

Learn to Fish License Waiver Information

What it is:

A **one-time** waiver of the fishing license requirement so that people ages 16 and older can participate a fishing outing. The outing must be tied to an **educational fishing program** such as the Department of Natural Resources' *Fishing for Dinner* or *Angler Education* programs, a school-based program of your own design, or a group event that covers a range of topics including skills, fishing regulations, outdoor ethics, fish biology, aquatic ecology, and habitat investigation.

What it is not:

A waiver for schools, organizations and businesses to take groups fishing for free, just for fun. Fishing is indeed fun; that's why so many people do it. It's also a privilege and in order to maintain the fishery, we need to sell fishing licenses that allow people the right to exercise that privilege. You want to have fun? Go buy a fishing license! ☺

Requirements:

- ☛ Complete **the Mentor Background Check Authorization for Educational Outdoor Skills Activities, [DNR Form 4100-217](#)**, 15 days* prior to your event. Your assistants may need to do this too, unless your school or organization has already conducted one for them.
- ☛ Get commitments from qualified mentors, i.e. people with no criminal record or conservation violations with in the past five years, in advance.
- ☛ The **[waiver application](#)** includes a written course outline and, if applicable, landowner or property manager approval. Also attach a **[mentor roster](#) and [participant roster](#)**. All forms must be submitted to the **[Angler R3 Office](#)** 15 days* prior to the fishing outing.
- ☛ Participants must be novices, i.e. people who have less than two years of fishing experience.
- ☛ Participants must have a DNR Customer Identification Number. To obtain one, direct your students to call 1-888-936-7463 or go to **[Go Wild](#)**. **Make this a homework assignment. (Use the [Go Wild worksheet](#) to aid your group.)**
- ☛ Mentors, the adults instructing or teaching the activity, must have fishing licenses.
- ☛ Participants must be engaged in a minimum of **four hours** of classroom and field instruction prior to the fishing activity. This is in addition to the fishing outing.
- ☛ All participants, mentors and volunteers must comply with fishing regulations.
- ☛ A volunteer or chaperone without a current fishing license AND with less than two years fishing experience may assist but must have a DNR Customer Identification Number and be listed on the participant roster if they fish.
- ☛ Volunteers and chaperones with current fishing licenses, who are not listed on mentor roster, but cleared by the sponsoring organization should be listed on the participant roster.
- ☛ The lead mentor must have the approved application and participant roster in hand the day of the fishing outing.

The term “mentor” is used broadly to include instructors or teachers leading the outing and any adults helping with it.

***NR 19.025(3)**

(a) An applicant shall submit a request for a waiver at least 30 days prior to a hunting or trapping event and 15 days before a fishing event. The department may waive the 15-day period for fishing events when the department determines it is not required to conduct criminal history, character or background checks. All applications shall be submitted on forms provided by the department.

Steps in Applying for a Fishing License Waiver – *the fine print.*

You will need to complete two to four forms 15 days* prior to your fishing outing.

1. Complete the [Mentor Background Check Authorization for Educational Outdoor Skills Activities, DNR Form 4100-217](#), 15 days* prior to your event. The background check is submitted to the Bureau of Law Enforcement at the DNR. If have had a background check with the DNR within five years, you do not need to do it again with every waiver application.
2. Complete the [Application and Authorization to Conduct an Educational Outdoor Skills Activity – Fishing, DNR Form 3600-226](#), 15 days prior to your event.

Submit this form to the [Angler R3 Office](#) for a review of educational merits. It is then reviewed by the local fisheries biologist for the county where your outing will occur. Your course outline should accompany this application. **A copy of your application will be returned to you after it is either approved or denied. You need to have the approved application in hand during your outing with your group, along with the mentor and participant rosters.**

Note the section on this form for **landowner or property manager approval**, if you are launching from or coming ashore onto private land. If using public lands, notify the property manager as a courtesy. He or she may be able to help you with your outing with advance notice.

3. Complete the [Authorized Mentors for Outdoor Skills Activity, Form 8500-167](#), and attach it to DNR Form 3600-226 at time of application.

You may need a head start on this if your mentors have not had background checks, (completed DNR Form 4100-217 listed above, or through your organization). Get commitments from qualified mentors, i.e. people with no conservation violations within the past five years or criminal records, in advance. If your assistants are **volunteers or chaperones** that are cleared by your organization, you do not need this form.

4. Complete the [Educational Outdoor Skills Activity Participant Roster, DNR Form 8500-166](#) and attach it to DNR Form 3600-226 at time of application. Send updates to the roster within two weeks of the outing. Use the [Go Wild worksheet](#) to help your students help you collect the 9-digit DNR Customer ID numbers.

This list of participants includes all **volunteers and/or chaperones**, as well as your students ages 16 and over. If a volunteer or chaperone has a fishing license, ask to see it and record the DNR Customer Identification Number from their license on the reporting form along with the other information.

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Carefully read the application for other requirements.

Possible reasons for denial of waiver:

- Resource is stressed due to drought/flood/over-fishing. A group this size would further jeopardize the fishery. Ask biologist to suggest an alternative site.
- Weak lesson plan.
- The course focuses on advanced fishing skills or has been requested for paying customers of a for-profit organization. The rule was intended to provide learning opportunities for novices.
- Failure to submit reporting form from previous outings.
- Participants have been given a waiver before. Have students repeating the course buy a license.

Too much Trouble? There is an alternative!

If you are working with 16- and 17-year-olds,

You could have the kids buy a youth fishing license! 😊

Getting in the habit of buying a license is the best way to make life-long anglers. Too expensive? Not really. An important part of any Learn to Fish program should include how fisheries are managed, restored and maintained. It doesn't happen on its own and it's not cheap. That's why the Department of Natural Resources sells fishing licenses. Oftentimes when something is free, it's devalued. It's helpful for anglers, young and old, beginning and seasoned to understand what it takes to manage a resource. Once they do, they'll realize what a bargain they're getting.

Part of your program should include a cost comparison of what one can buy for the cost of a youth license available to 16 and 17-year-olds. One night at the movies, one latte, a small part of their monthly cell phone bill, 365 days of fishing . . . Such a deal!

Parents know how fast teens can burn through money. They're also used to having to send money to school for various field trips and enrichment programs. Let parents know from the get-go that their child will be expected to get a fishing license as part of the course. It could be a homework assignment, or you could plan a field trip to the local tackle shop or hardware store to make the purchase as a group. The shopkeeper will be delighted to have your class come for a visit and see the dazzling array of lures, jigs, spoons and fishing gadgetry.

On the other hand, purchasing a license may be tough for some families. You can tap the school's field trip scholarship fund to discretely cover the cost as a scholarship. Or, you can fill out the required forms described on the previous page for the fishing license waiver.

Basic Resident License Costs

First-timer license: \$5.00 (any age)

Youth license: \$7.00 (16- & 17-year-olds*)

Adult license: \$20.00 Adult one-day license: \$8.00 (the angler can apply the cost of this license to an annual license)

Inland Trout Stamp: \$10.00

Great Lakes Trout and Salmon Stamp: \$10.00

*The first-timer license renders the point moot for 16-year-olds.