluation, and observed behavior. Passing the written test does not mean the student should necessarily receive certification. A student can be failed, at the instructor's discretion, if that student demonstrates consistently poor decision making or unsafe skills or behavior. In the event of a student's failure, the instructor shall document the reason(s) for the failure in the appropriate box on the student's result section on Event Manager.

## Student Testing

Several factors are involved in the establishment of a standardized evaluation (written exam). These include:

- Compliance with stated learning objectives and national standards.
- Student age and learning ability.
- Student educational background.
- Time availability for evaluation.
- Students' reading ability.
- Reciprocity issues.

To ensure standardization in the evaluation, testing, and certification of hunter education students, the following shall be adhered to:

- Only the written examination and/or skills tests supplied or established by the Department shall be utilized for certification purposes. No other examination will be authorized. This includes older versions of the exam.
- A Hunter Education Instructor shall offer to read the exam questions and answer choices aloud to all students.
- Upon completion of student testing, instructors shall review, correct, and score the written exams.
- For a student with a disability, a paraphrased test may be administered orally provided all questions from the standard test are included.
- A minimum passing score of 75% is required on written tests for all Hunter Education programs.

- There shall be no cooperative exam taking (students cannot take the exam together or as a group).
- There shall be no “open book” exam taking.

### **Maturity and Attitude**

Safe, responsible hunting and trapping requires maturity and a good attitude. If you are concerned that a student may not be mature enough to take on the responsibilities of these activities, talk to the parents as soon as possible. Explain the seriousness of these activities, and, if appropriate, recommend that the student retake the course.

If you would not hunt or trap with a student, that person should not be certified. Document, in writing, reasons for not certifying the student. These reasons can be written in the “Notes” section of each student’s results on Event Manager.

### **Practical Firearms Handling/Field Day (Basic Firearm. Hunter Education)**

All Basic Firearm Hunter Education courses must include skill-based training and evaluation. This includes firearms handling and live\simulated live fire. Instruction should be conducted in small groups to ensure safety and enhance learning, and, by the end of the day, the student must demonstrate safe handling. This skill-based training can occur indoors or out. Simulated firearms can be used to practice muzzle control, zone of fire, crossing obstacles, and shoot/don’t shoot situations. *See Appendix for details about Field Day.*

A practical, pass/fail field course is required to test student skills at the end of your course. If the student has problems, go over the course with them and demonstrate the correct methods. Then retest the student the same day. A student who still violates safety rules should not be certified. Because practical courses are dependent on your course location, there is no set course layout. However, all practical courses should include shoot/don’t shoot situations and fence/stream crossings. *See Appendix for sample Practical Course Setup and Evaluation form.*

### **Certification**

Upon successful completion of a hunter education course, each student shall receive:

A Certification card (Orange Card), as provided by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, completed and signed by the instructor. These certificates shall be issued immediately at the conclusion of a hunter education class. Certification numbers, which are often required by other states, are issued by the Department once the class results are received. Lifetime Hunting License holders will have their licenses

activated automatically once the results are in. They can also call to have them activated.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Curriculum Requirements

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**POLICY:** To meet the agreed upon national standards for hunter education programs and to maintain program quality, instructors shall conduct all hunter education programs in accordance with established minimum curriculum for that program. Instructors shall utilize the lesson plans, teaching aids, and materials as outlined in the instructor's guide to meet stated learning objectives. Instructors shall not intentionally delete or substitute portions of the curriculum.

Curriculum requirements are set forth by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and the International Hunter Education Association, Association for Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and National Bowhunter Education Foundation. Standards are updated regularly and can be found online.

Hunter Education, Bowhunter Education, and Trapper Education standards (click "Resources," then "Standards"): <https://www.ihea-usa.org/>

## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Live-Fire Activities

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**POLICY:** Live-fire activities are mandatory for all Basic Firearm Hunter Education courses. These exercises are designed to reinforce the safe handling of firearms, to provide instruction in the basic steps of shooting, and to meet the specified learning objectives for the course of study.

Live-fire exercises shall include one or more of the following: .22 rifle, 20-gauge shotgun, air gun, Laser Education Rifles, and Laser Shot Shooting Simulators. Instructors must make arrangements to pick up these items at least four (4) weeks before the designated range day. For more information, contact Hunter Education Program staff.

### **Other Considerations:**

- Eye protection is required for all shooters, coaches, and range officers on firearm and air gun ranges. Ear protection is required for all persons at firearm ranges.
- **.22 rifles.** The Department will supply ten (10) rounds of .22 ammunition and one (1) target per student. .22 ammunition may be shipped via mail. Rifles are available at the Hunter Education main headquarters in Montpelier and can be delivered to instructors. Contact Hunter Education staff to ensure rifle availability.
- **Shotguns.** The Department will supply five (5) 20-gauge shot shells and five (5) clay birds per student. Shot shells may be shipped via mail, but clay birds may need to be picked up. Shotguns are also available at the Hunter Education main headquarters in Montpelier. Use of 20ga shotgun satisfies live fire requirements.
- **Muzzleloaders.** The Department has a limited number of muzzleloaders and associated gear available. Muzzleloader use satisfies live fire requirements and can be used for certifying convicted felons depending on their conditions. It is up to the student to know and abide by their conditions. (see “Felons and Persons Convicted... on page 70
- **Air guns.** BB guns, and pellet rifles are available for indoor or outdoor live fire. Air gun use satisfies live fire requirements.
- **Laser Shot Shooting Simulators.** Only one of these systems is available at the Hunter Education main headquarters. Call early to reserve the Laser Shot system.

This can be added to your general class equipment request for delivery or pickup. This computerized, video projection system simulates live-fire and hunting situations. Use of this tool satisfies live fire requirements.

- **Laser Education Kits.** These are converted BB rifles that project a laser dot; they can come with a shoot/don't shoot video. Use with the shoot/don't shoot video to teach shot placement, safety, and ethics. They can also be used to aid sight alignment and to teach marksmanship on paper targets. Please give plenty of advanced notice for these kits as they take time to get together. Use of this tool in class satisfies live fire requirements.
- **.22 Revolvers.** As any hunter in Vermont may use a handgun in place of a rifle, we do have .22 revolvers. These shall not be used as a primary means of satisfying the live fire requirements

**If any instructor finds any defect or malfunction with Department issued firearms it must be reported immediately after the course is completed.**

### **Range Requirements and Procedures**

- Live-fire activities will be only conducted at safe and suitable areas as designated by the certified instructor.
- Students are prohibited from bringing and using their own firearms and ammunition.
- One instructor shall be designated as the "Range Officer" and will be responsible for the overall operation of the training session.
- The student to instructor ratio should not exceed 3 to 1, except when using the Laser Education Kits and the Laser Shot Shooting Simulator.
- The Range Officer shall inspect the range facilities to ensure they are safe and acceptable. Any unsafe conditions must be corrected prior to student training and live fire.
- An instructor shall inspect each Department-owned firearm or bow and related shooting equipment to ensure safety and reliability prior to each class.
- Any firearm, bow or related shooting equipment deemed unsafe, shall not be used for live firing under any circumstances. Hunter Education Staff must be notified of any issues found.
- The Range Officer shall remain on the range at all times during live-fire activities.
- The Range Officer shall ensure that the student can safely and comfortably handle the firearm provided.

