



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2005 Wisconsin Act 289
[2005 Assembly Bill 800]

**Certificate of Accomplishment for
Hunter Education Programs**

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other states, provinces, and countries offer courses for hunter education. These courses address issues such as hunter safety, care of firearms, marksmanship, hunter responsibilities, field care of harvested game, wildlife management, and prevention of hunting accidents.

In the current statutes, any person who is born on or after January 1, 1973, and who applies for a hunting license, is required to have a certificate of accomplishment that indicates completion of a hunter education program in Wisconsin. As an alternative, the DNR may accept evidence that the hunting license applicant has completed a course of hunter education in another jurisdiction, if that course is recognized by the DNR. The requirement of holding a hunter education certificate applies both to hunting with a firearm and hunting with a bow and arrow. A separate statute establishes an elk hunter education requirement to obtain an elk hunting license, which also recognizes elk hunter education courses from another jurisdiction.

Also, in current statutes, a person who is 14 years of age or older but under 16 years of age, may not possess a firearm and may not hunt without an accompanying parent or guardian unless he or she holds a certificate of accomplishment of successful completion of a hunter's education program or a similar certificate from another jurisdiction.

2005 Wisconsin Act 289 makes modifications to each of these current statutes to clarify the terminology and make all of these statutes consistent. For example, not all of the statutes prior to the adoption of Act 289 required "successful" completion of the course. Some of the prior statutes referred only to hunter education programs from other states and provinces, rather than other states, provinces, and countries. Some of the prior statutes required a reciprocity agreement between the DNR and the other jurisdictions while other statutes did not, and some statutes required that the course in another jurisdiction be recognized by the DNR while others did not. Act 289 makes these statutes consistent.

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This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.