

§10108. Programs

1. Training in firearm safety. The commissioner shall establish a program for training individuals in the safe handling of firearms and for this purpose may cooperate with any public or private association or organization having as one of its objectives the promotion of safety in firearms handling.

In establishing the program under this subsection, the commissioner shall:

A. Prescribe the qualifications of instructors. Each instructor authorized by the commissioner to conduct training under the program must be covered by liability insurance protecting that person from liability for damages during the time when instruction is being given. The cost of this insurance must be borne by the State and must be a charge against the funds credited to the department; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. Prescribe the type and course of instruction and the time and place of examinations; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. Issue a certificate of competency to individuals who successfully complete the examination. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

2. Promotion of hunting, fishing and camping. The commissioner may implement a program designed to promote fisheries and wildlife resources and attract hunters and anglers to the State. As part of this program, the commissioner may reduce the price of certain types of licenses for specified periods of time to promote license sales for hunting and fishing in the State. The commissioner may offer complimentary licenses as part of a department program or for promotional purposes. Any loss of revenue due to the issuance of complimentary licenses under this subsection may be offset by revenues from other department programs and funds dedicated to the Division of Public Information and Education. The commissioner may implement a program that expends funds for the purpose of recognizing individuals who contribute, either through volunteer efforts or some other form of contribution, to the mission of the department. These programs may include coordination of activities between the public and private sectors and utilization of promotional missions, exhibits, brochures, technical assistance and expertise as necessary to develop and promote hunting, fishing and camping activities within the State. The commissioner shall coordinate these programs with the activities of the Department of Economic and Community Development. Any purchases made as a result of that coordination must be by competitive bid.

[PL 2013, c. 408, §4 (AMD).]

3. Supersport certificate.

[PL 2011, c. 576, §1 (RP); PL 2011, c. 576, §10 (AFF).]

4. Landowner relations program.

[PL 2011, c. 576, §2 (RP).]

4-A. Landowner relations program. The commissioner shall develop and implement a landowner relations program, referred to in this section as "the program."

A. The program must:

- (1) Encourage landowners to allow outdoor recreationists access to their property to hunt, fish or engage in other outdoor recreational pursuits;
- (2) Foster good relationships between landowners and outdoor recreationists; and
- (3) Promote high standards of courtesy, respect and responsibility by outdoor recreationists in their relations with landowners. [PL 2011, c. 576, §3 (NEW).]

B. The commissioner shall appoint a landowner relations coordinator to oversee the program and any other landowner relations activities of the department. [PL 2011, c. 576, §3 (NEW).]

C. To the extent resources allow, the program must include the following elements:

- (1) Building and maintaining an educated and motivated group of outdoor recreationists who meet and promote high standards of courtesy, respect and responsibility in their relations with landowners and who are willing to volunteer in program-related projects or efforts to improve landowner relations;
- (2) Issuing a certificate to persons wishing to support or participate in the program. The commissioner may establish a fee for the certificate, which may not exceed \$20. All proceeds from the fees must be deposited in the Landowner Relations Fund established in section 10265;
- (3) Developing and disseminating to outdoor recreationists a code of ethics or other information promoting high standards of courtesy, respect and responsibility in their relations with landowners;
- (4) Developing an outreach program that provides educational materials and signs and that disseminates information to landowners and land users about landowner rights, landowner liability protections, the tradition of allowing outdoor recreationists to use private land and law enforcement resources available to landowners;
- (5) Engaging organizations and companies representing landowners, conservation groups, recreationists, land trusts and other organizations involved in outdoor recreation in developing, implementing and publicizing the program;
- (6) Organizing or otherwise promoting landowner appreciation events;
- (7) Working with representatives of various state agencies to promote and broaden public access to private lands for recreational use and to enhance enforcement of applicable laws; and
- (8) Seeking and developing sources of funding to support the program. [PL 2011, c. 576, §3 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 576, §3 (NEW).]