- At no time during live-fire activities will students be permitted to shoot at any target or other object unless directed or supervised by the Range Officer.
- If a firearm or bow is dropped, an instructor must inspect the firearm or bow for damage prior to resuming shooting activity.
- No food or water is permitted on the range.
- After live-fire activities have concluded, all participants shall wash their hands with soap in cool, not hot, water. Provide buckets with water, if necessary.
- The Range Officer shall also provide a five-gallon bucket with sand for misfires.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Instructors shall review the following responsibilities with students before each live-fire exercise:

- There should be no conversations or distractions, except as directed by an instructor.
- Horseplay or inappropriate behavior will not be permitted at any time during live-fire activities.
- Students may not possess live ammunition, except on the firing line, and only when issued to them by the instructor. Students may not possess broadhead tipped arrows at any time while in the range area.
- Students should inspect their firearm or bow and related shooting equipment for safety and reliability prior to any live fire exercise.
- Students may only load firearms or nock arrows while on the firing line.
- While on the firing line, students must keep their firearms or bows with nocked arrows pointed in a safe direction.
- During live-fire exercises, any students who are unable to safely handle a firearm or bow or related shooting equipment; or who cause unnecessary disturbances; or in any way endanger themselves or others, may be immediately asked to leave the range area by the Range Officer.
- Students will be required to wear suitable eye and ear protection while on the firing line.

### **Range Commands**

The Range Officer must tell the shooters these four important things before they fire their first round:

1. What to do.
2. How to do it.
3. When to do it.



4. Whether there is a time limit.

The following range commands shall be used and reviewed with participants prior to shooting:

1. Explain the rules of the range with the students, as well as the four main rules of firearm safety.
2. Explain cease fire. Tell students that anyone on the range, shooter or not, can and should call cease fire if they see something unsafe. Explain that when someone yells cease fire, everyone will stop shooting, point their firearms in a safe direction, and the concern will be addressed.
3. Range Officer: "Is the range safe?" Students: (if the range is safe, students may say "safe" or they may say nothing at all).
4. Range Officer: Shooters, place one round into the action of your firearm, and then close the action. (Archery — nock your arrow)
5. Range Officer: Shooters, at this time you may shoot one round at the target. When you are finished shooting, open the action, and turn the safety on.
6. Range Officer: Shooters, you may now shoot \_\_\_\_\_ rounds at the target. Action open and safety on when you are done. (The range officer can choose to have students continue shooting one round at a time or can choose to have students shoot more rounds at their own pace).
7. Range Officer: "Is the range safe?" Students: (if the range is safe, students may say "safe" or they may say nothing at all).

If the answer to any range command question is NO, the Range Officer must:

- Direct the student to raise their hand.
- Emphasize that all students should not move out of position and should keep the muzzle of their firearm pointed downrange.
- Go to the student and determine the problem.

### **Safety Problems**

Any person who observes an unsafe act or condition on the range or firing line, shall immediately call for a "cease fire" and notify the Range Officer. The Range Officer shall immediately call for a "cease fire." Only after the unsafe act or condition is corrected shall shooting resume.

### **Mechanical Problems**

Actions to take when mechanical problems arise during firing:

The Range Officer should wait a minimum of 30–60 seconds before opening the action after experiencing a misfire, jammed action, or similar problem.

Make sure everyone can recognize a “squib load,” which is any load that does not propel the bullet through the muzzle. “Pop and no kick” is the standard description.

Rounds that fail to fire, despite evidence that the firing pin struck the round, shall be placed in a five-gallon bucket filled with sand, with the projectile pointed down.

**In Addition:**

- Students shall follow the commands of the Range Officer. The Range Officer shall use the range commands of “load,” “fire,” “cease fire,” and “clear/safe” as required.
- All firearms or bows with nocked arrows shall be pointed downrange or in a safe direction at all times.
- Shooters shall keep their fingers off the trigger until ready to fire.
- Any shooter who completes the firing sequence before the line is clear shall remain in place, keeping their unloaded firearm or bow pointed downrange and in a safe direction. Under no circumstances will a shooter be permitted to leave the firing line or travel downrange until the firing line is considered safe and the Range Officer permits such travel.
- No one will be permitted downrange until the Range Officer has given the command to go forward to check target or retrieve arrows.
- At no time will anyone be permitted to handle a firearm or nock an arrow while anyone is downrange.
- At no time will anyone be permitted to walk downrange while any firearm or nocked bow is pointed downrange.

## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Action Set Firearms

---

**POLICY:** Action set firearms are factory manufactured to be *disabled* by removal and/or welding of the firing pin. They are painted orange and have fully functioning actions but will not fire. These actions set firearms consist of the five most common long rifle actions: pump, semi-automatic, break, bolt, and lever.

Action set firearms are made when a firearm manufacturing plant shuts down normal operation in order to produce these specific training sets. Manufacturers such as Remington and Mossberg have produced these training sets through an agreement with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) and then made available for purchase by state-run hunter education programs.

Action set firearms shall be:

1. Used to demonstrate a particular action and/or as a firearm in the field (obstacle) course.
2. Always treated as if it was a fully functioning and loaded firearm.
3. Never used with live ammunition. Dummy ammunition can be utilized to demonstrate loading, cycling, and unloading
4. Are often permitted in schools and other buildings where standard firearms are prohibited.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Dummy and Live Ammunition

---

**POLICY:** The only dummy ammunition allowed in a course is program-issued dummy ammunition. Dummy ammunition should be utilized as much as possible in the classroom portion instead of “live” ammunition. Instructors shall inspect all dummy ammunition prior to class to ensure no live ammunition is present. For live fire portions, the only live or dummy ammunition available should be a matching caliber of the firearms present.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Use, Care, and Storage of Firearms

---

**POLICY:** Firearms are an integral part of basic hunter education training. To minimize the risks associated with firearms in hunter education, the following policies will apply.

