



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, FORT DEVENS  
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IMDE-PWE

26 September 2018

UNITED STATES ARMY FORT DEVENS  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
HUNTING PROGRAM

**1. PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish the policies and procedures used to implement a hunting program on US Army Garrison Fort Devens Reserve Forces Training Area (“Fort Devens” or “Garrison”).

**2. REFERENCES:**

- a. 16 USC §670, as amended (Sikes Act)
- b. AR 200-1, Environmental Protection and Enhancement, 2007
- c. Fort Devens Reg. 350-3, Sustainable Range Program, 2017
- d. MGL Chapter 140 §129C
- e. MGL Chapter 131 §36
- f. 321 CMR 3.00
- g. MGL Chapter 21 §17C
- h. AR 190-11 Physical Security of Arms, Ammunition and Explosives
- i. AR 190-13 The Army Physical Security Program

**3. APPLICABILITY:** This SOP applies to all Garrison Directorates, staff, and contractors as well as to all persons that hunt, or desire to hunt, on Fort Devens property. This SOP shall remain in effect until formally revised or withdrawn notwithstanding any change to the Garrison’s formal name (e.g., Fort Devens vs. Devens Reserve Forces Training Area) or organization (e.g., Army vs. Army Reserve).

**4. OBJECTIVE:** In accordance with the Sikes Act (16 USC §670), the Garrison is committed to allowing sustainable multipurpose use of natural resources on South Post via authorized public access. The objectives of the Fort Devens Hunting Program (“Program”) are to (1) maintain wildlife populations that are compatible with existing habitat, (2) minimize conflicts between wildlife and training activities, (3) reduce public health and safety hazards, and (4) provide a recreational opportunity to authorized persons (*see ACCESS*).

**4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Implementation of the Program requires a coordinated effort between various stakeholders. The inability or unwillingness of any stakeholder group to perform the specified duties may result in suspension or cancellation of the Program.

**a. Garrison Command Group**

The Garrison Command Group (“Command”) will establish the overall vision and priorities for the Program. Specific duties include:

- (1). Coordinate with the Directorate of Resource Management (DRM) to identify and allocate available resources to support the Program (e.g., for overtime pay).
- (2). Notify Garrison Directorates of any changes in vision/priorities and instruct staff accordingly.
- (3). Conduct outreach, host special events, and provide partnership opportunities.

**b. Directorate of Public Works (DPW) / Environmental Division**

The Environmental Division (“Environmental”) will coordinate, implement, and oversee the Program with the primary responsibility for ensuring that it's environmentally sound, complies with this SOP, and achieves the current vision/priorities of the Command. Specific duties include:

- (1). Answer questions from the community about the Program (e.g., how to register, anticipated dates, who is authorized to participate, etc.).
- (2). Coordinate with the website manager to ensure that the Garrison website contains current Program information and resources including a registration application.
- (3). Establish and maintain a current and accurate record of prospective hunters.
- (4). Receive vetted registration applications from DOD Police and update record accordingly.
- (5). Consult with the appropriate state and federal authorities to determine cull targets for each species and season. Use cull targets and historical success rates to estimate the appropriate number/type of hunts for each season.
- (6). Coordinate with the Range Operations and Range Support Branches (“Range Control”) to finalize the hunting schedule and details for each date (e.g., training areas and number of hunters), and communicate this information to all registered hunters via a Letter of Instruction (LOI) prior to the start of each season.
- (7). Organize and implement a process for authorizing participants to hunt on certain days in coordination with Range Control (*see ACCESS*).
- (8). Support Range Control on the day of each scheduled hunt if requested.
- (9). Track and archive cull data from each hunting season.

**c. Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security (DPTMS)/Range Control**

Range Control will support program implementation and oversight with the primary responsibility for ensuring that the Program does not conflict with training. Specific duties include:

- (1). Answer questions from the community about the Program (e.g., how to register, anticipated dates, who is authorized to participate, etc.)
- (2). Identify actual available hunting dates (apart from the special hunts<sup>1</sup> established by the state) and transmit to Environmental.
- (3). Support Environmental with the sign-up process if requested (*see ACCESS*).
- (4). On the day of each scheduled hunt (including the special hunts):
  - a) Re-evaluate and confirm availability of training areas for Program use.
  - b) Check-in the authorized hunters, provide maps showing assigned areas, and deliver a safety brief.

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<sup>1</sup>Special hunts include the Paraplegic Deer Hunt and those organized by the Becoming an Outdoorswoman Program.

- c) Receive and respond to calls from hunters.
- d) Enforce the rules of the Program. Report bag limit offenses to Environmental; report all other violations to DOD Police and/or the Command, as applicable.
- e) Coordinate with DOD Police, MA Environmental Police, and State Police for law enforcement support and emergency services, as needed.
- f) Check hunters out. Tally and record cull data.