4-B. Keep Maine Clean program. The commissioner shall develop and implement a Keep Maine Clean program to recruit volunteers to pick up trash in fields and forests while engaging in outdoor recreation. The commissioner shall recruit volunteers for the program from outdoor recreationists, the media and other for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and shall build a database of volunteers and encourage their participation in the program. The commissioner shall promote the program through a publicly accessible website, e-mail and a monthly e-mail newsletter to volunteers, including stories about the program's sponsors, volunteers, contests, good landowner relations and other helpful information.

The commissioner shall seek sponsorship of the Keep Maine Clean program from businesses, groups representing outdoor recreationists and other individuals and groups. The commissioner may accept money, goods or services donated to the department for the program. Money, goods and services accepted by the commissioner under this subsection may be used only for program activities, including providing gifts to program volunteers and promoting and marketing the program. Money accepted by the commissioner under this subsection must be deposited in the Landowner Relations Fund established in section 10265.

[PL 2015, c. 277, §1 (NEW).]

5. Youth and family programs and activities. Youth and family outdoor recreational programs and activities may be established in the department to encourage hunting and fishing activities as well as shooting sports in the State. The commissioner may accept money, goods or services donated to the department for these programs and activities. Money, goods and services accepted by the commissioner

under this subsection may be used only for these programs and activities, including providing gifts to program participants, and to promote and market the programs and activities. Gifts may include but are not limited to complimentary hunting and fishing licenses, equipment, gear and tackle.
[PL 2017, c. 164, §1 (AMD).]

6. Archery hunting education program. The commissioner shall establish a program for training individuals in safe and responsible archery hunting skills and behavior. This program includes instruction on all types of archery equipment, fisheries and wildlife laws, rights of landowners and hunters and appropriate principles of wildlife management. The commissioner may charge an enrollment fee of up to \$10 per person to help defray the costs of this program. The commissioner may cooperate with any public or private association dedicated to responsible and safe archery hunting to establish this program.

In establishing the program, the commissioner shall:

A. Prescribe the qualifications of instructors; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. Provide liability insurance for each instructor authorized by the commissioner to conduct training under the program protecting that person from liability for damages during the time when instruction is being given. The cost of this insurance must be borne by the State and charged against funds credited to the department; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. Prescribe the type and length of instruction and the time and place of examinations; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

D. Issue a certificate of competency to individuals who successfully complete the examination. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2023, c. 239, §6 (AMD).]

6-A. Crossbow hunting education program.

[PL 2023, c. 239, §7 (RP).]

7. Trapper education program established. The commissioner shall establish a program for training individuals in safe and responsible trapping skills and behavior. This program must include instruction in the applicable laws and rights and in the appropriate principles of wildlife management. The commissioner may charge an enrollment fee of up to \$10 per person to help defray the costs of this program. For the purpose of establishing the program, the commissioner may cooperate with any public or private association having similar goals.

In establishing the program, the commissioner shall:

A. Prescribe the qualifications of instructors; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. Provide for insurance. Each instructor authorized by the commissioner to conduct training under the program must be covered by liability insurance protecting that person from liability for damages during the time when instruction is being given. The cost of this insurance must be borne by the State and must be a charge against the funds credited to the department; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. Prescribe the type and length of instruction and the time and place of examinations; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

D. Issue a certificate of competency to individuals who successfully complete the examination. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

8. Hunters for the Hungry Program. The Hunters for the Hungry Program, referred to in this subsection as the "program," is established to allow the department and persons who are lawfully in the possession of wild game meat to donate that wild game meat for distribution to needy persons through the food assistance programs of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

A. The department shall develop and implement this program in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. In developing the program, the department shall investigate, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, the costs and benefits of establishing a toll-free telephone line for facilitating the donation of meat. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

B. The department may adopt rules to implement the program. If rules are determined necessary, the department shall develop those rules in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. Rules adopted under this subsection may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Procedures for donating wild game meat;
- (2) Provisions for a quality control program;
- (3) Procedures for distributing donated wild game meat through the food assistance programs administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;
- (4) Methods for supporting private sporting groups throughout the State with program education and promotion efforts; and
- (5) Limiting the distribution of wild game meat to certain types of facilities. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

C. A person who donates lawfully obtained wild game meat that is apparently fit for human consumption to the program and a charitable, nonprofit or other organization authorized by the department to receive and distribute meat donated under the program are immune from civil liability arising from injury or death due to the condition of the donated food, unless the injury or death is a direct result of the intentional misconduct of the donor or the organization. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