### **Definition**

For the sole purpose of this policy, a “firearm” shall be defined as “Any device used in hunter education training, which propels a projectile from the explosion of a propellant resulting in the expansion of gases. It includes those devices commonly called rifles, shotguns, handguns, pistols, revolvers, and muzzleloaders.” It does not include BB guns, pellet rifles, and action set firearms (see page 65 for more about action sets).

### **Use of Firearms**

Only firearms that have been thoroughly inspected by the Hunter Education Instructor and found to be safe may be used in a hunter education class.

### **Borrowing Firearms**

When needed for a class, Hunter Education Staff shall be responsible for keeping record of firearms and where they are at any given time. This will include utilizing the Firearms Inventory Record to keep track of where each Department owned firearm is located. Staff will use the Firearms Inventory Record to record make, model, serial number, and FW tag numbers to properly identify the firearm being assigned to each instructor. Upon the loan and return of the firearms, staff will update the inventory accordingly. Staff will also record the condition of the firearm upon receipt (new, excellent, fair, poor).

### **Care and Maintenance of Firearms**

To ensure that all firearms used in hunter education training are safe and functional, the following shall apply:

- All exterior metal parts of inert action firearms shall be wiped with a lightly oiled cloth immediately after the conclusion of each hunter education class and prior to being placed into storage. Internal cleaning and lubrication of these firearms should not be required, except for regular servicing by authorized agency personnel as noted below.

- All firearms shall be cleaned after each use and prior to being placed into storage. Cleaning shall include wiping all exterior metal parts with a lightly oiled cloth and the cleaning and lubricating of internal surfaces of the barrel and chamber areas.
- Firearms should be visually inspected after each use by both Department staff AND volunteer instructors. If any malfunction, damage, or defect is discovered with a Department-issued firearm, the firearm shall be immediately removed from service. Volunteer instructors shall notify the Department of the malfunction.

### **Storage of Firearms**

To maintain the quality of issued firearms and protect them from misuse or theft, the following shall apply:

- All firearms that are being transported or stored shall be kept in a storage case.
- All firearms that are in storage shall be secured in a climate-controlled facility, whenever possible.
- All firearms shall be locked and kept in a secure location when not in use for classes. Instructors may use trigger or cable locks (supplied by the Department), keep firearms in a locked safe or gun cabinet, or otherwise be kept secure.

### **Loss or Theft of Firearms**

In the event of any loss or the theft of an issued firearm, the following shall apply:

- The instructor responsible for the firearm shall immediately report the loss or theft to Hunter Education staff. Notification shall include pertinent information about the circumstances of the loss or theft and identifying information about the firearm.
- If required, a subsequent report shall be made to the appropriate law enforcement authority as well as Hunter Education Program staff regarding said loss or theft.



## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Felons and Persons Convicted of Certain Domestic Violence Offenses

---

**POLICY:** Felons and persons convicted of certain domestic violence offenses are not prohibited from taking Hunter Education Program courses. However, these individuals may be prohibited from possessing firearms, including handling them in class. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructors of their status, and it is not the instructor's responsibility to enforce their behavior, or know their conditions of parole. However, instructors shall *discreetly* make accommodations for their limitations (ex: allowing felons to use a non-209 primer muzzleloader in class).

Note that the definition of a "firearm" excludes muzzleloaders, air rifles, archery equipment, and any firearm that has been rendered incapable of being fired by removal of firing pin and/or plugging the chamber. Convicted felons are also usually prohibited from possessing ammunition or ammunition components, including in courses. 209 primers often used in muzzleloaders are considered an ammunition component and **may not** be used by convicted felons. Caplock, flintlock, in-lines that utilize a percussion cap, or other muzzleloaders that do not utilize a 209 primer may be used by convicted felons depending on their individual conditions. Under this interpretation, an individual can successfully complete the mandatory live-fire component of a hunter education class.



## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Non-Certified Volunteer Instructors (NCV)

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**POLICY:** Instructors are encouraged to utilize non-certified assistants with different areas of expertise (i.e. first aid, outdoor survival) in some sections of their course. These guest speakers must understand the material that needs to be covered, what the standards are, and how much time is allowed. A certified volunteer instructor must be present in the classroom at all times. The content is also the instructor's responsibility, so the instructor must familiarize the non-certified assistant with the Instructor Code of Conduct.

Non-certified volunteers are allowed to assist:

- With registration and paperwork, including student registration forms.
- By teaching first aid, map and compass, survival, and other topics of a professional or technical nature within their areas of expertise.
- Anywhere else assistance is needed.

All Guest Speakers and Non-Certified Volunteers who help in classes may have their volunteer hours count toward volunteer match, just like a certified instructor. Hours can be submitted via a signed paper form, or via Event Manager.

Hunter Education staff will create Event Manager profiles for Guest Speakers and Non-Certified Instructors.

Certified Instructors are responsible for telling Hunter Education Program Staff that they have a non-certified instructor and must be added to Event Manager. All Non-Certified Volunteer hours must be recorded in Event Manager.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

**Subject:** Age Restrictions

---

**POLICY:** No student, regardless of age, can be excluded from attending an in-person Hunter, Bowhunter, or Trapper Education course. In addition, age may not be used as a reason for failing or excluding a student. All students under the age of 16 must bring a signed parental consent form to class. These forms are available online and can be printed by students and/or instructors prior to class.

Hunter Education Instructors shall:

- Have one instructor and/or non-certified assistant available to read the test. The reader to student ratio should be no greater than one reader for every thirty students.
- Have additional instructors or non-certified assistants on hand to read should an individual or small group require a quieter, less distracting setting.
- Have a sufficient number of youth-sized firearms available for handling and live-fire activities.

Hunter Education Instructors shall not:

- Discourage a student (or parent/guardian of a student) from taking a hunter education course due to their age.
- Make a statement regarding the student's age.

Hunter Education Instructors are encouraged to:

- Explain to each student and parent/guardian at time of registration the criteria we use to pass students: 1) the written exam 2) the "hands-on" field test and 3) the student's behavior and perceived judgment.
- Note that while the hunter education test isn't one of reading comprehension, most of the material is written at sixth-grade level.
- Require that a parent/guardian accompany children. Instructors are free to set a minimum age to require parents to be present. The Department recommends that a parent/guardian accompany any child aged ten or younger.
- Ask the parent or guardian if they will accompany their child, both in the field and in the classroom.

- Ask the parent or guardian if their child has the ability to sit through the class and understand the material. Direct them to the following website: <https://www.hunter-ed.com/vermont/studyGuide/20104901/>. This free, online study guide presents a concise overview of the fundamentals of hunter education. A similar guide is also available for bowhunter education: <https://www.bowhunter-ed.com/vermont/studyGuide/301049/>
- Ask the parent or guardian to discuss the potential for failure with their child and what it means. Any class can serve as a good learning opportunity for a child, regardless of outcome and especially if they know they are attending to learn but maybe not pass. If a student fails, you can welcome them back to your next course, or they may take another course at any point.
- Ask the parent or guardian to discuss hunting with their child before the class. Is their child excited about taking the class?

## COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Equipment Loan Policy

---

**POLICY:** Written course material and most audio-visual aids can be sent to the instructors directly; however, firearms and large support materials such as 3-D targets and tree stands cannot. Instructors shall follow these procedures and policy for checking in and checking out educational equipment:

1. Most of the program's equipment is stored at the Hunter Education main headquarters.
2. Contact the Hunter Education staff *at least four weeks* prior to picking up equipment. The Hunter Education staff will work with instructors to make arrangements to meet to drop off class materials.
3. Equipment can only be checked-out by Certified Program Instructors. An instructor can, however, designate another person to pick up the supplies, provided the main headquarters has been notified ahead of time.
4. The instructor assumes all responsibilities, within bounds of the *Liability Policy described on page 17*, for equipment after signing it out and should return such equipment in as good a condition as it was when released, including having cleaned it after use.
5. Instructors will notify Department staff about any equipment that they are returning broken or in poor condition. It is best if the broken equipment is flagged or marked in some way.
6. When in the possession of a Certified Instructor, all Department owned firearms must be stored in a secure location such as a safe and must be stored separate from personal firearms.

# COURSE PROCEDURES

**Subject:** Training Aids

---

**POLICY:** Hunter Education has several training aids available for use by Hunter Education Instructors. Some have limited availability and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Equipment is available by advanced notice from Hunter Education headquarters in Montpelier. *See the Equipment Loan Policy for liability and procedures.*

All items can be obtained through our Department website or by calling the Hunter Education Program Office to order.

Visit the equipment request website here: <https://tinyurl.com/VTMuzzleControl>

## 1. Firearms:

Action set firearms as referred to on page 66

.22 rifles

.22 revolvers

.22 youth Mini- Bolt rifles

.243 bolt-action rifles

20-gauge shotguns

.410 shotguns

Muzzleloaders: caplock, in-line, and flintlock.

Pellet rifles (CO2, multiple shot)

Laser Shot computer simulation

## 2. Ammunition:

.22 caliber – ten (10) rounds per student

20-gauge – five (5) rounds per student

.410 – by special request if available

.243 caliber – by special request if available

Muzzleloader balls, bullets, powder pellets, powder, and caps.

Pellets and BBs and CO2 canisters

Dummy rounds

## 3. Targets:

Paper .22 targets – one (1) per student

Paper full-size game targets

Clay birds – five (5) per student

Manual and electronic clay target throwers

Other target types by request and as available

**4. Archery Equipment:**

Left and right-handed Mathews Genesis universal compound bows in cases with arrows, arm guard, and finger tabs.

Long bows and recurve bows.

Crank style crossbows in cases with bolts, rail lube, string wax.

Block type target bow and crossbow targets.

3-D targets.

**5. Trapping Equipment:**

A selection of BMP traps including conibear, foothold, and egg traps.

Miscellaneous trapping supplies, plus more by request as available.

**6. Charts and visuals:**

Actions

Shot placement

Anatomy of deer and bear

Hunter education series – charts, diagrams, and so on from student manual

**7. Decoys:**

Full-size deer, turkey, duck, and goose

Small 3-D deer and bear with exposed vital area

2-D deer and turkey

**8. Tree Stands:**

Ladder, climbing, and fixed portable tree stands

Ground blinds

Various brands of tree steps/ladders

Full-body harnesses with lineman strap

Full-body safety vest (various sizes)

Static line with sliding prusik line attached

Hoist lines

**9. Videos (more videos may be available upon request)**

Alan Madison Master Set: Firearms Safety & the Hunter, Shoot/Don't Shoot, The Hunter's Path, Survival!

Alan Madison: The Last Shot

Irrevocable Decision

Safe Treestand Hunting Strategies

Field Dressing DVD set  
Fur Handling DVD set

## **10. Handouts:**

### **Basic Hunter Education Student Materials**

Today's Hunter in the Northeast Student Manual  
Today's Hunter in the Northeast Workbook  
Current year Vermont Guide to Hunting & Trapping (Law Digest)  
Survival Brochure  
Track Identification Guide  
Pens  
Various pamphlets  
Cable locks  
Graduate Stickers  
Additional items as available

### **Basic Bowhunter Student Materials**

Student Manual  
Crossbow Addendum  
Current year Vermont Guide to Hunting & Trapping (Law Digest)  
Survival Brochure  
Track Identification Guide  
Pens  
Various pamphlets  
Graduate Stickers  
Additional items as available

### **Basic Trapper Education Materials**

Student Manual  
Student Workbook  
Current year Vermont Guide to Hunting & Trapping (Law Digest)  
Trapping and Furbearer Management in North American Wildlife Conservation  
Survival Brochure  
Track Identification Guide  
Pens

Various pamphlets  
Graduate Stickers  
Additional items as available

**11. Electronic equipment:**

DVD players  
Laptops  
Projectors  
Laser Shot simulator

**12. Other aids:**

Compass sets  
Handheld GPS units  
Targets with vital areas marked  
Loading materials and equipment for muzzleloaders  
Tanned skins of all Vermont furbearers, all VT species  
Model training compass  
Hunter-orange clothing  
Firearm cleaning equipment  
Survival kit  
Turkey hunting tote  
Practical Tote  
Topographic maps  
Basic first-aid kit.

All items can be obtained through our Department website or by calling the Hunter Education Program Office to order.

Visit the equipment request website here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/VTMuzzleControl>

**Aids you can make**

- 1. 3-D contour map** — Using layers of corrugated cardboard, cut out mountains, valleys, streams, and so on. Each layer of cardboard represents a contour line.



