

Austin City Deer Hunt 2025

APPLICATION & RULES

General Overview:

The City of Austin and MN DNR have provided an ongoing seasonal opportunity to take part in managing the deer population within the City of Austin. The actions of all participating hunters directly impact the success of this hunt and, thereby, the potential for any future hunts held within City limits. Both SAFETY and ETHICS must continue to be top priorities.

The application deadline is September 12, 2025. The \$25 non-refundable fee is payable to the City of Austin, and it does not guarantee participation in the hunt. Applications can be completed and accompanying fees can be paid online by following this link <https://secure.rec1.com/MN/austin-mn/catalog?filter=c2VhcmNoPTM4MzE3MTk=> or by scanning this QR code:



You may also stop into the Austin Parks, Recreation, and Forestry office at 500 4th Avenue NE to get assistance with registration.

Regulations:

1. All game laws are in effect as stated by MN DNR, and must be followed at all times.
2. The dates of the Austin City hunt are October 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 for all hunt locations **except** the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, Todd Park, and Wildwood Park. Those locations begin October 15. Hunting may only occur during legal shooting hours as designated by MN DNR.
3. **Hunters must be a minimum of 18 years of age.**
4. **No crossbows are allowed.**
5. Hunters may not discharge a bow within 150 feet of any inhabited structure and must be 100 feet or more from main trails.
6. **Being chosen as part of this special hunt for deer management is a privilege. The City of Austin and/or its officials may end this hunt or revoke hunting privileges at any time.**
7. In order to qualify for this hunt, prospective hunters must pass the shooting proficiency test which is hosted at the Cedar River Archery Club in August. Only one opportunity is presented to pass the test. It is the responsibility of prospective hunters to ensure they are prepared to take this shooting proficiency test which requires placing 5 of 6 arrows shot from an elevated stand within a 6-inch circle on a target situated 20 yards from the archer.
2025 Proficiency Tests: Wednesday, August 20 5pm-8pm & Saturday, August 30 9am-12:30pm
8. Another pre-requisite of applicants to qualify for the hunt is completion the NBEF/Advanced Bowhunter Education program hosted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and provision of proof (submitted along with application) of successful completion of the course.
9. General Lottery: The names of all qualified hunters will be entered into this drawing.
10. Hunters harvesting at least two antlerless deer in this 2025 hunt will secure a spot in the 2026 hunt, provided they commit no hunting violations.
11. **All hunting must take place within hunt boundaries. Designated areas include Todd Park, Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, Crethaven Addition (designated greenspace along Turtle Creek), Bustad Park**

(and adjacent public spaces along Turtle Creek), south of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, north of the Street Shop, Whittier Park, Wildwood Park, and Turtle Creek South. Maps of available hunting parcels will be e-mailed along with the application.

12. Harvested deer must be reported by hunters to City of Austin **and** DNR within 24 hours, stating day of harvest, animal's sex, and hunt location.
13. Any hunter cited for a game violation during the course of the City Hunt will be ineligible for all future hunts within the city of Austin.
14. Hunters deciding to no longer hunt for any reason, including having filled their tag(s), are asked to please notify City of Austin immediately so a new hunter can be contacted to participate.
15. Hunters are asked to wear a hunter orange hat when going to and from stands. Wearing of hunter orange is not required while in a hunting stand.
16. Arrows may not be discharged while traveling to or from hunting stands.
17. **A signed City of Austin Deer Hunt card is the hunter's permission slip. It must be carried on the hunter's person at all times while hunting or scouting approved City Hunt properties. Cards are not transferrable. Transfer of card to another hunter will result in the loss of future hunting privileges in the city of Austin for both the offender and the individual to whom the card was transferred.**
18. Violation of any of these or other applicable laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, policies, or directives by City officials will result in the immediate revocation of hunting privileges on City and other associated hunt properties and may result in criminal prosecution.
19. **Hunt participants will be provided with a placard which includes hunter's name, address, phone number, hunt number, and hunting zone. This placard must be prominently displayed on the dash board of hunter's vehicle so that it is visible throughout hunt times.**
20. ATV use is not permitted in any of the hunt areas.

