

97B.031 USE AND POSSESSION OF FIREARMS.

Subdivision 1. **Permissible firearms and ammunition; big game and wolves.** A person may take big game and wolves with a firearm only if:

- (1) any rifle, shotgun, or handgun used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and has centerfire ignition;
- (2) the firearm is loaded only with single projectile ammunition;
- (3) a projectile used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and has a soft point or is an expanding bullet type;
- (4) any muzzleloader used has the projectile loaded only at the muzzle;
- (5) any smooth-bore muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .45 inches; and
- (6) any rifled muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .40 inches.

Subd. 2. **Handguns for small game.** A person may take small game with a handgun of any caliber in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, except that wolves may only be taken by hunting with the calibers specified in subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Firearms larger than ten gauge prohibited.** A person may not use a firearm with a bore larger than a ten gauge to take a protected wild animal.

Subd. 4. MS 2014 [Repealed, 2015 c 65 art 3 s 38]

Subd. 5. MS 2016 [Repealed, 2017 c 93 art 2 s 166]

Subd. 6. **Scopes.** A person may use a muzzleloader with a scope to take deer during the muzzleloader season. The scope may have magnification capabilities.

Subd. 7. **County authority to limit firearms for deer hunting.** A county board of a county located in the shotgun zone under Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 97B.318, may adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county. Subsequent ordinances may be adopted under this subdivision only after additional notice and public hearing and are effective until repealed or modified by ordinance.

History: 1986 c 386 art 2 s 7; 1989 c 153 s 1; 1989 c 287 s 7; 2000 c 473 s 7; 2002 c 351 s 15; 2004 c 215 s 19; 2005 c 102 s 1; 2005 c 146 s 28,29; 2007 c 131 art 1 s 36; 2008 c 368 art 2 s 39; 1Sp2011 c 2 art 5 s 39; 2012 c 277 art 1 s 50,51; 2014 c 290 s 38; 1Sp2015 c 4 art 5 s 19,20; 2017 c 93 art 2 s 93; 2023 c 60 art 4 s 55; 1Sp2025 c 1 art 4 s 12