

WISCONSIN HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE OFFERINGS NOW AVAILABLE:

What is Changing?

Starting Oct. 15, 2020, students of all ages can obtain hunter education safety certification through a single Wisconsin DNR approved online-only hunter education course. This is a **temporary** change allowing those under the age of 18 to take the online-only course from **Oct. 15 through Dec. 31, 2020**. This temporary change accommodates those who are not comfortable attending an in-person class due to the COVID-19 public health pandemic.

There will not be an in-person field day requirement for those under 18 who take the online-only hunter education course.

This temporary change is an additional option for those under the age of 18 to get certified. People of any age can continue to enroll in the traditional hunter education course or the blended hunter internet field day course. Both of these options have an in-person requirement to obtain hunter education safety certification.

What is not changing?

Hunter education in Wisconsin continues to meet the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) standard. Traditional hunter education courses in Wisconsin will remain available as our dedicated volunteer instructors offer over 750 hunter education classes annually around the state and in every county. Anyone, of any age, can continue to take the traditional hunter education course. The blended hunter internet field day course will also continue to be offered for students of all ages. Online-only hunter education remains an option for adults.

Why pivot with these changes?

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Wisconsin DNR had to look at current and future methods of delivering hunter education to our customers to keep public health and safety our priority. We surveyed our volunteer instructors and analyzed data supporting alternatives to traditional in-person hunter education courses. Several challenges were identified through this survey process and during the first two months of in-person hunter education courses.

- A portion of our volunteer instructor corps is at-risk due to COVID-19 and growing pandemic concerns.
- Setting guidelines for how traditional in-person courses could be safely conducted with precautionary measures such as PPE requirement, shorter course duration, encouragement of wearing face masks and class size restrictions.
- Public facilities traditionally used for in-person classes have not been available due to COVID-19.
- In-person classes only reached approximately 74% capacity as students did not register at a rate that maximized the classes offered or on trend with previous years.
- As counties adjusted their local restrictions on public gatherings and limits on facility capacities, in-person hunter education classes also had additional limits on class size offerings.

What are the benefits?

The *temporary* online-only certification option will provide additional hunter education opportunities to all our customers affected by COVID-19. Among other benefits, it also aligns our program with many hunter education programs in other states that offer this as an option already.

- A fully online option reduces barriers to recreational experiences.
- It provides an additional option for students to choose the best option for their situation.
- Demand for certifications takes the pressure off current hunter education instructors and staff to provide additional coverage and resources.
- The online certification option takes pressure/unintended exposure off at-risk instructors due to COVID-19.
- Save money in supplies, instructor/student materials, PPE, etc.

Our goal in the Wisconsin hunter education program is to continue to build our offerings to meet our customers' needs today and into the future.

What are the hunter education course offerings?

Customers may obtain their hunter education safety certification in Wisconsin through one of several methods.

1. **NEW** -- Complete the online-only hunter education course (100% online certification) through the DNR's approved vendor. Students will be required to pay the vendor fee plus \$10.00 for the DNR as required by state law. **NOTE:** for those 18 years of age and under, this option is available for a **temporary** period starting Oct. 15, 2020, and ending on Dec. 31, 2020. Students over 18 years of age have been able to complete their hunter education course entirely online and continue to be able to do so in the future.
2. Complete a blended hunter internet field day course that includes an online class and a mandatory in-person field day with a certified hunter education instructor. Complete the online portion of the course through our approved vendor. Then, visit [GoWild.wi.gov](https://gowild.wi.gov) to find an available course and enroll with a certified hunter education instructor. To be fully certified, the in-person portion of the course must also be completed. Students that complete the hunter internet field day online course **MUST** attend an in-person field day to earn their hunter education safety certification. The course cost is \$10.00 to be paid at the in-person field day. This fee is required by state law.
3. Attend a traditional hunter education course. In 2019, Wisconsin offered over 750 hunter education classes around the state and in every county. Hands-on class instruction is the best option when it is safe to get hands-on experience with safe firearm handling. Courses are usually held over several days. The traditional course cost is \$10.00, a fee required by state law.

View open traditional and internet field day courses and enroll at <https://gowild.wi.gov/customers/safetiedclass>

If I started one of the three online hunter education courses previously offered by the DNR before Oct. 15, 2020, can I complete it? YES.

If you paid for and started one of the three online hunter education courses (hunteredcourse.com, hunter-ed.com and huntercourse.com) before Oct. 15, 2020, you will have until Dec. 31, 2020 to complete the course. If you are under the age of 18 and are taking one of the three courses *previously* offered by the DNR, you **MUST** attend a field day to obtain hunter education safety certification. These three previous courses' content does not qualify for individuals under the age of 18 to obtain hunter education safety certification entirely online. If you are over the age of 18 and take the "hunteredcourse.com" course, you also **MUST** attend a field day to obtain hunter education safety certification.

I started taking one of the three online hunter education courses previously offered by the DNR (hunteredcourse.com, hunter-ed.com and huntercourse.com). I was going to attend a field day to obtain my hunter education safety certification. I now want to receive my hunter education safety certification entirely online. What are my options?

The only option to obtain your hunter education safety certification entirely online after Oct. 15, 2020 is to complete the online-only hunter education course.

Will instructors of the hunter internet field day course accept field day vouchers from the three courses online hunter education courses previously offered by the DNR? YES.

Volunteer instructors will continue to accept field day vouchers from the three online hunter education courses (hunteredcourse.com, hunter-ed.com and huntercourse.com) previously offered by the DNR.

I accidentally took the hunter internet field day online course instead of the online-only hunter education course. Can I obtain my hunter education safety certification without attending an in-person field day? NO.

The hunter internet field day online course content does not qualify for individuals to obtain hunter education safety certification without attending an in-person field day. You will either have to enroll in and complete the in-person field day requirements or complete the online-only hunter education course.

Is the Mentor Hunt Program still an option? YES.

Besides the available hunter education certification options, the [mentor hunt program](#) is also available for those who have not received hunter education certification and would like to try hunting with someone who has. This program has been available for over ten years to help break down hunter education certification barriers for all ages.

A person of any age can obtain a mentored-only hunting license and hunt without first completing a hunter education course through mentored hunting. They must be accompanied by a licensed hunter (mentor), hunt within arm's reach of the mentor and follow other rules. Such mentored hunts remove barriers while allowing people to experience hunting in a highly controlled manner safely. This one-on-one mentoring opportunity gives first-time hunters a chance to try hunting and enables veteran hunters to pass on their passion for the outdoors.

Additional Questions:

Questions related to the online-only hunter education course or the Wisconsin hunter education program should contact Lt. Jon King, DNR Hunter Education Administrator at 608-575-2294.