

§10853. Complimentary and reduced-rate licenses

1. Residents over 70 years of age. A complimentary license to hunt, trap or fish, including an archery license under section 11109, subsection 7, a pheasant hunting permit under section 11156, a muzzle-loading permit under section 11109, subsection 4, a migratory waterfowl permit under section 11157 and a bear hunting permit under section 11151 must be issued to a resident who is 70 years of age or older upon application to the commissioner.

A. A resident who applies for a complimentary license under this section at any time during the calendar year of that resident's 70th birthday must be issued a license upon application, regardless of the actual date during that calendar year in which that resident attains 70 years of age. A guide license may be renewed without charge for a resident who is 70 years of age or older upon application to the commissioner. The application must be accompanied by a birth certificate or other certified evidence of the applicant's date of birth and residency. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. Beginning January 1, 2006, the department may not issue a complimentary license to a resident over 70 years of age. A complimentary license issued to a resident over 70 years of age prior to January 1, 2006 is valid as long as the license holder satisfies the residency requirements set out in section 10001, subsection 53. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. A complimentary license issued under this subsection remains valid for the remainder of the life of the license holder, as long as the license holder continues to satisfy the residency requirements set out in section 10001, subsection 53 and the license is not revoked or suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

[PL 2015, c. 281, Pt. C, §2 (AMD).]

1-A. Residents 100 years of age or older. A complimentary antlerless deer permit under section 11152 may be issued to a resident of the State who is 100 years of age or older upon application to the commissioner.

A. A resident who applies for a complimentary antlerless deer permit under this subsection at any time during the calendar year of that resident's 100th birthday may be issued the permit regardless of the actual date during that calendar year in which that resident attains 100 years of age. The application must be accompanied by a birth certificate or other certified evidence of the applicant's date of birth and proof of residency. [PL 2005, c. 75, §1 (NEW).]

B. A complimentary antlerless deer permit issued under this subsection remains valid for the remainder of the life of the permit holder, as long as the permit holder continues to satisfy the residency requirements set out in section 10001, subsection 53 and the permit is not revoked or suspended. [PL 2005, c. 75, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2005, c. 75, §1 (NEW).]

2. Blind residents. A complimentary license to fish must be issued to a resident who is 16 years of age or older and blind and applies to the commissioner for the fishing license. This complimentary license remains valid for the life of the license holder if the license holder continues to satisfy the residency requirements in section 10001, subsection 53 and the license is not revoked or suspended. The application must be accompanied by certified evidence that the applicant is permanently blind. For the purpose of this subsection, "blind" means having visual acuity for distance vision of 20/200 if the widest diameter of field of vision subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

[PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §93 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

3. Paraplegics. A resident paraplegic or a nonresident paraplegic who is a resident of another state may obtain upon application, at no cost, all hunting, trapping and fishing licenses, including permits, stamps and other permission needed to hunt, trap and fish. A license holder under this

subsection who qualifies to hunt during the expanded archery season on deer under section 11153 and who meets the eligibility requirements of section 11106 must have included in that person's license one antlerless deer permit and one either-sex permit. The commissioner shall issue all fishing, trapping and hunting licenses and permits applied for under this subsection if the commissioner determines the applicant meets the requirements of this subsection and is not otherwise ineligible to hold that permit or license. For the purposes of this subsection, "paraplegic" means a person who has lost, or who has permanently lost the use of, both lower extremities.

A license issued to a resident paraplegic under this subsection remains valid for the life of the license holder if the license holder continues to be a resident as that term is defined under section 10001, subsection 53 and the license is not revoked or suspended. A nonresident paraplegic may apply for and be qualified to be issued the complimentary licenses and permits referred to in this subsection as long as the state where the person resides provides a reciprocal privilege for resident paraplegics of this State.

[PL 2025, c. 333, §2 (AMD).]

4. Disabled veteran. A resident disabled veteran or a nonresident disabled veteran who is a resident of another state may obtain upon application, at no cost, all hunting, trapping and fishing licenses, including permits, stamps and other permission needed to hunt, trap and fish, and, upon meeting the qualifications as established in section 12853, subsection 4, a guide license. A license holder under this subsection who qualifies to hunt during the expanded archery season on deer under section 11153 and who meets the eligibility requirements of section 11106 must have included in that person's license one antlerless deer permit and one either-sex permit. The commissioner shall issue all fishing, trapping and hunting licenses and permits requested under this subsection if the commissioner determines the applicant meets the requirements of this subsection and is not otherwise ineligible to hold that permit or license. For the purposes of this subsection, "disabled veteran" means a person who:

- A. [PL 2017, c. 475, Pt. A, §19 (RP).]
- B. Was honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard; and [PL 2017, c. 475, Pt. A, §19 (RPR).]
- C. Has a service-connected disability evaluated at 50% or more. [PL 2017, c. 475, Pt. A, §19 (RPR).]