2. **Animal cutouts** — Get some realistic game targets such as the ones bowhunters use. Mount them on heavy cardboard or plywood and cut out the silhouette. Use these as shoot/don't shoot animals on your practical handling course and test.
3. **Training compass model** — You will need a piece of thin plywood about 1 1/2 feet by 3 feet, a round piece of Plexiglas about 1 foot in diameter, and a pointer needle. Using a permanent marker, make a model compass with movable needle and dial. These are also available through Silva also.
4. **Sighting cradle** — A sighting cradle is used to hold a rifle still while a student gets proper sight alignment and sight picture. Cut Vs in a cardboard box or wooden box to hold the rifle steady. Make a round black circle with a small hole in the center to simulate a bull's-eye and mount on the end of a wand. Have the student look through the sights and direct you to move the bull's-eye until the student is satisfied that everything is lined up. Make a mark through the hole in the center of the bull's-eye on a paper mounted on a wall. Move the bull's-eye and have the student lift his/her head and repeat the sighting two more times. The goal is to have all three marks close together. This is an excellent way to help students who cannot hit the target on the range.
5. **Simulated blood** — Use to set up a blood trail that students can use to practice tracking. Combine red food coloring, glycerin, and water in a plastic milk jug. Put two holes in opposite sides of the jug. Lay out the trail by pumping the jug as you run, walk, or stop in the woods. Shake the jug to simulate lung blood. (You can use whole milk and a squeeze of detergent instead of glycerin if you're going to use the trail within an hour of your laying it out.)
6. **Vitals/Anatomy posters** — Use a large paper target of a deer/bear/turkey. Cut out pieces that can be used as heart, liver, lungs, ribcage. Paste magnets to both the animal and the cut-out organs. Have students place the organs in the correct spots.
7. **Rifle and shotgun bore model** — Use a 2- to 4-inch cardboard tube with foam weather-seal glued to the inside to show rifling. Cut away a section for a clear view. Use another tube to show a shotgun smooth bore. Rig up constrictions to show chokes.

- 8. Pellet and BB gun backstop** — Line a 2-foot cardboard box with 2 inches of folded newspaper, fill the remainder of the box with wadded up paper, tape the box shut, and you have a pellet trap for indoor shooting. Use an old rug or loose-hanging canvas behind the trap to complete the range.

## **APPENDIX**

**Subject:** Appendix

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# HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTOR

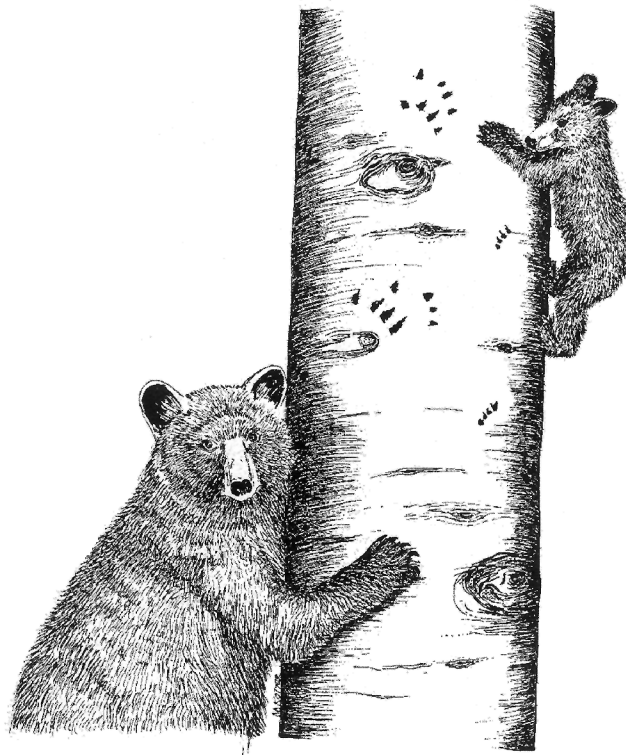


## Introduction

The content of each presentation will vary, depending on the age, interests, and capabilities of the students involved. Younger children have more difficulty dealing with abstract concepts, so our approach must be modified to accommodate this reality. Even so, **we should always strive to give students the facts that will allow them to make informed decisions.**

This information will help you understand more about how children learn, what works in the classroom, and how we can best deliver the information they need to make those informed decisions.

And remember, when you make an effective classroom presentation, the students aren't the only ones who learn. **Every time you appear before a group of children, you'll gain experience and new insights that will make you a more effective presenter the next time.** With those insights and the tips contained in this booklet, you should have no difficulty bringing a touch of class to any classroom in your community.



Before you even begin planning your presentation, it helps to complete a few preliminary tasks.

**1. Know your objectives**

Decide in advance exactly what you want to accomplish. What do you want the students to learn from your presentation?

**2. Determine timing**

Determine whether your presentation will fit comfortably into the time slot. If not, adjust accordingly. A practice run-through will help you get a more accurate handle on the time required to deliver your presentation properly.

**3. Know your audience**

Your presentation may change depending on whether the class is large or small. Wear your nametag and try to address people by their names.

**4. Prepare your equipment, props, and materials**

Have your teaching materials ready and prepared: identify any special equipment needs and make sure they are working.

**5. Prepare your students**

Make sure that students bring appropriate clothing and personal items for the activities.

**6. Practice risk management**

Find out whether there are any special educational needs you should know about. How can you ensure that these students will enjoy the full benefit of your presentation? Are there any students with allergies or other restrictions regarding what they can touch or come in contact with? Are there any students with physical limitations who can still be actively engaged?

**7. Provide adequate supervision**

Team teaching helps with this. Use your co-instructors as an extra pair of eyes and ears. Be clear with direction, rules, and guidelines.

## Getting To Know Your Audience

It's important to know at least a few things about the students you're planning to address. Here are some general tips to help ensure that your presentation will fit the audience it's designed for.

### 1. Visualize the students you'll be instructing

How tall are they? What is their typical vocabulary level? How long is their attention span? Remember that the average adult has a 20-minute attention span without a significant change of pace during the presentation. What are students of this age interested in? What is "cool" or "neat" in their eyes? What do they think is "dumb"? What toys and television programs do they like?

### 2. Learn as much as you can about your audience

If you don't have children at home to generalize from, there are ways of connecting with children in other environments:

Visit a school ahead of time, perhaps during lunch hour. It may be possible to sit in on a class if you've asked permission in advance.

Ask your nieces, nephews, grandchildren or neighbors' children of the same age to give you some hints. What are some things that kids are relating to at this time that will allow you to foster a good relationship with the kids you will be working with?

### 3. Watch your language

Remember that many common terms are unfamiliar to children. Review your presentation to make sure there is no "jargon" which could confuse students. Make a note to remind yourself to **define any words that may not be immediately clear to your audience.** Try not to use those words unless they are critical to your overall message.

### 4. Be sensitive to cultural diversity

Today's classrooms are culturally diverse. Remember that students from diverse cultural, ethnic and family backgrounds may have widely varying attitudes about environmental issues. These differences are often a function of unique cultural traditions and can be instructive in teaching children the importance of tolerance toward others' views, even when they differ from our own.



## **Planning Your Presentation**

There is no substitute for good planning. Even the most experienced teachers work hard to prepare for class every day. They know that an unprepared teacher is not only ineffective, but also risks losing control of the classroom. Veteran teachers use a wide range of methods and approaches in the classroom, but there are some basic rules that you might find helpful.