Stands:

1. Hunt participants are required to hunt from an elevated stand at least 5 feet above the ground. Acceptable stands and harnesses are any which are commercially-manufactured, non-modified, and in the case of safety harnesses, those which have not exceeded their expiration date.
2. Only designated handicap-accessible areas, one each at the Hormel Nature Center and Todd Park, are open to ground blinds. Please be aware that ground blinds to be used as accessible hunting locations must comply with the new ground blind regulations requiring blaze orange markings on the blinds.
3. For Todd Park, Wildwood Park, or Nature Center locations, stands may be placed beginning Wednesday, October 8. All other locations may begin placing stands Wednesday, September 24. Participating hunters are required to notify the City of Austin Park & Rec Department and/or Hormel Nature Center (for those located at JCHNC) as to stand location. If stand is moved more than 20 yards, said hunters/stand owners are required to inform those same entities.
4. Stands must be removed no later than January 1, 2026 from assigned hunting area.
5. Each participating hunter will be limited to the use of ONE stand. Any untagged stands will be confiscated and delivered to the City of Austin Police Department. Hunters placing more than one stand will lose their opportunity to hunt in any future City hunts.
6. **Stands must be affixed with a laminated tag, provided by Austin Parks and Rec, upon placement of the stand. Stands must have stand tags present on the platform and must be visible to the passer-by for observation. Untagged stands will be confiscated by law enforcement.**

7. Screw-in steps and/or screw-in bow holders are NOT allowed on any properties. Ladder stands, climber stands, or hang-on stands (those not requiring screw-in attachments) may be used, as well as climbing sticks.
8. Removing, trimming, or clipping trees for the purpose of hunting is not allowed, nor is cutting for shooting lanes or stand placement.

Deer Harvest:

1. EARN-a-BUCK is required. **Hunters must take an antlerless deer, recover it, and tag it prior to harvesting an antlered deer. It is then required that all harvested deer be reported to the City plus the DNR hotline or DNR online registration website.**
2. Hunters having harvested a buck in 2025 prior to hunting in the special hunt have already used their regular license tag and will not be able to harvest a buck during the special hunt; as per DNR regulations, a hunter may harvest only one antlered buck per year. Thus, hunters who have harvested a buck may still participate in the City Hunt but will be limited to tagging only antlerless deer during the hunt through the use of bonus tags.
3. **All entrails of deer shall be removed intact or in containers/plastic bags and disposed of properly in accordance with state laws.**
4. Any hunter who shoots a deer which is not immediately recovered must notify the Parks and Rec Dept. and/or the Nature Center regarding the location. This will allow for notification of other hunters within the hunt area to be on the lookout.
5. The DNR will not require CWD testing deer harvested in zone 255 in 2025. Hunters may voluntarily test their deer for CWD by requesting a mail-in kit from the DNR or by requesting testing from taxidermists participating in the DNR's Partner Sampling Program. For more information visit:
<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwd/cwd-testing.html>
6. Harvested deer should be removed from hunt areas as discretely as possible. Harvested deer should be covered and removed in a manner that is sensitive to the non-hunting public. Secondary trails should be used wherever possible for deer removal.
7. Hunters removing harvested deer from the Nature Center on (snow-covered) groomed cross-country ski trails should drag or remove deer along a trail edge (versus the center), so groomed trails are not destroyed.
8. Hunters are solely responsible for removing deer. However, during normal business hours of the week, Nature Center personnel *may* be available to assist in deer removal (from JCHNC grounds) via their UTV. Hunters may contact Luke Reese to check for availability, however, hunters should be prepared to remove their deer without staff assistance.
9. If you would like to donate your deer, check out the latest information from the state at:
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/hunter-harvested-venison-donation-minnesota>.