(5). Share cumulative cull data with Environmental at the end of each season.

**d. DPTMS/DOD Police**

DOD Police will support Program implementation and oversight with the primary responsibility for ensuring public safety. Specific duties include:

- (1). Receive registration applications from prospective hunters. Verify the person's identity and the completeness of the form. Investigate the reported data to establish the person's ability to participate in the Program (i.e., valid MA hunting license, LTC, and FID card). For non-military ID bearing civilians, run the required background check, and, if appropriate, grant an access pass permitting unescorted entry to the Garrison property for the purpose of participating in the Program.
- (2). Inspect hunters' weapons (firearms and bows) and verify the make, model, caliber, and serial number, as applicable, reported on the registration application. Investigate the compliance of each weapon with Massachusetts hunting and gun laws/regulations, as well as any applicable federal laws, regulations, or policies to determine whether the specific weapon is authorized for participation in the Program (i.e., can be brought onto the Garrison and used for a given type of hunt/season).
- (3). Consult with other law enforcement entities and/or state and federal authorities during the vetting process, as needed.
- (4). Transmit vetted applications back to Environmental clearly indicating whether the person and his/her weapon(s) are eligible to participate in the Program.
- (5). Assign at least one officer to hunter check-in and check-out, and respond to disturbances, as needed. At check-in, verify:
  - a) each hunter's identity relative to the list of authorized hunters for a given day,
  - b) that each hunter has only one DOD Police-verified weapon (firearm or bow), and
  - c) that each non-military ID bearing civilian hunter has a current access pass permitting unescorted entry.
- (6). Respond to calls for law enforcement support and/or emergency services during scheduled hunts. Address violations as they occur, and coordinate with MA Environmental Police or State Police as needed.

**e. Hunters and Prospective Hunters**

Hunters and Prospective Hunters ("hunters" or "participants") must acknowledge and appreciate that participation in the Program is a privilege, not a right, and always act accordingly. Specific duties include:

- (1). Do not access, or attempt to access, Fort Devens property without proper authorization.
- (2). Obtain and maintain all permits, licenses, stamps, etc. required by MA hunting and gun laws/regulations.