Each application must be accompanied by satisfactory evidence that the applicant meets the requirements of this subsection. An applicant for a license or permit under this section is subject to the provisions of this Part, including, but not limited to, a lottery or drawing system for issuing a particular license or permit. A permit or license issued under this subsection remains valid for the life of the permit or license holder, as long as the permit or license holder continues to remain a resident of this State or another state and the permit or license issued under this subsection is not revoked or suspended. For a nonresident to be eligible under this subsection, that nonresident's state must have a reciprocal agreement with this State.

[PL 2025, c. 333, §3 (AMD).]

5. Holders of Congressional Medal of Honor. Upon application, the Governor may grant 2-year complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to holders of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

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

6. Members of Armed Forces domiciled in State. A member of the Armed Forces of the United States on active duty who is permanently stationed outside of the State may be issued fishing, hunting and trapping licenses for an amount equal to the administrative costs associated with issuing a license as determined by the department. Administrative costs do not include agent fees. To qualify, the member of the Armed Forces of the United States must show proof that that member's home of record, as recorded in that person's service records, is Maine. That person may purchase all other licenses or

permits at resident fees. The license is valid during the year of issue. That person's spouse and children may purchase hunting, fishing and trapping licenses at reduced rates. The reduced fees are as follows:

- A. Twenty dollars, plus the issuing fee for a combination fishing and hunting license; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- B. Ten dollars, plus the issuing fee for a hunting license; [PL 2013, c. 408, §7 (AMD).]
- C. Ten dollars, plus the issuing fee for a fishing license; and [PL 2013, c. 408, §7 (AMD).]
- D. Ten dollars, plus the issuing fee for a trapping license. [PL 2013, c. 408, §7 (NEW).]
[PL 2017, c. 164, §4 (AMD).]

7. Patients and inmates in certain state institutions. The commissioner may issue free fishing permits covering:

- A. Clients of the Department of Health and Human Services who reside in licensed facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities or autism or licensed facilities for the treatment of mental illness; [PL 2011, c. 542, Pt. A, §7 (AMD).]
- B. Groups of full-time patients at a nursing home, as defined in Title 22, section 1812-A; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
- C. Groups of full-time residents of a facility licensed under Title 22, chapter 1663. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]
[PL 2011, c. 542, Pt. A, §7 (AMD).]

8. Members of federally recognized Indian nation, band or tribe. The commissioner shall issue a hunting, trapping and fishing license, including an archery hunting license under this chapter, and including all permits, stamps and other permission needed to hunt, trap and fish, to a person who is an enrolled member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians or the Mi'kmaq Nation that is valid for the life of that person without any charge or fee pursuant to section 11109, if the person presents certification from the appropriate reservation chief or governor or the Mi'kmaq Nation Tribal Council stating that the person described is an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian nation, band or tribe listed in this subsection. Holders of these licenses are subject to this Part, including, but not limited to, a lottery or drawing system for issuing a particular license or permit. Members of a federally recognized Indian nation, band or tribe listed in this subsection are exempt from the trapper education program required for a license under section 12201, the bear trapping education course required by section 12260-A, subsection 4 and the archery hunter education course under section 11106. A license holder under this subsection who qualifies to hunt during the expanded archery season on deer under section 11153 and who meets the eligibility requirements of section 11106 must have included in that person's license one antlerless deer permit and one either-sex permit.
[PL 2025, c. 333, §4 (AMD).]

9. Foreign exchange students. A resident license to hunt or fish must be issued, at a fee equal to the resident license fee for a person of like age and status, to any citizen of a foreign nation under 21 years of age who is domiciled with a family within the State pursuant to any cultural or educational exchange program conducted by any governmental, educational, cultural or religious organization.
[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

10. Persons with developmental disabilities. A complimentary license to fish must be issued to any person with a developmental disability, as defined in Title 5, section 19503, subsection 3, upon application to the commissioner when that application is accompanied by a statement signed by the person's physician that states that the applicant's functional limitations substantially limit that person's ability to fish independently. This complimentary license remains effective for the life of the license holder, if the license is not revoked or suspended.

[PL 2011, c. 355, §1 (AMD).]