9. Pheasant program. The commissioner may enter into an agreement with a qualified rod and gun club or qualified hunting-oriented organization to allow the club or organization to purchase and raise pheasants. An agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection may provide for the use of department facilities for raising pheasants by a qualified rod and gun club or qualified hunting-oriented organization. For purposes of this subsection, "qualified rod and gun club or qualified hunting-oriented organization" means a rod and gun club or a hunting-oriented organization that has demonstrated involvement in raising and releasing pheasants in the year prior to entering into an agreement with the commissioner to purchase and raise pheasants.

The following provisions must be observed.

A. The department is not authorized to purchase or raise pheasants. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. All pheasants purchased and raised under an agreement with the commissioner pursuant to this subsection must be released under the direction of department officials in areas open to hunting for the general public. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

10. Becoming an Outdoors Woman. The Becoming an Outdoors Woman program is established in the department to encourage women to participate in hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities within the State. The commissioner may sponsor Becoming an Outdoors Woman events, establish appropriate fees for participation and accept money, goods and services donated to the department for the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program. Money, goods and services accepted by the commissioner under this subsection may be used only for program activities, including activities designed to enhance the program such as giving gifts to program participants, or to assist in promoting and marketing the program.

[PL 2013, c. 408, §5 (AMD).]

11. Coyote control program. Pursuant to section 10053, subsection 8, the commissioner shall maintain a coyote control program as follows.

A. The commissioner may employ qualified persons to serve as agents of the department for purposes of coyote control. These agents must be trained by the department in animal damage control techniques and must be utilized by the department to perform coyote control duties in areas where predation by coyotes is posing a threat to deer or other wildlife. Each agent shall execute a cooperative agreement with the department specifying the conditions and limitations of the agent's responsibilities as an agent, including any terms for reimbursement of expenses or payment of wages. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §30 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

B. An agent employed pursuant to paragraph A may use snares to control coyotes during winter months under the following conditions.

- (1) An agent may use snares only for animal damage control purposes to help meet management goals established by the commissioner for deer, threatened or endangered species or other wildlife species or to benefit agricultural interests as described in paragraph C.
- (2) An agent must be trained and certified by the department in the use of snares.
- (3) An agent must be deployed by a department wildlife biologist before setting snares.
- (4) An agent shall post access points to areas in which snaring activity is taking place, including, but not limited to, roads and trails for motorized vehicles, cross-country skiers or hikers or other obvious travel ways that may be used by people.
- (5) An agent shall plainly label snares with the full name and address of that agent.
- (6) An agent shall keep an accurate record of the number and location of snares set by that agent and must be able to account for those snares at all times.
- (7) An agent shall check that agent's snares that are equipped with relaxing locks on a daily basis.
- (8) A department employee may accompany an agent at any time an agent is checking snares.
- (9) An agent shall report monthly to the department, on forms provided by the department, the coyotes and nontarget species taken by snaring during the reporting period.

The commissioner shall revoke the snaring certificate of an agent who violates any provision of this paragraph.

The commissioner shall adopt policies and procedures on the use of snares as necessary to minimize the potential for taking nontarget species and to adequately protect threatened and endangered species. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §30 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

C. An agent employed pursuant to paragraph A may be employed for the benefit of agricultural interests as long as the department is reimbursed annually for the cost of those efforts by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry from funds specifically appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for that

purpose. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §30 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §30 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

12. Camp North Woods program. The Camp North Woods program, referred to in this subsection as "the program," is established to provide youth opportunities to learn outdoors skills about conservation of the State's natural resources. Department staff shall mentor in the program, which may include, but is not limited to, instruction and training in recreational vehicle operation, paddle sports, hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor survival, navigation, firearm and archery training and wildlife and fish identification. The program is funded solely from the Camp North Woods fund, established under section 10266.

[PL 2015, c. 301, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 414, §A2 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 655, §§B28-30 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 419, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 419, §12 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 576, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 576, §10 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV). PL 2013, c. 408, §§4, 5 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 277, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 164, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 239, §§6, 7 (AMD).

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