



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 via email to participate in a Shooting Range Qualification held in the summer.
- 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?

- No, applicants will be processed on a first-come first-serve basis.

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
**Please note, hunters who qualify with a rifle are also eligible to use a shotgun with slugs.*
 - Archery: hit 4 out of 5 shots in the vitals on a target at 30 yards
All archery implements (traditional, compound, crossbow) are permitted

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

- The shooting qualifications will take place on various dates throughout the state. 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.

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. The CHP team reserves the right to evaluate hunter participation in the program at time of recertification.

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 qualification, the attempt will be marked as a fail. The participant will be eligible to retake the test at a later, future scheduled date. No retests will be given on the day of the shoot. There is no minimum waiting period that the applicant must abide by before they could reschedule for a future test.

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

- Yes, the regulation package to expand the CHP statewide was passed on April 11, 2026. Staff are working to expand the program statewide for the 2026 season.

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