11. Permits to accommodate permanent physical disabilities. The commissioner may issue a special permit to a person with a permanent physical disability that includes special authorization that allows that person to hunt, trap or fish at times or in a manner otherwise prohibited by this Part in order to enhance access to hunting, trapping and fishing opportunities. No laws or rules may be waived except as are necessary to effect this subsection. A permit may be issued under this subsection only if:

A. The applicant provides the commissioner with a letter signed by a licensed physician clearly stating the nature of that person's disability, the permanence of the disability and the extent to which the disability affects that person's ambulatory ability or endurance; use of one or both hands, arms or legs; or sight or hearing; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

B. The commissioner determines that the permanent physical disability prevents that person from safely accessing hunting, trapping or fishing opportunities at the times or in the manner allowed by this Part or by rules adopted pursuant to this Part; and [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

C. The person meets all other requirements for issuance of that permit and related licensing requirements and is not otherwise ineligible for that permit. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

Each applicant's disability and needs must be reviewed by the department and a determination made regarding the special authorization that may be made to enhance the applicant's access to fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities. A permit issued under this subsection must be signed by the commissioner and include a clear and specific description of the activities authorized by that permit. The person with a disability shall carry the permit whenever that person is hunting, trapping or fishing, and the permit must be presented to a game warden or other law enforcement officer upon request. No laws or rules may be waived except as are necessary to effect this subsection.

The commissioner may authorize only the minimum special exceptions necessary to overcome the applicant's disability and allow that applicant to safely hunt, trap or fish. This does not authorize the commissioner to issue special exceptions that endanger public safety. A permit issued under this subsection does not authorize a person to exceed the allowable bag or size limits for any fish or wildlife species; to fish for or take a fish or wildlife species for which a license is not otherwise issued; to fish for, trap or hunt a fish or wildlife species more than 7 days before the opening or more than 7 days after the closing of the regular open season for that species; or to fish, trap or hunt in any area permanently closed to those activities by state law or rule.

[PL 2015, c. 301, §6 (AMD).]

12. Persons with acquired brain injury. A complimentary license to fish must be issued to any person with a head injury, as defined by Title 22, section 3086, upon application to the commissioner. This complimentary license remains effective for the life of the license holder if the license is not revoked or suspended.

[PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §93 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]

13. Certain veterans.

[PL 2009, c. 440, §2 (AMD); MRSA T. 12 §10853, sub-§13 (RP).]

14. Game warden killed in line of duty. A complimentary license to hunt, trap and fish, including permits, stamps and other permissions needed to hunt, may be issued, upon application, to the spouse or child of a game warden who has been killed in the line of duty. These licenses must be issued in accordance with criteria established by the Maine Chiefs of Police Association and the Maine Law Enforcement Officer Memorial board, upon confirmation by the Game Warden Colonel that the applicant is qualified for such a license.

[PL 2007, c. 651, §11 (AMD).]

15. Assisting a person with disabilities. The commissioner may allow a licensee who has received a complimentary fishing license under subsection 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 or 12 to have a person accompany and assist that licensee in fishing. The person accompanying and assisting the holder of a complimentary fishing license as provided in this subsection may do so without obtaining a separate fishing license. This subsection does not authorize the person accompanying and assisting the licensee to assist that licensee with more than one fishing rod and reel. The person accompanying and assisting the licensee must remain within the immediate proximity of the licensee while that licensee is fishing. [PL 2011, c. 355, §2 (NEW).]

16. Resident 16 or 17 years of age in custody of the Department of Health and Human Services. A complimentary license to fish may be issued to any resident 16 or 17 years of age who is in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services under Title 19-A, chapter 55 and Title 22, chapter 1071, upon application to the commissioner. This complimentary license remains valid for the duration of the Department of Health and Human Services' custody of the resident, if the license is not revoked or suspended. [PL 2013, c. 93, §1 (NEW).]

17. Group fishing license for persons with disabilities. In addition to other licenses issued by the commissioner pursuant to this section, the commissioner may issue a complimentary group fishing license to a person or entity that allows a group of persons with disabilities to fish in a location for a period of time as specified on the license. [PL 2017, c. 72, §1 (NEW).]

18. Gold star family registration plate holder. A complimentary license to hunt, trap and fish, including permits, stamps and other permissions needed to hunt, may be issued, upon application, to a resident who is the holder of a registration certificate and a set of gold star family registration plates pursuant to Title 29-A, section 524-B. A permit or license issued to a person under this subsection remains valid for the life of the person, as long as the person continues to remain a resident of this State and the permit or license issued under this subsection is not revoked or suspended. [PL 2019, c. 443, §1 (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, §§B93-95 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 655, §B422 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 75, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 268, §2 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 397, §C10 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 477, §2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 195, §1 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 463, §2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 651, §§10, 11 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 440, §2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 327, §1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 355, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 542, Pt. A, §7 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 93, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 136, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 145, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 404, §1 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 408, §§7, 8 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 136, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 136, §12 (AFF). PL 2015, c. 281, Pt. C, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 301, §6 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 72, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 100, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 164, §§3-5 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 475, Pt. A, §19 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 443, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 638, §1 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 228, §6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §4 (REV). PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §5 (AFF). PL 2023, c. 646, Pt. A, §15 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 333, §§2-4 (AMD).

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