### **Think the five senses!**

Remember that we acquire knowledge about our environment by using our senses. Sight, sound, touch, even smell and taste are powerful learning tools. Consider each of the senses as a potential area of classroom activity.

- Sight — The “show and tell” approach is the most tried-and-true of all classroom teaching methods. Seeing is believing. Props such as replicas, pictures, videos, posters, signs, maps, charts, books, newspaper or magazine clippings...all are useful and appropriate.
- Sound — Don’t underestimate the value of sound as part of your presentation. Recordings of nature sounds can add a great deal to the effectiveness of your program.
- Touch — Nothing excites children like being able to touch. Having them touch items such as bark, soil, water, pelts, and so on is a great way to teach children the variety of nature.

There are always ways to teach using the senses of smell and taste as well. The idea is to make your presentation directly and personally meaningful to each member of the audience. Letting them see, hear, and touch your materials is a great way to do that.





## **Getting Kids Involved**

The best teachers find ways of making sure that every child is engaged in classroom discussion and activities. You may not know all the tricks of the trade, but here are a few tips to help you get your audience involved in your presentation.

### **1. Ask a lot of questions**

Keep in mind that there are two basic types of questions, and both are useful in classroom presentations.

**Close-ended** questions are those that have specific “right” answers. Some may be answered “yes” or “no.” This type of question is useful to test how well students have retained and recalled information you’ve provided. For example:

- Do you live in the Connecticut River Watershed?
- Are there trees growing in your yard?
- What Vermont mammal is black and white and protects itself by spraying?

**Open-ended** questions are those that may have several “right” answers, and usually require much more than a “yes” or “no” response. This type of question is useful for encouraging thinking, analysis, imagination, and creativity. These questions also adapt well to “essays” or written response. For example:

- Why do you think it is important to conserve water?
- What benefit do trees provide to people and animals?
- What would happen if real-life animals acted the same way cartoon animals do?

### **2. Make sure your questions are appropriate**

Try to avoid asking questions that are beyond your audience’s reasoning level. You may want to write down key questions ahead of time. If youngsters don’t respond to your questions, you may be using words they don’t know. Try rephrasing the question.

### **3. Involve reluctant or distracting students**

Disciplinary problems are always the responsibility of the classroom teacher, but it’s normal for children, especially younger ones, to get restless when there’s a break in the normal classroom routine. The best way to deal with reluctant or distracting students is to “catch them being good,” and comment on it.

For example, Jimmy has been whispering to this neighbor, distracting the students around him. Wait until he stops, and then say, “Thanks, Jimmy for not whispering anymore. It will make it a lot easier for me to finish my presentation.” The odds are that you won’t have any more difficulty with Jimmy whispering.

Students who may be shy or hesitant about participating are a little more difficult to manage. Try to make eye contact with those who seem withdrawn from the discussion. If they meet your eyes directly, they may be willing to participate if called upon, but may be too shy to volunteer. However, if they look away and refuse to make eye contact, it’s a pretty good indication that they do not wish to participate.

Be especially careful to give equal attention to boys and girls. Studies have shown that boys consistently get more attention and are called upon more often in class than their female classmates. This happens even when more girls than boys are actively seeking the opportunity to speak.

In several studies, teachers ignored the girls whose hands were raised and instead called upon boys who had not raised their hands. Don't let yourself fall into this gender-bias trap.

## **Handling Tough Questions**

Because environmental topics have been in the news, some students may already have formulated strong views. In most cases, their opinions have been influenced to a significant degree by their parents or other family members. Dealing with students who express these views in a confrontational or challenging way requires some sensitivity. Always keep your responses non-defensive and positive.

### **How do we deal with “problem parents” who think they know more than the instructors and have passed along questionable ethics to their children?**

This is tough because the child’s best teacher is his/her parent. Parents need to understand that kids at this age start to question their parents’ value system, regardless of what it is. This is a part of the child’s identity search and need to be autonomous. For the child who has a solid upbringing, association with ethical adults will reinforce the parents’ solid values. For the child who has been inoculated with negative views, hopefully the association with adults who hold a more positive value system will make the child aware that there are other perspectives on ethical issues that their parents may have not modeled or considered. It is at least a place to start. Attitudes are slow to change.

- Resist the urge to answer all questions.
- If you do not know the answer, say so. Do not make up an answer.
- Encourage students to research the question.
- Open up the question to other students.
- Research the question yourself and get back to the students with an answer.

## **Wrapping Up**

Before you end your presentation, be sure to summarize the main ideas you’ve covered. **Reinforce your key objectives.** Be as specific as possible. What one or two key points do you want the students to remember? Your summary needn’t be in lecture form. Quick questions and answers are an equally effective method of review.

Let students know that their exposure to your topic doesn’t have to end when you leave the classroom. Tell them about other materials on environmental topics which they may find of interest. If appropriate, invite them to explore a local area, park, or state facility. Briefly tell them about any materials (videos, coloring books, computer programs, and so on).

**Be sure to thank them for their interest and attention.**

## How Kids Learn

Children learn best by doing. The least effective method of teaching is the lecture, where children only listen and do not actively participate. Here are some guidelines to help you determine which methods might work best for your presentation.

- **Reading**  
Children retain approximately 10% of what they read. Printed materials are useful, but reading should be supplemented with other learning methods.
- **Hearing**  
Children retain approximately 20% of what they hear. This means that the most effective presentations give students a chance to ask questions, explain, and discuss what is presented.
- **Seeing**  
Children generally retain about 30% of what they see. Posters, exhibits, illustrations, graphs, and so on are a big bonus.
- **Hearing and Seeing**  
When students both see and hear new information, they retain approximately 50%. Watching demonstrations, videos, movies, slide shows, and participating in tours are good ways to learn.
- **Saying**  
Students retain approximately 70% of what they personally explain. The more actively engaged they are in the learning process, the more they learn. Discussion groups and judging experiences are two meaningful ways for students to express their ideas.
- **Saying and Doing**  
When students are actively involved in saying and doing, they retain approximately 90% of the material. To the extent possible, give them a chance to participate directly as you show or demonstrate various aspects of your presentation.

**Relate** the factual information the students are receiving to how it relates to them directly, or provide an example that they can understand.

Cognitive Domain = Knowledge (facts, specific information, examples)

Affective Domain = Values (how it relates directly to me, personal beliefs, how I feel)

Presenting information in the context of both cognitive and affective domains, you have confluent education: the merging of factual information relevant to the individual so that the information is retained.

