

**97B.031 USE AND POSSESSION OF FIREARMS.**

Subdivision 1. **Firearms and ammunition that may be used to take big game.** A person may take big game with a firearm only if:

- (1) the rifle, shotgun, and handgun used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and with centerfire ignition;
- (2) the firearm is loaded only with single projectile ammunition;
- (3) a projectile used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and has a soft point or is an expanding bullet type;
- (4) the muzzleloader used is incapable of being loaded at the breech;
- (5) the smooth-bore muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .45 inches; and
- (6) the rifled muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .40 inches.

Subd. 2. **Handguns for small game.** A person may take small game with a handgun of any caliber in a manner prescribed by the commissioner.

Subd. 3. **Firearms larger than ten gauge prohibited.** A person may not use a firearm with a bore larger than a ten gauge to take a protected wild animal.

Subd. 4. **Silencers prohibited.** Except as provided in section 609.66, subdivision 1h, a person may not own or possess a silencer for a firearm or a firearm equipped to have a silencer attached.

Subd. 5. **Scopes; visually impaired hunters.** (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the commissioner may issue a special permit, without a fee, to use a muzzleloader with a scope to take deer during the muzzleloader season to a person who obtains the required licenses and who has a visual impairment. The scope may not have magnification capabilities.

(b) The visual impairment must be to the extent that the applicant is unable to identify targets and the rifle sights at the same time without a scope. The visual impairment and specific conditions must be established by medical evidence verified in writing by (1) a licensed physician or a certified nurse practitioner or certified physician assistant acting under the direction of a licensed physician; (2) a licensed ophthalmologist; or (3) a licensed optometrist. The commissioner may request additional information from the physician if needed to verify the applicant's eligibility for the permit.

(c) A permit issued under this subdivision may be valid for up to five years, based on the permanence of the visual impairment as determined by the licensed physician, ophthalmologist, or optometrist.

(d) The permit must be in the immediate possession of the permittee when hunting under the special permit.

(e) The commissioner may deny, modify, suspend, or revoke a permit issued under this subdivision for cause, including a violation of the game and fish laws or rules.

(f) A person who knowingly makes a false application or assists another in making a false application for a permit under this subdivision is guilty of a misdemeanor. A physician, certified nurse practitioner, certified physician assistant, ophthalmologist, or optometrist who fraudulently certifies to the commissioner that a person is visually impaired as described in this subdivision is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**History:** 1986 c 386 art 2 s 7; 1989 c 153 s 1; 1989 c 287 s 7; 2000 c 473 s 7; 2002 c 351 s 15; 2004 c 215 s 19; 2005 c 102 s 1; 2005 c 146 s 28,29; 2007 c 131 art 1 s 36; 2008 c 368 art 2 s 39; 1Sp2011 c 2 art 5 s 39