



Forest Notes

Where can I hunt in State Forest?

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Hunting in State Forest

Generally, hunting for pest animals and game species is permitted in all State Forests, however some restrictions may apply. The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is responsible for managing State Forest. Hunters are advised to consult the local DEPI Office for specific information about any restrictions that apply to the area of State Forest that they wish to hunt. Pest animals may be hunted at any time and hunting for game species is allowed only during the open season for that species.

The Game Management Authority has primary responsibility for regulating game hunting in the state.

Anyone wishing to hunt game in Victoria, including juniors (12-17 years), must hold a current Game Licence. "Game" includes those species of duck, deer, quail, pheasants and partridges declared to be game in Victoria. Game hunting and Game Licences are managed by the Game Management Authority. Should you wish to apply for a Game Licence, you can do so at major DEPI offices or download the form at www.gma.vic.gov.au.

No Game Licence is required to hunt pest animals in Victoria, however, if you wish to hunt pest animals with a firearm, you must be the holder of a current Firearms Licence. The hunting of pest animals on Crown land is now seen as an accepted genuine reason for hunters wishing to apply for or renew a Firearm's Licence. To satisfy the requirement of proof, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries can issue hunters with an Expression of Interest to Hunt Pest Animals on Crown Land. For information on where you can obtain an Expression of Interest form and the cost, please contact DEPI on 136 186.

For information relating to Firearms Licensing, contact the Victoria Police Licensing & Regulation Division on 9247 6485.

Where can't I hunt in State Forest

Some areas of State Forest are set aside and closed to all hunting. No game hunting is allowed in State

Forest immediately surrounding the Rubicon Power Station, Warburton and surrounds, Halls Gap and surrounds, Warburton township and Mount Timbertop area.

As well as State Forest, there are many land classifications throughout Victoria and, depending on the type, hunting may or may not be permitted. Generally, the following applies:

Land Classification	Hunting permitted?
State Forest, Forest Parks (Cobboboonee and Otway) and other unoccupied Crown land	Game species may be hunted during the open season only. Pest animals may be hunted at any time, noting, it is an offence to be in possession of a spotlight and firearm in recognised deer habitat
State Game Reserves	Game duck may be hunted, but only during the open season. Sixteen State Game Reserves are available for Stubble Quail hunting and six for Hog Deer hunting. Pest animals may not be hunted at any time, unless specifically authorised by the Department.
Sanctuaries	Game species may not be hunted at any time. Pest animals may be hunted.
Melbourne Water Catchment Areas	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
Flora and Fauna Reserves and Nature Reserves	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.
National Parks, State Parks, Coastal Parks, Wilderness Parks, Regional Parks	Generally, hunting of any type is not permitted at any time, however, there are some exceptions. See the Victorian Hunting Guide for details at www.gma.vic.gov.au
Private Land (includes leased and licensed Crown Land)	Game (only during the open season) and pest animals may be hunted, but only with the permission of the land owner/manager.
Alpine resorts	Hunting of any type is not permitted at any time.

For more specific details of where you may hunt, call the nearest DEPI Regional office, before you enter the field.

Firearms Safety

Remember - Many people use State Forest for recreation and for their livelihood. When hunting in State Forest it is an offence to shoot on or across public roads or tracks at any time, and don't shoot in or towards populated areas (this includes camping and day visitor areas and walking tracks).

All firearm users must practice firearm safety to reduce the risk of firearm incidents. There is no such thing as a firearm "accident". In every case, at least one of the Firearm Safety Rules has been broken. Responsible hunters will know and apply the basic firearm safety rules at all times and will encourage other hunters to do the same. The following firearms safety code will help avoid any risk of injury.

Firearms Safety Code

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries endorses the Firearms Safety Code, which was approved by the Firearms Consultative Committee and Victoria Police and promotes safe firearms handling practices. You should know the **ten basic safety rules** before you handle firearms and insist anyone who goes shooting with you follows these rules. If you wish to know more about firearm safety, or obtain a copy of the Firearms Safety Code, contact Victoria Police Licensing & Regulation Division on 9247 6485 or visit www.firearmsafety.org.au.

Treat every firearm as being loaded

Check every firearm yourself; do not take the word of another person that a firearm is unloaded.

Pass or accept only open and unloaded firearms. Never accept or pass a firearm to another person unless the breech is open and all ammunition has been removed from the firearm.

