

Approved Hunting Organisations (AHOs) approval and management

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Category:	DPI Hunting	Review date:	31 January 2028 or when required

Policy statement:

It is a requirement of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* (the Act), Part 3, Division 3, Section 19 that NSW Restricted Game Hunting Licence (R-Licence) holders must be a member of a hunting club or organisation that is approved by the Regulatory Authority. The Regulatory Authority is the Secretary Department of Regional NSW, with functions delegated to DPI Hunting (part of the Department of Primary Industries).

Approved hunting clubs or organisations are called Approved Hunting Organisations (AHOs) for the purposes of Section 19 of the Act. This policy is in place to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to the management and monitoring of AHOs under this legislation.

Scope:

This policy applies to a hunting club or organisation that applies to, or is currently approved by, the Regulatory Authority as an AHO. This includes hunting organisations approved by the Game Council of NSW before its dissolution, in accordance with the Act.

This policy does not apply to any other role performed by an AHO (such as accreditation as a training provider).

Requirements:

1. Application to be an Approved Hunting Organisation

Applications by hunting clubs or organisations to be Approved Hunting Organisations must:

- Be on the approved form provided on the DPI Hunting website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.
- Nominate a minimum of two office bearers from the hunting club or organisation as contacts.
- Be accompanied by a copy of the hunting club or organisation's constitution that contains a hunting code of practice in line with the NSW Game Hunting Licence Code of Practice (see **Attachment A**) and disciplinary procedures for members who breach relevant legislation (as listed in **Attachment B**) or the NSW Game Hunting Licence Code of Practice.

2. Maintaining Approved Hunting Organisation status

In order to maintain AHO status hunting clubs or organisations must:

- a. Ensure that the provisions listed in 1b and 1c above remain current for the period that they retain AHO status.
- b. Notify DPI Hunting within 14 days of any circumstances that may give rise to the organisation no longer being compliant with the AHO requirements listed in this policy.
- c. Comply within the nominated timeframe with any requests for information from DPI Hunting as part of AHO audit processes.
- d. Notify DPI Hunting of any changes to the organisation's details, including the name and contact details of nominated contact officers, within 14 days of the change occurring.
- e. Ensure that a current, actively monitored phone number and email address is provided to DPI Hunting for the purpose of effective communication.
- f. Immediately notify DPI Hunting of any alleged or suspected breaches to relevant legislation (as listed in **Attachment B**) or to the NSW Game Hunting Licence Code of Practice (as listed in **Attachment A**), by any member that holds a NSW Game Hunting Licence.
- g. Ensure the timely communication of material supplied by DPI Hunting to AHO members.

3. *Audit of Approved Hunting Organisations*

DPI Hunting will audit AHOs using the following guidelines:

- a. Audits will be conducted annually (minimum 10%) on a randomly selected basis.
- b. Targeted audits will be conducted as required based on identified risks
- c. AHOs will be notified of their audit in writing via email.
- d. AHOs must provide evidence of compliance with this policy to DPI Hunting within six weeks of the date of the email referred to in 3 (b).
- e. All audit records will be retained by DPI for evidentiary purposes.
- f. Where there is concern of non-compliance, DPI Hunting may seek additional information from the AHO by a nominated date.
- g. AHOs who do not respond to the audit within the nominated timeframe will be determined non-compliant and may have their AHO status suspended or cancelled.
- h. Non-compliance with an audit request or a finding of 'non-compliant' after an audit may see the organisation's AHO status suspended or cancelled.
- i. All audited AHOs will receive correspondence within six weeks of the completion of an audit that details the audit outcomes.
- j. Hunting clubs or organisations that have their AHO status cancelled must immediately inform their members that they are no longer an approved organisation to ensure their members can find an alternate AHO for the purpose of maintaining a NSW R-Licence.

4. *Suspension or cancellation of Approved Hunting Organisations*

- a. Hunting clubs or organisations may have their AHO status suspended when:
 - i. They fail to respond, comply or cooperate with an AHO audit conducted under this policy.
 - ii. They have a 'non-compliant' audit finding.
- b. Suspended AHOs may have their AHO status reinstated when:
 - i. They have responded to and complied with audit requests and have returned a 'compliant' audit result.
 - ii. They have completed the recommended actions from a 'non-compliant' audit report.
- c. Hunting clubs or organisations may have their AHO status cancelled when:

- i. They fail to respond, comply or cooperate with an AHO audit under this policy on two separate occasions.
- ii. They fail to comply with actions in a 'non-compliant' audit report within three months.
- d. Hunting clubs or organisations that have had their AHO status cancelled will not be considered for AHO status for three years from the date of cancellation.

Hunting clubs or organisations that have had their AHO status cancelled may appeal the decision within 30 working days by writing to:

Director DPI Hunting
Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Approved Hunting Organisations (AHOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with this policy and associated procedures Maintain up-to-date contact information Maintain contact with DPI Hunting
Program Leader Licensing, Stakeholders & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of AHOs Maintenance and management of AHOs and associated policy and procedure Audit of AHOs Suspension or cancellation of AHOs
Director DPI Hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rule on appeal of suspension or cancellation of AHOs

Delegations

The Regulatory Authority has delegated the following function relating to approval of AHOs to DPI Hunting:

Delegation	Role
Approval of a hunting club or organisation (Part 3, Division 3, Section 19 <i>Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director General, Department of Primary Industries Director DPI Hunting Program Leader Licensing, Stakeholders & Education

Definitions:

- Regulatory Authority:** Secretary Department of Regional NSW, with functions delegated to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Hunting.

