

# Hunters need to take safety course

By Harriett Gill

*The Norton Telegram*  
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Kansas law requires hunters born on or after July 1, 1957, to pass an approved course in hunter safety, a requirement in most states, though the dates differ.

There are two exceptions:

- Anyone 15 and under may hunt without a hunter education certificate under the direct supervision of an adult 18 or older.
- Anyone 16 or older may have a one-time deferral by purchasing an apprentice hunting license. Holders must hunt under the supervision of a licensed hunter 18 or older.

No one under the age of 11 will be certified for a hunter education course. A younger person may take the course but would be required to complete it again.

A Hunter Education Certificate is needed for any hunter regardless of the weapon used. Bow hunters are under the same requirements as firearm hunters. Military personnel must also have a certificate.

Kansas provides a free Internet-assisted course on the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks website by the International Hunter Education Association. Other on-line courses are available for a charge. HunterExam of Kansas has an on line course and a Field Day Qualifier Exam Certificate option for a one time

cost of \$24.95. HuntersEd offers the same on line course and Field Day Qualifier Exam Certificate for \$19.50. A commercial course may be more current than the free course.

You must have a computer and a printer to complete the on-line portion of an Internet-assisted course. This is an independent study method, a three-part process, which requires registration at field day and testing session, completion of an on-line course and in-person participation in the field day and test.

The free course has 14 final quizzes, one at the end of each section. These must be handed in to the instructor at the field day.

The traditional course is organized and conducted by volunteer instructors across the state. By law, the course must include a minimum of 10 hours on class time. Most courses average 12 hours of instruction over two or more days. Courses are offered throughout the year, with the majority in the months from August through October.

The state has a nonresident Hunter Education "crash course" for hunters unable to take a class in their home state. Anyone eligible for a resident hunting license is ineligible to take this course. This one-time certification is valid only in Kansas and only until Feb. 1 of the year following completion. The fee is \$25.

The state accepts all state and provincial and

some foreign countries' certifications.

The purpose of Hunter Education is to teach respect for the sport of hunting and safety. A student learns:

- Respect for the resource of wildlife by supporting and understanding the work of wildlife managers.
- Identifying all game, supporting use of non-toxic shot and retrieving the downed game.
- Respect for firearms, learning the safe storage of firearms and ammunition, unloading your firearm when transporting, never playing with a firearm and controlling the muzzle at all times.
- Respect for the law, obeying bag limits and laws and regulations that control the hunt.
- Respect for the landowner, acting as a guest when on their property, asking permission to hunt on the land, picking up litter and taking it with you when you leave.
- Respect for yourself, conducting yourself in a manner that will ensure the future of the sport, using good manners and setting a good example, knowing where your partners are at all times (no one can forget the hunt in which the Vice President, Dick Cheney shot his hunting partner), using ear and eye protection, not using alcohol or drugs—which can include cold medicine—when handling firearms.
- Respect for the future of hunting by real-

izing that hunting is a privilege, not a right. The public watches hunters and determines their reaction by the actions they have observed.

Many safety rules are common sense:

- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
  - Control the muzzle at all times.
  - Guns are to be unloaded and action open when stored.
  - Use proper ammunition and keep the action and barrel of the firearm free from obstruction.
  - Know what you are shooting at and what lies beyond the target.
  - Never point a gun at something you don't want to shoot.
  - Don't climb any obstacle with a loaded gun.
  - Do not shoot at water or other flat solid surface.
  - Store firearms safely and out of reach of children or others that are not familiar with gun handling.
  - Never use a firearm when you have been drinking or using drugs.
- The final exam has 25 questions. You must answer 22 of them correctly and pass the Field Day instruction to receive a Hunter Education Certification.

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Nicholas Peterson got some last-minute instruction from Chris Mulder, manager of the Norton Wildlife Area with the Kansas Division of Wildlife and Parks. Nicholas was one of the 41 students in the Norton Hunter Safety Education class.

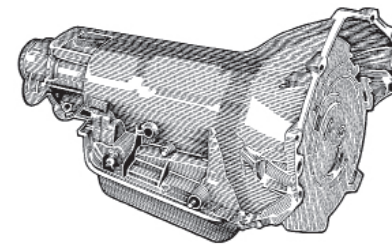
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