1. **First Steps.** Download the Department of Natural Resources Falconry Packet or contact the falconry coordinator at heidi.cyr@state.mn.us or 651-259-5107.
   A. Review the state and federal falconry regulations.
   B. Study recommended reading materials.
   C. Cultivate relationships with other falconers by talking to them and going out in the field with them because you will need to find a falconer who is willing to sponsor you for your apprentice falconry permit. You may also want to contact the Minnesota Falconer’s Association (MFA), [www.mnfalconry.org](http://www.mnfalconry.org), and attend MFA meets in the fall (MFA membership is not a requirement in obtaining a Minnesota Falconry Permit).

2. **Falconry Exam.** Contact the Falconry Coordinator to arrange a time and place to take the falconry exam. The falconry exam may be taken at the DNR central office in Saint Paul or at one of the field offices. You must get at least 80% of the questions right for a passing grade. You must wait at least two weeks before you may re-take the exam.

3. **Sponsorship.** Once you pass the exam, secure sponsorship with an active Minnesota Falconer. If you are having difficulty finding a sponsor, contact the MFA, and if you still cannot find a sponsor, contact the Falconry Coordinator.

4. **Falconers under 18 years old.** Falconry applicants that are under 18 years of age should review the supplemental information factsheet with their parents.

5. **Facilities and Equipment.**
   A. Tour several falconers’ facilities before beginning construction on your facilities or making/buying equipment.
   B. Review state and federal facilities regulations before beginning construction on your facilities or making/buying equipment.
   C. Review the facilities checklist and booklet before beginning construction on your facilities or making/buying equipment.
   D. Contact the falconry coordinator with any questions about federal or state facilities regulations.
   E. In coordination with your sponsor and in compliance with state and federal regulations, construct your facilities (both an outdoor weathering area and an indoor mews).
   F. In coordination with your sponsor, obtain the necessary equipment listed in federal regulations.
   G. Have your sponsor inspect your facilities prior to an official facilities/equipment inspection by a MN DNR Conservation Officer or Nongame Specialist.
   H. Contact the Falconry Coordinator to arrange a time for your official state facilities inspection.

6. **Apply for a Falconry Permit.**
   A. Expect the permitting process to take **4-6 weeks.** Please plan accordingly as we cannot expedite permits.
   B. Mail your application with appropriate certifications signed (including your sponsorship letter), your approved facilities inspection form with pictures, and passing falconry exam (unless the coordinator already has this on file) to the Falconry Coordinator.
   C. You will receive a permit by email in **2-3 weeks.**
   D. Upon receipt of your permit, sign it and mail it to the Falconry Coordinator.
   E. A state-signed permit and black falconry band will be returned to you in **2-3 weeks.**
7. Obtain Your Raptor. In coordination with your sponsor, you must:
   A. Acquire and/or make necessary falconry and trapping equipment to obtain and maintain a bird.
   B. Stock your freezer with a variety of quality hawk food.
   C. Trap a red-tailed hawk.
   D. Immediately, place the black falconry band on the raptor’s leg.
   E. Within 10 days of obtaining a raptor, complete and submit the required raptor reporting forms to
      the MN DNR and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

8. Raptor Maintenance. Your raptor must be maintained in a safe and humane manner. Your
   facilities must be maintained in accordance with state and federal regulations. You must contact the
   Falconry Coordinator regarding any changes to your facilities or their location.

9. As an Apprentice Falconer.
   A. Maintain close contact with your Sponsor;
   B. Contact the falconry coordinator within 10 days if you lose or change sponsorship.
   C. Discuss general maintenance issues, training, etc. with your sponsor and other falconers.
   D. Consistent hunting with your hawk is important.
   E. Attend Mid-Winter Anemia educational seminar presented by MFA/The Raptor Center.
   F. During winter months, some species of raptor may need to be moved into the house or have their
      facilities heated and insulated. They generally need more food. Contact your sponsor to ensure
      proper maintenance of your raptor during winter weather.
   G. Continue attending MFA meetings, various Apprentice training programs, and other falconry
      events to develop knowledge, contacts, and further your falconry education.
   H. Consider attending The Raptor Center’s Basic Raptor Rehabilitation Workshop (registration is
      through the University of Minnesota).

10. Falconry Permit Renewals.
    A. Prior to renewal, your facilities must be inspected. Contact the Falconry Coordinator or your local
        Conservation Officer to conduct the inspection.
    B. Renewal applications must be submitted 30 days prior to permit expiration.

11. Upgrading to an Apprentice Permit.
    A. Upgrade is automatic upon your 16th birthday.

12. Upgrading to a General Falconry Permit.
    A. Upgrades are not automatic.
    B. You must have been a junior apprentice or apprentice falconer (or a combination of the two) for at
       least 24 months.
    C. You must have two (2) seasons of experience to be considered for upgrade. No exceptions.
       i. A “season of experience” is defined as the experience gained by a falconer who has one or
          more raptors in the falconer's possession for a minimum of six calendar months within a
          season.
       ii. A "season" in falconry is from May 1 to April 30 of the next year.
       iii. Half months are counted from the first day of the month to the 15th day of the month or
            from the 16th day of the month to the last day of the month.
       iv. Periods less than half months are not included in the total.
    D. At least 4 of the 6 months in each season must be during the hunting season between September 1
       to February 28/29.
    E. Written sponsor recommendation is required.
    F. Once you have 2 seasons of experience and your sponsor’s recommendation letter (emails are
       sufficient), you may apply to the Falconry Coordinator for a permit upgrade.