- **AHO:** Approved Hunting Organisation as constituted under the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*, including organisations formerly known as ‘Approved Professional Hunting Organisations’ (APHOs).
- **R-Licence:** NSW Restricted Game Hunting Licence

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	01/09/2014	N/A	Director Game Licensing
2	19/10/2015	Updated 3 (a) (b) (c) Updated Departmental naming conventions.	Director Game Licensing
3	14/12/2016	Definition of AHO updated	Director Game Licensing
4	09/04/2018	Amendment to Roles and Responsibilities	Director Game Licensing
5	26/04/2023	Updated to reflect current naming conventions and other minor edits	Director DPI Hunting
5.1	11/5/2023	Added information relating to audit requirements	Director DPI Hunting

Contact

DPI Hunting
 Department of Primary Industries
 Locked Bag 21
 Orange NSW 2800
 P: 02 6363 7650
 E: hunting@dpi.nsw.gov.au
 W: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting

Attachment A: NSW Game Hunting Licence Code of Practice

Purpose

The NSW Game Hunting Licence Code of Practice (the Code) defines the standards of ethical behaviour and safe practices required when hunting game animals.

The Code is established under section 24 of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* (the Act) and identifies the provisions that must be complied with by persons hunting game animals pursuant to a game hunting licence. Compliance with the mandatory provisions is a condition of a game hunting licence.

This Code replaces the previous Hunter's Code of Practice that was included in Schedule 2 of the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation 2012. This change allows the code to be approved separately by the Minister for Agriculture, as required under Section 24 of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*.

Awareness of relevant legislation

The intent of the Code is to provide a framework to promote ethical and safe practice.

It is the responsibility of the holder of a NSW game hunting licence to be aware of and comply with all relevant provisions of legislation relating to hunting, animal welfare and the use of firearms.

Where there are inconsistencies between the Code and legislation, the legislation takes precedence.

Mandatory requirements

Everyone hunting game animals must abide by the Code. All holders of game licences must comply with the Code.

A contravention of a mandatory provision of the Code constitutes a breach of a licence condition and may be subject to penalties of up to \$5,500 for each breach and cancellation or suspension of the licence (section 29 of the Act).

Code of Practice

The Code is set out in clauses 1-7, below. Each clause must be observed by persons hunting game animals pursuant to a game hunting licence. Compliance with those mandatory provisions is a condition of a game hunting licence.

1. **Safe handling of firearms:** Where firearms are used, hunters must follow all safe use and handling practices. Game hunting licence holders must comply with the *Firearms Act 1996*.
 2. **Permission required to hunt on land:** A game hunting licence does not automatically authorise the holder of the licence to hunt on any land. Subject to the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation, the holder of a NSW game hunting licence must not hunt any land without the express authority of the occupier of the land.
 3. **Target identification and safety:** The holder of a game hunting licence must not discharge a firearm or bow at a game animal if:
 - a. it cannot be clearly seen and identified, or
 - b. there is a discernible risk of injury to any person, or
 - c. there is a discernible risk of significant damage to any property.
 4. **Obligation to avoid pain and suffering:** The holder of a game hunting licence must:
 - a. not inflict any unnecessary pain or suffering on a game animal being hunted, and
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- b. use a firearm and ammunition or bow and arrow that is likely to achieve a humane kill of the game animal being hunted, and
 - c. only shoot within the reasonably accepted killing range of the firearm and ammunition or bow and arrow being used, and
 - d. target the game animal being hunted so that a humane kill is likely.
5. **Lactating females with dependent young:** If a holder of game hunting licence kills a lactating female game animal, the holder of the game hunting licence must make every reasonable effort to locate and humanely kill any dependent young.
6. **Wounded animals:** If a game animal is wounded by the holder of a game hunting licence, the holder of the game hunting licence must make every reasonable effort to locate any wounded game animals and kill them quickly and humanely.
7. **Use of dogs:** Subject to the Game and Feral Animal Control Regulation, dogs and other animals may be used while hunting only if:
- a. their use is not in contravention to the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*
 - b. their use is with the permission of the occupier of the land concerned.

Attachment B: Relevant legislation

AHOs must notify the DPI Hunting of any member who has:

1. In the previous 10 years been found guilty of an offence under the *Firearms Act 1996* that is, in accordance with section 84 of that Act, an offence that may be (or is required to be) prosecuted on indictment?
2. In the previous 10 years been found guilty of any other offence relating to firearms in NSW or elsewhere?
3. Been found guilty of any offence in NSW or elsewhere in the past 10 years involving cruelty or harm to animals, personal violence, damage to property or unlawful entry onto land?
4. Been found guilty of an offence in NSW of releasing a game animal into the wild for the purpose of hunting the animal or its descendants?