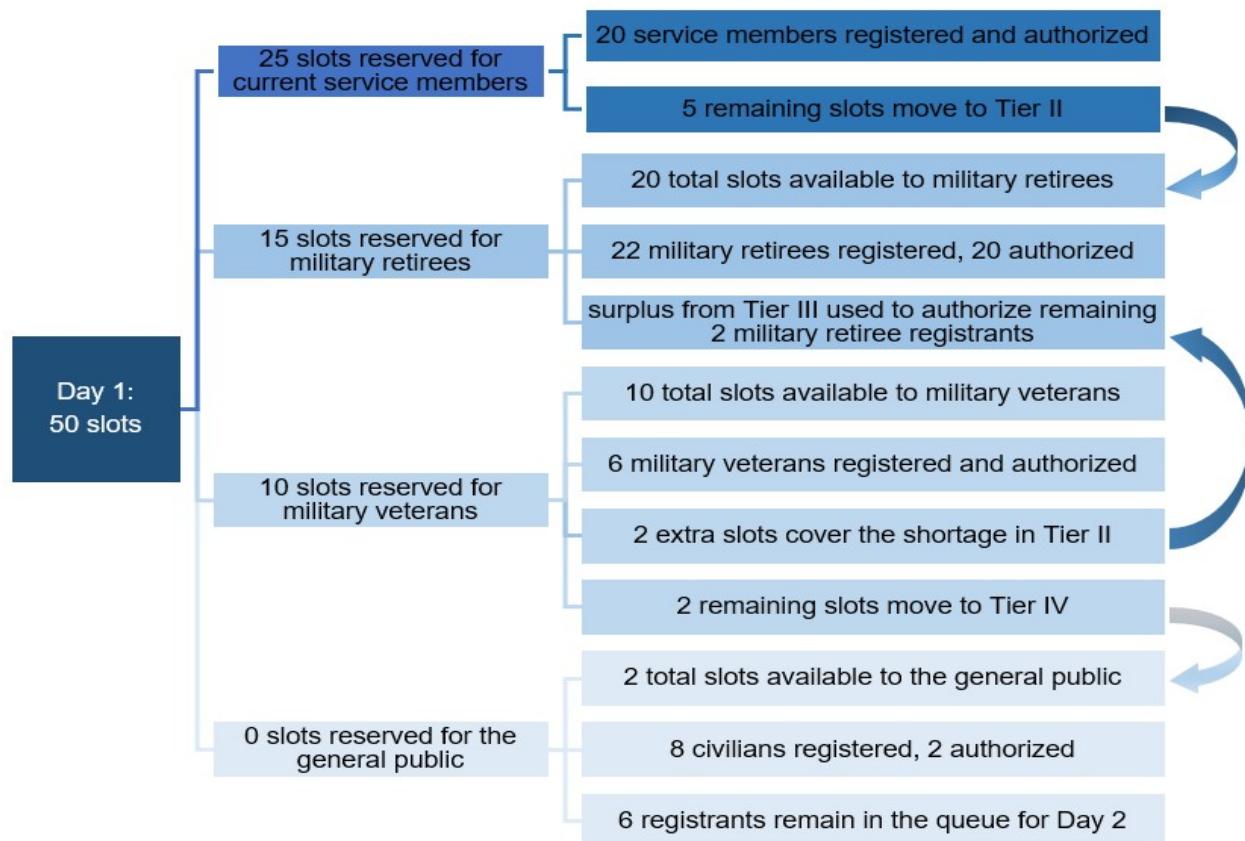
- (3). Submit a complete and accurate registration application in person to the DOD Police (47 Quebec Street, Devens, MA) by the date specified in the LOI for the season in which the participant desires to hunt. Bring a government-issued photo ID, MA hunting license, all applicable documentation of firearm ownership (LTC, FID card, etc.), and, if applicable, a military ID. All weapons (firearms and bows) that will be used to hunt on the Garrison must also be present at the time of registration for serial number verification.
- (4). Comply with the Garrison's process for authorizing participants to hunt on the available days (*see ACCESS*). Do not attempt to hunt on the Garrison without proper authorization.
- (5). If a non-military ID bearing civilian: acquire an access pass permitting unescorted entry at least 48 hours prior to your authorized hunt(s).
- (6). Check in with Range Control before each authorized hunt at the start time stated in the LOI to receive a safety briefing and Training Area assignment. Comply with all requests from DOD-Police to verify your identity and weapon.
- (7). Bring only one DOD Police-verified weapon (firearm or bow) onto the Garrison, hunt only within the assigned Training Area, and park only in designated spots.
- (8). Demonstrate courtesy and respect to all Garrison staff, the Command, law enforcement, and fellow hunters while participating in the Program.
- (9). Know, understand, and adhere to all local, state, and federal hunting and gun laws/regulations while participating in the Program.
- (10). Follow all Program-specific rules described in this SOP.
- (11). Check out with Range Control after each hunt no later than the end time stated in the LOI. Report harvested game to Range Control and the state.

**5. RESTRICTIONS:** Program participation is limited to adults 18 years and older. Authorized participants may bring one accompanying minor child aged 12 to 17, but they will observe a single bag limit and share a single firearm/bow. The accompanying minor child must be identified on the registration application. Children under age 12 are not permitted to accompany an authorized hunter.

**6. ACCESS:** Specific registration instructions will be included in each LOI, which will be posted on the Garrison website and distributed directly to prospective program participants via mail or email as appropriate. Registration for a hunting season is an expression of interest and does not guarantee access to the Garrison. The Garrison Commander and his/her authorized representatives reserve the right to refuse entry to any person at any time and for any reason.

- a. Authorization to hunt on Fort Devens property will be allocated each season by Environmental in accordance with the tiered priority system described below and illustrated in Figure 1. At least seven calendar days prior to the first general hunt, Environmental will notify participants of their authorized day(s) for the given season.
  - (1). **Tier I:** At least 50% of all slots in any given hunt will first be made available to current service members on active or reserve duty on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - (2). **Tier II:** At least 30% of all slots in any given hunt will first be made available to military retirees on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - (3). **Tier III:** At least 20% of all slots in any given hunt will first be made available to military veterans on a first-come, first-served basis.

(4). **Tier IV:** Any slots not requested by current service members, military retirees, or veterans at least two weeks prior to the start of the general hunt will be made available to the general public on a first-come, first-served basis.



**Figure 1:** Example application of the tiered priority system for authorizing participation in the Program.

**7. PENALTIES:** Failure to abide by all state and federal laws/regulations, Garrison policies (including this SOP and the LOI), or instructions from any staff person may result in suspension or loss of hunting privileges on Fort Devens and/or penalties levied by the state. This includes bag limits, requirements for reporting harvested game, mandated attire and safety gear, and restrictions on the type/caliber of firearms.

**8. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:** For questions or comments about this policy, contact the Environmental Division Chief, Directorate of Public Works at 978-796-2565.

  
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 LTC, CA  
 Commanding