Example: Getting permission to hunt on private land. This may be a law if posted or simply a courtesy if the land is not posted. (Fact)

(Relate to student who does not own land.) If you have a bike and your friend wanted to use it, what would you expect from your friend: ask to borrow it, seek permission to use it, provide information about where the bike will be ridden and when it will be brought back, and would it be brought back in good condition?

**What is the best way to present the material for maximum retention in the time we have?**

The goal here is learning. Don't confuse "covering material" with learning. Time is a huge issue in any educational endeavor. Just because we "covered" material in the classroom does not mean the students learned it. The best way to improve learning, especially for young adolescents, is to use active rather than passive strategies, make the learning relevant to them, use lots of concrete examples, and keep things moving.

## **Knowing What to Expect from Students**

It is important to understand that every child (and every class) is unique, so there are few rules that apply to every situation. But there are some general principles to help us understand the abilities and interests of children in various age groups. As you prepare for your presentation, be sure to consider these factors.

### **Nine- to Ten-Year-Olds**

#### **Things to remember:**

- Children in this age group enjoy competition.
- They have a sense of humor and respond well to humor.
- They respond positively to compliments.
- They make up their minds easily, but respond to reason.
- They are inquisitive and impulsive.
- They are excitable and cry easily.
- They tend to think in terms of right or wrong, great or disgusting, black or white...very little middle ground.
- They enjoy sports, mysteries, biographies, short stories, magazines, and comic books.

#### **Activities should be:**

- Hands-on, involving both seeing and doing.
- Creative: drama, constructing things.
- Conducive to developing leadership skills.
- No more than 20–25 minutes in length.

#### **Materials should be:**

- Very simple, but may include some technical terms.
- Colorful and fairly detailed.
- Reflective of gender and cultural diversity.

### **Ten- to Twelve-Year-Olds**

#### **Things to remember:**

- Appearance is becoming important as they begin to become interested in the opposite sex.
- They are competitive.
- They are straightforward, but shy if afraid of being wrong.
- They are empathetic and sympathetic
- They are imaginative and easily influenced, but respond well to reason.
- They like organized clubs, biographies, adventures, mysteries, comic books, and sports.
- They are developing values, are conscious of right and wrong, and are concerned with justice and fairness.

#### **Activities should be:**

- 25–30 minutes in length.
- Related to special interests: hobbies, television, music, sports, and so on.
- Composed of both seeing and doing.

**Materials should be:**

- More complex, with reasonable use of technical terms.
- Colorful and visually interesting.
- Reflective of gender and cultural diversity.

## **Thirteen- to Fourteen-Year-Olds**

### **Things to remember:**

- Children in this age group are aware of their physical development and may be uncomfortable with the rapid changes (or lack of changes) occurring.
- They are moving from concrete to abstract thinking.
- They prefer to find their own solutions to problems.
- They are concerned about justice, equality, and fairness.
- They are more concerned with peer opinions than those of parents or other adults.
- They are willing to talk about values and morals.
- They are struggling to define their own identities.
- They want to assume responsibility and share in something important.

### **Activities should be:**

- Imaginative, but approached with some seriousness.
- Based on reason.
- 25–30 minutes in duration.
- Built around group activities where possible.

### **Materials should be:**

- Of relatively high quality.
- Well-reasoned and documented.
- Reflective of positive ethical values.
- Reflective of gender and cultural diversity.

## **Fifteen- to Eighteen-Year-Olds**

### **Things to remember:**

- Children in this age group know their own special abilities and talents.
- They are thinking about the future and making career plans.
- They set goals based on personal needs and priorities, rather than the priorities of others.
- They are mastering abstract thinking.
- They are self-absorbed.
- They value acceptance by members of the opposite sex.
- They enjoy acting as “mentor” or “advisor” to younger students.

### **Activities should be:**

- Focused on enhancing critical thinking skills.
- Carried out by students with a minimum of supervision.
- Planned with input from students where possible.

### **Materials should be:**

- Written for eighth-grade reading level.
- Of excellent production quality.
- Reflective of gender and cultural diversity.



## **Do's and Don'ts**

### **Do**

- Speak in a calm, kind voice.
- Speak directly to a child.
- Speak in short, meaningful sentences.
- Express your request in a positive manner.
- Get down to the child's physical level if possible.
- Answer the child's questions with correct information.
- Build the child's self-esteem and confidence.
- Listen carefully.
- Set a good example.

### **Do Not**

- Make fun of the child.
- Compare a child to another.
- Be dishonest with a child.
- Make a child feel guilty.
- Make a child feel inferior.
- Imply criticism of parents or of a teacher.
- Overreact to classroom misbehavior.

**Most importantly — have fun while sharing your knowledge.**

## **Suggested Basic Hunter Education Field Day Schedule**

### **8:00 Introduction/Housekeeping (30-45 minutes)**

- Collect homework, take attendance.
- Make note of bathrooms, exits, anything else about the facility.
- Explain the outline of the day. Review student expectations and requirements to pass class. Any questions from the homework? General questions before we begin? Ask if students need anything from you, the instructor.

### **8:45 AM Modules (1 hour 45 minutes) – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30-45 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Firearms handling
- **Module 2:** Map and compass activity
- **Module 3:** Anatomy of ammunition and ammo selection

### **15 minute break**

### **10:45 Ethics, Laws, and Safety (45 minutes) – a full class discussion/activity. With a warden if possible.**

- What are ethics? Why have game laws?
- HRSI activity/ethical dilemma activity
- The role hunting and trapping plays in wildlife conservation.

### **11:30 Lunch (30-45 minutes depending on schedule)**

### **12:15 PM Modules (1 hour 30 minutes) – split into 2 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30-45 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Trip planning and survival.
- **Module 2:** Defensive turkey hunting.

### **15 minute break**

### **2:00 Final Modules (1 hour 30 minutes) – split into 2 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30-45 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Live fire
- **Module 2:** Practical course

### **3:30 Final Questions. Exam. (1 hour)**

Remember this is just a *suggested* outline. Field days vary depending on the location, number of students, and strengths of your instructors.

## **Suggested Basic Bowhunter Education Schedule**

### **9:00 Introduction/Housekeeping (30 minutes)**

- Collect homework (if applicable), take attendance.
- Make note of bathrooms, exits, anything else about the facility.
- Explain the outline of the day. Review student expectations and requirements to pass class. Any questions from the homework? General questions before we begin? Ask if students need anything from you, the instructor.

### **9:30 AM Modules (1 hour 30 minutes) – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Crossbows
- **Module 2:** Shot placement and anatomy
- **Module 3:** Bowhunting equipment and safety

### **15 minute break**

### **11:15 Ethics, Laws, and Safety (45 minutes) – a full class discussion/activity. With a warden if possible.**

- What are ethics? Why have game laws?
- HRSI activity/ethical dilemma activity
- The role hunting and trapping plays in wildlife conservation.

