



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Crossbow Hunting Qualifications and Certificate



(Reading and understanding this document will serve as qualification for crossbow use)

Hunters will be allowed to hunt big game with a crossbow during the 2011 and 2012 big game hunting seasons.

General Information:

- Crossbows may only be used to hunt deer and bear.
- Crossbows may only be used during the early bear season, regular firearms seasons, late muzzleloader seasons, and the special firearms season in Suffolk County.
- Crossbows cannot be used during bowhunting seasons or in 'Archery Only' areas of the state.
- The hunter needs a current year's license to hunt big game.
- If hunting with crossbow in late muzzleloading season, the muzzleloading privilege is also required.
- The hunter needs to read and understand the information in this document.
- **The hunter needs to complete the certificate below and carry the completed certificate while afield with a crossbow.**

Crossbow Safety Rules:

- Before shooting your crossbow, read and thoroughly understand your crossbow owner's manual.
- Always identify your target and the area beyond it before shooting.
- Make sure your crossbow's limb tips are free of obstructions before shooting.
- If hunting from a tree stand, always cock the crossbow on the ground before climbing into the stand.
- Do not place the bolt on the crossbow until you are safely in your stand.
- Never raise or lower a cocked crossbow with a bolt in it from a tree stand.
- Keep ALL fingers below the crossbow's rail when shooting a bolt.
- Never carry a cocked crossbow with a bolt in it while walking.
- Never dry-fire (cock and fire without loading a bolt) a crossbow.
- Never use a cocking device to uncock a crossbow.
- To uncock a crossbow, shoot a bolt tipped with a field point into soft ground or a target.
- Always observe a maximum effective range for hunting of less than 40 yards to prevent wounding game.
- To understand how bolts function, though not mandatory, consider taking a bowhunter education course.



Legal Requirements for Crossbows:

- A bow, a string, and either compound or recurve limbs with minimum width of 17 inches (tip of limbs, uncocked).
- Mounted on a stock with a trigger and working safety that holds the string and limbs under tension.
- A minimum peak draw weight of 100 pounds and a maximum peak draw weight of 200 pounds.
- A minimum overall length from the butt of the stock to the front of limbs of 24 inches.
- A minimum length of the bolt of 14 inches. (Arrowhead is nonbarbed, 2 or more cutting surfaces at least 7/8" wide).
- A crossbow is considered unloaded if the bolt is removed, regardless whether it is cocked or uncocked.

Suggested References to Review:

- NYSDEC Crossbow Frequently Asked Questions
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/68802.html
- NYSDEC Sportsman Education
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html
- North American Crossbow Federation:
Crossbow 101 (video)
www.northamericancrossbowfederation.com/infoEdu2.php

Practice safely, practice often, and learn the capabilities and limitations of the crossbow and the bolt it shoots.

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Crossbow Certificate of Qualification



I certify that I have read and understand the safety rules and legal requirements of crossbow use in New York. I acknowledge that I have reviewed the training requirements required for use of a crossbow while afield.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

DEC ID# (this is your back-tag number) _____

Date _____

Fill in, cut out, and keep with your hunting license.