

Dept. of Natural Resources: State hunter education now available online for all ages

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MADISON, Wis. – As of Oct. 15, students of all ages can earn their Wisconsin hunter education safety certification through a single, online-only hunter education course under a temporary change approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The temporary change allows those under age 18 to take the online-only course from Oct. 15 through Dec. 31, 2020. Those interested in taking the online-only course who are over 18 years of age may continue to do so.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DNR reviewed the available methods for delivering hunter education. A survey of volunteer instructors showed support for exploring alternatives to the traditional in-person hunter education course.

Hunter education volunteer instructors often fall into higher-risk categories for contracting COVID-19. The online option addresses these concerns as well as issues with limited public facility availability for in-person instruction, personal protective equipment requirements, shortened courses and capacity limits for in-person classes.

“The temporary online-only certification option will provide additional hunter education opportunities to all customers affected by COVID-19,” DNR hunter education administrator Jon King said. “The online option aligns our program with many hunter education programs in other states, which are facing the same challenges with their hunter education programs.”

Students of the online-only course will be required to pay the approved online vendor fee plus the \$10 state-required course fee.

Those interested in hunter education can learn more on the [Safety Education webpage](#). Additionally, interested students can enroll in the online-only hunter education [here](#).

Those under age 18 who take the online-only course for the remainder of 2020 will not be required to complete the in-person field day.

Traditional Hunter Ed And Mentor Courses Still Available

Traditional hunter education courses involving in-person instruction will remain available thanks to the dedication of volunteer instructors. A blended hunter education course coupling the online course with the required in-person field day will also be available.

“Last year, there were more than 750 traditional hunter education classes held statewide, in every county,” King said. “We prefer the hands-on course with our outstanding volunteer instructors, who play a pivotal role in keeping hunting safe in Wisconsin. However, health and safety is our top priority.”

“Our instructor group talked about holding an in-person hunter education class this year, but the logistics of keeping everyone safe were tough,” said Jim Wipperfurth, a Sauk County hunter education instructor since 2010. “In light of COVID, online hunter education is the best opportunity to get certified.”

Additionally, the [mentored hunt program](#) is available as an option for those who have not received hunter education certification. This program, which has been available for over ten years, helps break down hunter education certification barriers for all ages.

Anyone 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. 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.

To learn more about DNR safety programs for other outdoor activities, visit [the](#)



[DNR's website.](#)