Hunting Zones/Areas:

The hunt will be broken down into the following areas with the listed number of hunters allowed per area accordingly:

Todd Park: 2 hunters (+1 ADA hunter) = 3 hunters
Nature Center: North Zone: 10 hunters South Zone: 8 hunters (+ 1 ADA hunter in ADA Area) = 9 hunters
Bustad Park (designated public land along Turtle Creek): 2 hunters
Cresthaven Addition (designated public green space along Turtle Creek): 1 hunter
Area South of Wastewater Treatment Plant: 2 hunters
Area North of Street Shop: (40+ acres) 2 hunters
Whittier Park: 1 hunter
Wildwood Park: 1 hunter
Turtle Creek South: 1 hunter

Other General Information:

Additional Information from the DNR

- Deer Tags – these are just normal deer licenses. Hunters MUST have a regular archery deer license, purchased at any license agent, by phone, or online (there are 4 license agents listed for Austin: Ankeny's Mini Mart, Runnings, Walmart, and Ace Hardware). To harvest additional deer they will need Bonus Permit(s). The regular license can be used to tag either a deer with legal antlers or an antlerless deer. Bonus permits are valid for antlerless deer only. The license, permits, and tags are valid anywhere in the state where they can be used (i.e., they are not specific to the City's special hunt).
- Minnesota adult resident deer licenses are \$34. Bonus permits are \$18.
- Special hunt number is **973**. Deer taken in Austin hunt MUST be registered as having been harvested in **973**. When hunters purchase the license or bonus tag(s) they will be asked to name a permit area where they are likely to hunt. They should use the number of the regular permit area where they normally hunt (i.e., **255** for western Mower County). The system isn't always set up to take all the special hunt numbers.
- Hunters can take 3 antlerless deer with special permits.
 - Only the regular license is valid for tagging a buck, but they can use a combination of the regular license antlerless tag, and 3 bonus antlerless tags for tagging up to 4 antlerless deer and a buck. A hunter may also use their statewide tags elsewhere and purchase 3 bonus antlerless tags for deer harvested in this hunt. Bonus tags that are unused in the special hunt can also be used outside of this special hunt area in another special hunt area.

Contact Information:

- **Deer Reporting Phone Number: (507) 396-5025 (may leave message after hours).**
- Nature Center contact: Luke Reese (507) 437-7519.
- City of Austin: Parks and Rec Department (507) 433-1881 to reach Trish Branden, Jason Sehon or Riley Donovan.
- City Hunt Associates: Justin Johnston (320) 287-1057 for questions during hunt.

Please complete and return this page, along with your \$25 application fee, to Austin Park and Rec, 500 4th Avenue NE, Austin, MN 55912 by September 12, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. Thank you.

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Driver's License #: _____ **Vehicle Plate #:** _____

MNDNR #: _____

Please rank, on a scale of 1-10, your preferred hunting areas. If there are areas you are unwilling to hunt, please leave them blank. The names and 'hunt area' drawing will be Monday, 9/15 @ 3:00 p.m., at City Hall with Hunt Committee members and Park and Rec clerical staff present. Hunters may attend, but this is not a requirement. Notification of hunt locations will be communicated shortly after the drawing.

Tag distribution will begin on Monday, 9/22 beginning at 8:00 a.m. at City Hall for those whose names are drawn.

Todd Park _____ Nature Center North _____ Nature Center South _____ Bustad _____
Cresthaven _____ South of WWTP _____ Whittier Park _____ North of Street Shop _____
Wildwood Park _____ Turtle Creek South _____

I have a documented disability and would like to be considered for an ADA location as follows:

Todd Park ADA _____ **Nature Center ADA** _____

I have read the rules and agree to abide by them. I understand that I am not guaranteed to receive a permit, and that the application fee is non-refundable. I declare under penalty of perjury that the above information is correct and true.

Application fee: \$25 _____ (cash, check, or cc) Date Paid: _____

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____