

NEWS RELEASE
Oregon Fish and Wildlife

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Controlled hunt deadline remains May 15: Guidance for hunters during the pandemic
Buy online this year to limit non-essential travel

SALEM, Ore.—Controlled hunt applications are still due May 15, but ODFW recognizes some hunters may be concerned about applying due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While ODFW does not anticipate COVID-19 related impacts to fall big game hunting seasons, the agency already has a process to restore preference points if hunters cannot go hunting. “We want to reassure hunters that we already have processes in place to deal with situations when hunters cannot hunt,” said ODFW Director Curt Melcher. “You will not lose your hard-earned preference points if you are unable to go hunting.”

ODFW will reinstate preference points when a significant portion of a hunt area is closed for a large part of the season, which has happened due to wildfire in the past. Points can also be reinstated when someone cannot go on their hunt due to a serious illness or injury. (License and application fees are not refunded as hunters keep their points, get one additional point for the current year, and may use their license later in the year.)

“What’s happened with the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented,” said Melcher. “We cannot predict what the situation will look like in the fall so we understand some hunters have reservations about hunting this year.”

Hunters who are considering just getting a preference point this year can wait to make that decision. Preference points can be purchased from July 1 until Nov. 30 for any hunter who chooses not to apply for a controlled hunt by May 15.

Nonresidents may also apply for fall controlled hunts. Last Friday, Oregon announced the state will [reopen for nonresident hunting and fishing today \(Tuesday, May 5\)](#), though clamming and crabbing remain closed to nonresidents for now. Applications for fall controlled hunts had always remained open to nonresidents and the policy for reinstatement of preference points also applies to nonresidents.

APPLY ONLINE TO LIMIT TRAVEL

For hunters who want to apply for a tag this year, please apply online at <https://odfw.huntfishoregon.com/login>. For a step-by-step guide on applying online, visit <https://myodfw.com/articles/how-apply-controlled-hunt#How>

Find more tips on using the system at <https://myodfw.com/ELS>. Contact Licensing if you need help (odfw.websales@state.or.us, (503) 947-6101). All ODFW offices remain closed to walk-in visitors, but staff are available by phone and email, though phone lines will get busier as the deadline approaches.

Customers who phone Licensing are able to enter their phone number for a call back instead of waiting on hold without losing their place in the queue.

If you already have preference points but have never opened your online account before, don't forget to use Verify/Look Up to find your profile, as your basic account information is already in the system. Any customer who has purchased an annual license since 2016 or has special certifications (such as a Pioneer License, NW Goose permit) needs to use the Verify/ Look Up account feature and not create a new account.

While many license agents are open, some may be working with less staff and providing limited service. ODFW suggests calling ahead to ensure someone is available to sell license documents. "We are all trying to limit our travel, and buying online means you can avoid an extra trip to the store," said Melcher. "License sale agents that are open are considered essential services and their staff are under extra stress. If you do go to an agent, try to limit the number of people who go with you."

Hunter education requirement

Hunters under age 17 who still need a hunter education certificate to hunt are encouraged to go ahead and apply for a fall hunt. ODFW is planning to offer as many classes and field days around the state as possible once restrictions ease. Remember most of the class can be taken [online](#). ODFW is also working on other options to ensure youth can hunt this fall, such as temporarily waiving the field day requirement for youth who are unable to complete it before fall hunting seasons.

Other important reminders for the 2020 controlled hunt draw:

- There were [major changes to some hunts this year](#) as part of efforts to simplify and improve the regulations. Carefully check your hunt number before applying as it may have changed. See regulations online at <http://www.eregulations.com/oregon/big-game-hunting/>
- Deer and elk tags for a few hunts have been reduced from what is printed in the regulations. See details at <https://myodfw.com/articles/deer-elk-tag-reductions-2020>
- You can change your application, free of charge, online through June 1, 2020. Here's how, <https://myodfw.com/articles/how-apply-controlled-hunt#ChangeChoices>
- Don't forget about premium hunts. Every hunter who applies has a chance to win a special hunt in addition to their controlled or general season hunt. Premium hunts have a four-month season (Aug. 1-Nov. 30), any-sex bag limit, cost the same as a regular tag, and preference points are not used to select these hunts. You can be drawn for premium hunts multiple times. Find more info at <https://myodfw.com/articles/premium-big-game-hunts>

"This has been the most challenging and difficult time many of us have ever faced," said Melcher. "We thank all hunters and anglers who have followed the Stay Home, Save Lives guidelines."