

2025 FIREARM DEER CHECK STATIONS IN CWD-TESTING COUNTIES

Refer to the back of your deer permit for detailed instructions on tagging your deer.

Testing of deer for Chronic Wasting Disease by IDNR personnel will occur (so long as funding is available) during the 7-day Firearm Deer Season (Nov. 21 - 23, 2025 and Dec. 4 - 7, 2025) in:

- 1) Counties where deer have been documented with the disease.
- 2) Counties considered high risk for the disease.
- 3) Counties in which additional surveillance is warranted.

In the counties listed in the table below, hunters shall take their whole (or field-dressed) deer to a designated firearm deer check station by 8 p.m. on the day the deer was killed. A permanent harvest tag will be attached to the leg of the deer upon registration at the check station. If a hunter is not able to locate a harvested deer in sufficient time to enable reporting the harvest by 8 p.m., the hunter must take the deer to the appropriate check station upon its opening at 8 a.m. the following morning, or immediately upon retrieving it if that occurs later than the opening of the check station. If this situation occurs on a Sunday (e.g. the check station will not be open on Monday), the hunter must contact the appropriate regional IDNR Law Enforcement Office by 10 a.m. Monday morning for instructions on checking in the deer. If the head/antlers are delivered to a taxidermist for processing, the temporary harvest tag must accompany the head/antlers and be kept with the head/antlers while at the taxidermist. If the carcass is taken to a meat processor, the permanent harvest tag must remain attached to the leg of the deer until it is processed, then must remain with the processed deer until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer. Persons delivering deer/parts of deer to a tanner for processing must supply the tanner with their deer permit number to verify lawful acquisition. In the absence of a permit number, the tanner may rely on the written certification of the person from whom the deer was received that the specimen was legally taken or obtained.

Changes in Check Station locations will be publicly announced

Boone	Boone County Fairgrounds	1/2 mile N of Rt 76 and Business Rt 20, Belvidere, IL 61008
Bureau	Bureau County Fairgrounds	811 W Peru St, Princeton, IL 61356
Carroll	Carroll County Farm Bureau Building	811 S Clay St, Mount Carroll, IL 61053
DeKalb	Shabbona Lake State Park	4201 Shabbona Grove Rd, Shabbona, IL 60550
Ford	IDNR Gibson City Office	301 Date St, Gibson City, IL 60936
Grundy	Gebhard Woods State Park	401 Ottawa St, Morris, IL 60450
JoDaviess	Elizabeth Community Building	210 N West St, Elizabeth, IL 1/2 mile W of business district on Hwy 20, next to Highland C.C. Elizabeth campus
Kane	Use Boone, DeKalb, Kendall, or McHenry check station	
Kankakee	Kankakee River State Park Visitors Center	4 miles NW of Bourbonnais at 5214 W State Rt 102
Kendall	Silver Springs State Park	4.5 miles W of Yorkville at 13608 Fox Rd
LaSalle	Buffalo Rock State Park	3 miles W of Ottawa on Dee Bennett Rd
Lee	Lee County 4H Center	1196 Franklin Rd, Amboy, IL 61310
Livingston	Pontiac Sportsman's Club	1/2 mile NW of Livingston Co. Ag Fairgrounds at 18663 4H Park Rd, Pontiac, IL (just W of I-55)
McHenry	Volo Bog State Natural Area	28478 Brandenburg Rd, Ingleside, IL 60041
Ogle	Castle Rock State Park	Rt 2, 3 miles S of Oregon, IL 61061
Stephenson	County Fairgrounds	1 mile E of Rt 26 and Fairgrounds Rd, Freeport, IL 61032
Will	Des Plaines Game Propagation Center	East of I-55 at 30550 S Boathouse Rd, Wilmington, IL 60481
Winnebago	Rock Cut State Park	6425 Hart Rd, Loves Park, IL 61111 - 0.9 miles E of N Perryville Rd on Hart Rd

- Unfilled Property-Only Hunting (Landowner) Firearm Deer Permits are valid during the Muzzleloader Season (with a muzzleloading rifle) and during the Late-Winter/Special CWD seasons (in counties open to the Late-Winter and CWD Seasons).
- Any unfilled Firearm, Muzzleloader or Youth permits except Special Hunt Area permits that were valid during the previous Firearm, Muzzleloader-Only or Youth seasons are valid during the CWD Season (in counties open to CWD Season).
- Hunters shall not have in their possession, while in the field during deer season, any deer permit issued to another person.
- Permits will not be reissued in cases involving deer taken which are found to be diseased or spoiled due to previous injury. Legal disposal of unfit deer taken shall be the responsibility of the hunter.
- Totally white white-tailed deer are protected by Illinois law and are illegal to kill.
- Please refer to the 2025-2026 Hunting and Trapping Digest for all hunting rules and regulations.

FIREARM OWNERS ID CARD (Issued by Illinois State Police): Regardless of who owns the gun, anyone who has a firearm, including muzzleloaders, or firearm ammunition in their possession, must have in their possession a valid Firearm Owners' ID (FOID) Card unless he or she is: a) A licensed out-of-state-sportsman hunting in Illinois, or b) Under the age of 21 and under the immediate control of a parent, guardian, or responsible adult who has in their possession a valid FOID Card. **For more FOID Card Information, contact ISP at 217-782-7980.**

2025 FIREARM DEER HUNTING RULES AND REGULATIONS – CWD COUNTIES

Season Dates

- 1st Firearm Season: Nov. 21 - 23, 2025
- 2nd Firearm Season: Dec. 4 - 7, 2025
- Muzzleloader-Only Season: Dec. 12 - 14, 2025
(Hunters may also use a muzzleloader permit with a muzzleloader during 2nd Firearm Season Dec. 4 - 7, 2025)

Hunting Hours

One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Persons hunting deer must have gun unloaded during hours when deer hunting is unlawful. See "Legal Hunting Devices" for description of unloaded muzzleloading rifle.

