



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Pennsylvania Certified Hunter Program FAQ

1. What are the requirements of becoming a Certified Hunter? Meet all of:

- Purchased Hunting License 4 of last 5 years/ Passed HTE
- No wildlife or game code violations in the last 3 years. No major violations in the past 10 years
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Submit and pass a Criminal Background Check
- Pass the Certified Hunter Written Exam
- Pass the Certified Hunter Shooting Proficiency Test
- Sign and abide by the Certified Hunter Program Agreement
- **Desire to hunt additional properties and harvest antlerless deer**

2. What is the process of becoming a Certified Hunter?

- Click the “Apply Now” button on the Certified Hunter Webpage and fill out the application
- Provide 10-15 business days for PGC processing of your background check and game law checks
- You will then be emailed the CHP Study Guide and a unique link to take your exam
- After passing with an 85% or greater, you will then receive instructions to participate in a Shooting Range Qualification held in the Southwest Region for 2025
- If passed shooting exam, you will be certified and receive instruction on how to find and access CHP properties, along with how to tag and report your harvests in the program

3. Will priority be given to certain hunters over others to become certified?

- For the initial Pilot Program year of 2025, hunters who live local to the Pilot area and have a demonstrated track record of harvesting antlerless deer will be given priority through the process. Our goal is to Certify everyone who would like to become Certified, however during the pilot phase we are limited to how many hunters we can certify.

4. Is there a study guide for the written exam?

- Yes, you will be emailed an informational slide packet about the program that also serves as a study guide. The remaining questions for the exam are found in the PA Hunter/Trapper Digest and based on PA Hunting knowledge.

5. How can I best prepare for the Shooting Range Qualification?

- Ensure your weapon is fully sighted in with the ammo you plan to use on the shooting test. Bring any shooting aid (bipod, tripod, etc.) that you typically shoot off of. Practice taking shots prior to coming to the test so you are familiar and confident with the distances. The shooting qualification measures are listed below:

- Rifle: hit 4 out of 5 shots in a 6" circle at 100 yards
- Shotgun: hit 4 out of 5 shots in a 6" circle at 50 yards
- Archery: hit 4 out of 5 shots in the vitals on a 3D target

note that all archery implements (traditional, compound, crossbow) are permitted

6. What are the dates and where will the Shooting Tests be conducted?

- The shooting qualification will take place on various days throughout the year, mostly on Saturdays. For the 2025 season, all range days will be conducted in the pilot area of the Southwest Region. You will get access to the dates of the range days once you pass your written exam.

7. Do I have to recertify every 5 years?

- Yes, each hunter will have to recertify every 5 years. Hunters will not have to retake the exam or the shooting test, however they will be evaluated on their performance in the program. The evaluation will consist of safety/responsibility issues, landowner relations, and harvest reporting.

8. Is there a number of antlerless deer I must harvest each year as a Certified Hunter?

- No, there is not a specific number of deer a Certified Hunter must harvest each year to be part of the program. That said, a main goal of the program is to harvest antlerless deer where localized populations are high and causing deer damage and a part of your recertification will relate to your effectiveness as a Certified Hunter.

9. What if I fail the written exam or the shooting test?

- If you fail the written exam, you are eligible to reapply for the CHP after 1 year from your testing date.

- If you fail the shooting test, you are eligible to retake the test on the same day. If you fail again, you must wait 1 year to reapply for the CHP.

10. Will there be expansion of the CHP into other regions across the state?

- Yes, the goal of the CHP is to be state-wide as early as 2026, based on results from the pilot program. If you are interested in becoming a Certified Hunter, but reside far from the Southwest, we urge you to wait to apply until the CHP is in your area.

Still have questions? Email us at PGCCHP@pa.gov