### **12:00 Lunch (30-45 minutes depending on schedule)**

### **12:45 PM Modules (1 hour 30 minutes) – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Blood trailing and practical course
- **Module 2:** Live fire
- **Module 3:** Treestand safety

### **15 minute break**

### **2:30 Final Modules (1 hour)**

- **Module 1:** Trip planning and survival
- **Module 2:** Final questions and review

### **3:30 Exam (1 hour)**

Remember this is just a *suggested* outline. Field days vary depending on the location, number of students, and strengths of your instructors.

## **Suggested Combo Hunter-Bowhunter Course Schedule**

### *Two-day schedule*

#### **Day 1:**

**9:00 Introduction/Housekeeping (30 minutes)**

- Collect homework, take attendance.
- Make note of bathrooms, exits, anything else about the facility.
- Explain the outline of the day. Review student expectations and requirements to pass class. Any questions from the homework? General questions before we begin? Ask if students need anything from you, the instructor.

**9:30 AM Modules (1 hour 45 minutes)** – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 45 minutes.

- **Module 1:** Firearms handling
- **Module 2:** Ethics, laws, and wildlife conservation
- **Module 3:** Map and compass activity

**11:15 15 minute break**

**11:30 PM Modules (1 hour)** – split into 2 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30 minutes.

- **Module 1:** Defensive turkey hunting
- **Module 2:** Anatomy of ammunition and ammo selection

**12:30 Lunch (30-45 minutes depending on schedule)**

**1:15 Final Modules (2 hours 15 minutes)** – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 45 minutes.

- **Module 1:** Practical course
- **Module 2:** Live fire (guns)
- **Module 3:** Trip planning and survival

**3:30 Review/Q&A. Plan for tomorrow.**

## **Suggested Combo Hunter-Bowhunter Course Schedule**

### *Two-day schedule*

#### **Day 2:**

**9:00 Check in/attendance (20 minutes)** Any questions from yesterday? Outline the day ahead.

**9:30 AM Modules (1 hour)** – split into 2 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 30 minutes.

- **Module 1:** Treestand safety
- **Module 2:** Archery equipment

**10:30 15 minute break**

**10:45 Final Modules (2 hours 15 minutes)** – split into 3 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 45 minutes.

- **Module 1:** Shot placement and anatomy
- **Module 2:** Live fire (bows)
- **Module 3:** Blood trailing

**1:00 Lunch (1 hour depending on schedule)**

**2:00 Final Questions (30 minutes)**

**2:30 Exam (1 hour)**

Remember this is just a *suggested* outline. Field days vary depending on the location, number of students, and strengths of your instructors.

## **Suggested Trapper Education Course Schedule**

### **9:00 Introduction/Housekeeping (30 minutes)**

- Collect homework, take attendance.
- Make note of bathrooms, exits, anything else about the facility.
- Explain the outline of the day. Review student expectations and requirements to pass class. Any questions from the homework? General questions before we begin? Ask if students need anything from you, the instructor.

### **9:30 Trap Types (1 hour)**

- Show the legal traps used in Vermont.
- Go over parts of the trap and what each part does.
- Which traps are best for which animals? Which are land vs. water sets?

### **10:30 15 minute break**

### **10:45 BMPs (1 hour)**

- What are BMPs? Why do we have BMPs? Research methods, how they were determined.
- Trap location selection based on target species.
- Use of scents and lures.

### **11:45 Trapper Ethics, Laws, and Trappers' Role in Wildlife Conservation (1 hour)**

### **12:45 Lunch (30-45 minutes depending on schedule)**

### **1:30 Field Activities (1 hour 30 minutes) – split into 2 groups. At least 1 instructor per group. Rotate every 45 minutes.**

- **Module 1:** Land sets. Make your own sets, pick out locations. Fisher, fox, marten, raccoon, etc.
- **Module 2:** Water sets. Castor mounds, sets with footholds and conibears, etc. Beaver, mink, etc.

### **3:00 15 minute break**

### **3:15 Final Q&A (15 minutes)**

### **3:30 Exam (1 hour)**

## **Sample Practical Course**

*Small groups of students should go through the practical course together. This is a simulated hunt, the culmination of everything learned about safe, ethical, and legal hunting. During the “hunt” have a conversation with the students before coming to the decision whether it is a shoot or don’t shoot scenario. What questions do they have about this situation? Just because one student takes the shot, it doesn’t mean it is **safe, legal, and ethical** for every student.*

### **Before exercise, lay down the ground rules:**

- Identify the hunting season and relevant laws (deer, bear, no antlerless permit, and so on). Each situation can have its own explanation for the hunting season, the tags, laws, etc.
- Simulate loading and unloading firearms.
- Everything is as it appears.
- Animal targets are real.
- Simulate shooting if you would shoot.
- Have a reason for not shooting.
- *Before taking a shot, the hunter should be able to say yes to these three questions: Is it a safe shot? Is it a legal shot? Is it an ethical shot?*

### **Suggestions for before the “hunt”:**

- Ask landowner for permission.
- Put on blaze-orange vests and/or hats.
- Safely simulate loading and when loading the firearm is appropriate.

### **Suggested hunting scenarios:**

1. 2- or 3-person fence crossing.
2. Side-by-side hunting — demonstrate basic carries.
3. Shoot/don’t shoot. Consider zone of fire, buck, or doe.
4. Solo fence crossing.
5. Don’t shoot — person beyond target.
6. Shoot/don’t shoot. Consider zone of fire, legal turkey?
7. Don’t shoot — deer in safety zone.
8. Safely unloading.

**Suggestions for after the “hunt”:**

- Safely put away unloaded rifles.
- Thank landowner and offer some game if they bagged any.
- Review exercise and answer questions. Corrections and suggestions should be made on the trail when needed.



## **Hunter Education Program Contact List Updated August, 2022**

1 National Life Drive  
Dewey Building  
Montpelier, VT 05620  
802-828-1193 – Hunter Education Program Office  
802-828-1000 – Fish & Wildlife Department Main Line

### **Chris Herrick, Commissioner**

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### **Alison Thomas, Director of Outreach**

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802-318-1347 (cell)

### **Nathan Lafont, Hunter Education Training Coordinator**

E-mail: Nathan.Lafont@vermont.gov  
Phone: 802-828-1193 (office)  
802-522-5580 (cell)

### **Main Hunter Education Line**

E-mail: HunterEducation@vermont.gov  
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### **Hunter Education Temporary Employee**

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802-522-4724 (cell)