Permit, License, & Habitat Stamp Requirements

Permit: Before hunting, you must sign your permit. Your deer permit shall be carried on your person while hunting.

License: In addition to your deer permit, you must have a valid Illinois hunting, sportsman, youth, or apprentice license unless you are:

1. A person who is disabled and able to show proof of disability in the form of one of the following:
 - A State Disabled Person ID card (available from the Secretary of State through the Drivers License Exam Station) showing a P2, P2A, H2 or H2A disability.
 - Veteran's disability card (at least 10% service related) available from local Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs offices.

OR unless you are:

2. An Illinois resident on active duty and on leave from the U.S. Armed Forces.
3. A landowner or tenant residing on farmlands, or the children, parents, brothers, and sisters permanently residing on such lands, and hunting only the lands resided on. Landowners/Tenants are required to obtain a Habitat Stamp, unless exempt.

Habitat Stamp: Before any person 18 years of age or older takes, attempts to take, or pursues a deer, he or she shall first obtain a State Habitat Stamp. Disabled veterans and former prisoners of war shall not be required to obtain a State Habitat Stamp. Any person who obtained a Lifetime License before January 1, 1993, shall not be required to obtain a State Habitat Stamp.

Clothing

Any person taking or attempting to take deer by use of a firearm shall wear, when in the field, a cap and upper outer garment of solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink color, displaying a minimum of 400 square inches of blaze orange or blaze pink material.

It Is Unlawful:

- to use or possess any other firearm or ammunition in the field while hunting white-tailed deer except as provided in the Firearm Concealed Carry Act;
- for any person having taken the legal limit of deer by firearm to further participate with a firearm in any deer hunting party;
- to drive deer, or participate in a deer drive, on all Department-owned or managed properties. A deer drive is defined as a deliberate action by one or more persons (whether armed or unarmed) whose intent is to cause deer to move within firearm range of one or more participating hunters.

For more details regarding deer hunting laws, please refer to the Hunting Digest or contact IDNR Office of Law Enforcement at 217-782-6431.

Legal Hunting Devices

- Shotguns, loaded with slugs only, of not larger than 10 nor smaller than 20 gauge, not capable of firing more than three consecutive slugs; or
- Single- or double-barreled muzzleloading rifles of at least .45 caliber shooting a single projectile through a barrel of at least 16 inches in length; or
- Centerfire revolvers, centerfire single-shot handguns, and centerfire single-shot rifles. The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches.
- On private land only, archery equipment may be used with a firearm permit.

*** Additional Muzzleloading Regulations***

- A muzzleloading firearm is defined as a firearm into which the projectile is incapable of being inserted from the breech end.
- Only black powder or a "black powder substitute" such as Pyrodex may be used. Modern smokeless powders (nitrocellulose-based) are an approved black powder substitute only in muzzleloading firearms that are specifically designed for their use.
- Only percussion (cap or primer), wheellock, matchlock, flintlock or electronic ignition may be used.
- Removal of percussion cap/primer; removal of prime powder from frizzen pan with frizzen open and hammer all the way down; removal of prime powder from flashpan and wheel unbound; removal of prime powder and match with match not lit; or removal of the battery from the electronic ignition shall constitute an unloaded muzzleloading firearm.

Legal Ammunition

- For shotguns and muzzleloading firearms, the minimum size of the projectile shall be .44 caliber. A wad or sleeve is not considered a projectile or a part of the projectile.
- The only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches.
- Non-expanding, military-style full metal jacket bullets cannot be used to harvest white-tailed deer; only soft point or expanding bullets (including copper/copper-alloy rounds designed for hunting) are legal ammunition.

Bag Limit

The bag limit is one deer per legally authorized either-sex, antlered-only or antlerless-only permit. All either-sex permits and antlered-only permits are subject to the following restriction: No hunter, regardless of the quantity or type of permits in his/her possession, may harvest more than 2 antlered deer during a year, including the Youth, Archery, Muzzleloader, and Firearm Seasons. For purposes of this bag limit, deer seasons are considered to be in the same year if their opening dates fall within the same 12-month period that begins July 1. A hunter in possession of an either-sex permit after having harvested 2 antlered deer during a year may only use the permit to harvest an antlerless deer. Subject to this restriction, an either-sex permit holder is allowed to take a deer with or without antlers and an antlered-only permit holder is allowed to take only a deer having at least one antler of a length of 3 or more inches. An antlerless-only permit holder is allowed to take only a deer without antlers or a deer having antlers less than 3 inches long.

Hunting Area

The specific county or hunt area for which the permit is issued. Permission to hunt on private property must be obtained from the property owner or tenant. Landowner permits are valid on all properties owned by that permittee, regardless of in which county the property is located, so long as that county is open for the specific hunting season for which the permit is issued. This includes all permits issued to: 1) A landowner, tenant, bona fide current income beneficiary, or the immediate family of a landowner, tenant, or income beneficiary; or 2) A bona fide equity shareholder, bona fide equity member, or bona fide equity partner and on all lands owned by the corporation, limited liability company or partnership. All tenant permits issued under this Part are valid only on lands rented/leased for commercial agriculture in the counties open for the specified hunting season. A hunting rights lease, or other nonagricultural lease, is not valid as a basis for obtaining a landowner or tenant permit.