



# A Summary of Rhode Island Bowhunting Regulations

This summary will help you become familiar with the bowhunting laws specific to the state of Rhode Island. While it is not a complete list of all hunting laws in the state, it does highlight the more common questions among new bowhunters.

Legal Shooting Hours	
Deer	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset
Coyote	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset
Spring Turkey	½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.
Fall Turkey	½ hour before sunrise until sunset
Small Game	Sunrise until sunset (except on opening day when it begins at 0700 hours [7:00 a.m.])

## Shooting Restrictions

- You must keep a minimum of 200 feet away from any potentially occupied dwelling unless you have written permission to be closer.
- You are prohibited from using laser sights or night vision on a bow.

## Bowhunter Equipment Requirements

- You may use a long bow, recurve bow, compound bow, or crossbow for hunting deer.
  - » The long bow, recurve bow, and compound bow must be set at not less than 40 pounds for archers using fixed blade broadheads. These bows must be set at a minimum of 50 pounds for archers using mechanical broadheads.
  - » For the long bow, recurve bow, and compound bow, only broadhead-tipped arrows with at least two metal-cutting edges are allowed. All broadheads must be 7/8 of an inch or greater at the widest point. These include mechanical broadheads measured in the open position.
  - » Crossbows must be set at not less than 125 pounds minimum draw weight. One field point arrow may be carried in the quiver for the safe discharge of the crossbow. The field point arrow must be a different color from the crossbow arrow so that they can be easily distinguished.
- During the archery season, you may hunt deer with adaptive aids (such as a draw lock) at any time without a special permit.
- You may possess only one firearm or bow in the field while hunting deer. Check local ordinances because there may be other restrictions in specific towns.
- You may use archery equipment for small game hunting, meeting the minimum draw weight required for deer hunting. Arrows tipped with small game blunts or JUDO® points may be used. However, broadhead or field point arrows may not be used for small game hunting.
- You may use broadhead-tipped arrows for hunting coyote only during the archery deer season when in possession of a valid archery deer tag.
- You may carry one blunt or JUDO®-tipped arrow during the archery deer season for the purpose of taking small game during the open portion of the small game season.
- You may use crossbows to take small game mammals; however, no birds may be taken with a crossbow.

## Decoys

- Using decoys to attract deer is allowed only on private land and only during the early portion of the archery season (September 15 to September 30). An exception is that decoys may also be used on private lands in towns where hunting with a firearm is prohibited from September 15 to January 31.
- When transporting decoys while hunting, you must wear 500 square inches of fluorescent orange visible from all sides.

## Fluorescent Orange Requirements

**Rhode Island does require bowhunters to wear fluorescent orange during certain seasons.** See information below for requirements and exemptions.

- Fluorescent orange safety clothing is required during the hunting season statewide for all hunters. To meet this requirement, safety clothing must be solid daylight fluorescent orange. Fluorescent camouflage **does not** meet this requirement. The hunter orange must be worn above the waist and be visible in all directions. For example, you may wear a hat that covers 200 square inches or a combination of hat and vest that cover 500 square inches. If you are hunting, you must wear a certain amount of fluorescent orange safety clothing.
  - » 200 sq. in. by small game hunters during the small game season
  - » 200 sq. in. by fall turkey hunters while traveling
  - » 200 sq. in. by muzzleloader deer hunters during the muzzleloading deer season
  - » 200 sq. in. by archers when traveling to or from stands during the muzzleloader deer season only
  - » 500 sq. in. by all hunters (including archers) and all users of management areas and undeveloped state parks during all portions of shotgun deer seasons
- If you are using pop-up blinds during the firearms deer season, you must display 200 square inches of fluorescent orange that is visible on the outside of the blind from all directions. You must also wear fluorescent orange in accordance with the rules for the specific seasons while in the blind.
- Fluorescent orange is not required in areas limited to archery by regulation. The following are **exempt** from fluorescent orange requirements.
  - » Waterfowl hunters hunting from a boat or a blind, over water or field, when done in conjunction with decoys
  - » Hunters crow hunting over decoys
  - » Spring turkey hunters
  - » First segment dove hunters

## Additional Information

- Annual written permission from the landowner is required for hunting deer on private land. You must carry written permission and show it to any authorized person on demand.
- An archery proficiency test may be required depending upon the area hunted. The test consists of five arrows shot at a deer silhouette target at a measured distance of 20 yards, using equipment that meets minimum requirements for deer hunting in Rhode Island. To pass the test, three out of five arrows must strike the vital area. The proficiency card is valid for two years from its date of issue.
- Temporary elevated stands may be used on state property in Rhode Island. However, they must be removed at the end of the hunting season each year. The use of nails, spikes, bolts, or other climbing devices which may damage the tree may be prohibited.

For the most current information, visit the [Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management](#) website. If you have any questions about the bowhunting regulations, contact Scott Travers at [scott.travers@dem.ri.gov](mailto:scott.travers@dem.ri.gov).

For a more complete list of hunting laws, review the current [Rhode Island Hunting and Trapping Regulation Guide \(Abstract\)](#). You should review the guide before attending the In-Person Written Exam.