Always point firearms in a safe direction

Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction. A safe direction will depend on where you are and what you are doing.

Load a firearm only when ready to fire

Only load a firearm when you intend to use it and only in the area where it can be safely and legally discharged.

Identify your target beyond all doubt

You must positively identify your target beyond all doubt before firing. **If in doubt, don't shoot!** Identify the whole animal and don't fire at only movement,

colour, sound or shape. Before you shoot ask yourself: "Is this a person?"

Check your firing zone

Be aware of what is between you and your target, and in the area beyond your target. Projectiles that miss can travel up to 4.5 km, shotguns can also spread shot over a very wide area.

Store ammunition and firearms safely

You are required by law to have a safe and secure place to store your firearms. All firearms and ammunition should be stored separately, out of reach of children, out of view and in an approved cabinet.

Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms

When handling a firearm you must be able to think clearly. Alcohol and drugs (even those prescribed) dull and slow your mental and physical reactions.

Never have loaded firearms in the car, home or camp

Before entering a car, home or camp, completely unload your firearm. Ensure that the action is open and that there is no ammunition in either the breech or the magazine.

Never fire at hard surfaces or water

Consider the area in which you are shooting. Could a ricochet occur? A ricochet will almost certainly result from shooting at water or smooth flat surfaces and rocks.

Do not climb fences or obstacles with loaded firearms

Before attempting to negotiate a fence or obstacle unload your firearm. Do not rely on safety catches. Safety catches, at best, only supplement the safe handling of firearms.

**Observe this code:
Insist others do the same**



Bow Hunting in State Forest

The use of long, recurve, compound and cross bows for hunting is permitted on Crown land and in certain areas of State Forest in accordance with the relevant state Acts and regulations.

Note that crossbows are listed as a prohibited weapon in Victoria and people using them must

have a Prohibited Weapons Permit from Victoria Police.

If you are hunting game deer with bows you will also need a Game Licence and abide by the minimum draw weights and arrow-head specifications. See the Victorian Hunting Guide for details at www.gma.vic.gov.au.

Game birds (duck, quail, pheasant and partridge) can not be hunted with bows.

Contacts for Hunting Organisations

Many hunting organisations offer hunter education courses. These courses often address firearms safety issues, bush craft, legislative requirements for game hunters, game biology and hunting skills. For further details, contact relevant hunting organisations to see if they offer these courses.

Australian Deer Association (Vic)
PO Box 454, Croydon 3136
☎ (03) 9870 1175
www.austdeer.com.au

Field & Game Australia Inc. (Victoria)
PO Box 464, Seymour 3660
☎ (03) 5799 0960
www.fga.net.au

Sporting Shooter's Association of Australia (Vic)
3/26 Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill, 3120
☎ (03) 8892 2777
www.ssaavic.com.au

Victorian Hound Hunters Inc.
40 Campbells Road, Marden 3953
☎ (03) 5664 1345
www.victorianhoundhunters.com.au

Australian Bowhunters Association
www.bowhunters.org.au

Victorian Deer Association
www.vda.org.au

Victorian Game and Deerstalkers Association
PO Box 127, Blackburn South 3130
www.vicgame.org.au

Working Gundog Association of Australia
www.wgaa.blogspot.com.au

Safety information

- On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and State forest are closed to the public. Do not enter

parks or forests on Code Red Days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning. For more information contact DEPI (see below).

- **Campfire safety** – Use fireplaces where provided. The fire must be attended at all times by a person with the capacity and means to extinguish it. For solid fuel fires, the ground and airspace within 3m of the outer perimeter of the fire must be clear of flammable material. Ensure the fire is extinguished with water before leaving. **If it's cool to touch it is safe to leave.**
- **Campfires are prohibited on days of Total Fire Ban.** Only gas or electric appliances that have been designed and commercially manufactured exclusively for cooking may be used for meal preparation on a Total Fire Ban Day provided:
 - the ground and airspace within 3m of the appliance is clear of flammable material
 - a minimum of 10 litres of water is on hand
 - it is in a stable position when in use**It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire.**

For more information

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forests. For further information contact DEPI's Customer Service Centre ☎ 136 186 (If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service on 133 677) or visit DEPI's website at www.depi.vic.gov.au.

For information on game hunting visit the Game Management Authority website at www.gma.vic.gov.au or call on 136 186.



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