State and Federal falconry regulations only loosely outline the duties and responsibilities of the Sponsor and the Apprentice. Therefore, the following guidelines have been prepared by the Minnesota DNR in coordination with the Minnesota Falconer’s Association (MFA)’s sponsorship guidelines.

**Federal and State regulations for Sponsors and Apprentices:**

1. A Sponsor must hold a valid Master Falconry permit or a valid General Falconry permit with two seasons of experience or 24 total months of experience with the Sponsor's own raptors at the General level.

2. A Sponsor must not have more than three apprentices at any one time.

3. To become an Apprentice Falconer, a permittee must have a letter/email from their sponsor stating that they will assist the permittee in:
   - Learning about the husbandry and training of raptors held for falconry;
   - Learning relevant wildlife laws and regulations; and
   - When the time is right, deciding what species of raptor is appropriate for you to possess.

4. An Apprentice must notify the Falconry Coordinator within ten days if there is a change in sponsorship (it is recommended that the Sponsor also notify the Falconry Coordinator as to the reason for the change in sponsorship).

5. An Apprentice must practice falconry under the Sponsor's supervision for at least two seasons of experience with the Apprentice's own raptors.

6. The Apprentice’s training must include capturing, maintaining, training, flying, hunting, and releasing raptors.

7. Junior Apprentices and Apprentice Falconers may take and possess only passage red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), except that, with approval from the Apprentice's Sponsor, an Apprentice permittee with a minimum of two seasons of experience may take and possess any raptor allowed for an Apprentice class falconer under federal regulations and under part 6238.1200, subpart 16.

8. For Apprentices under age 18 and for Junior Apprentices, their parent or legal guardian must sign the application, and must agree to take legal responsibility for the activities of the child (it is the recommendation of the DNR that the Sponsor also work in close coordination with the Apprentice’s parent or guardian).

9. Junior Apprentices must house their raptor at the legal residence of an adult, preferably a parent or legal guardian, who is in possession of a valid falconry permit or at the permitted location of the adult's raptors (it is the recommendation of the DNR that for Junior Apprentices, the parent or guardian become a falconer as well). If the adult falconry permittee is an Apprentice, only one raptor is allowed under either the Junior Apprentice falconry permit or the adult's permit unless the additional raptor is housed with the Sponsor.

10. To advance to General Falconer, a permittee must have a letter/email from their Sponsor stating that the permittee has practiced falconry with raptor(s) as an Apprentice Falconer to obtain at least 2 seasons of experience, including maintaining, training, flying, and hunting the raptor(s) for at least 6 months in each year. That practice may have included the capture and release of the falconry raptors.
The Minnesota Falconry Association recommendations:

**The Sponsor:**

1. The Sponsor shall be available to the potential Apprentice Falconer after they have passed the falconry exam, but before the construction of the facilities.

2. The Sponsor shall be available for a *minimum of two years* to their Apprentices.

3. The Sponsor is not responsible for any expense involved in such things as telephone bills or travel. However, regular meetings between the Apprentice and Sponsor are recommended by the Minnesota DNR (a minimum of 20 hours of field instruction annually); therefore, sponsoring Apprentices that require long commutes is discouraged.

4. The Sponsor should promote the open exchange of ideas and assist in development of the Apprentice’s falconry skills. A lack of adequate communication by the Apprentice should be followed up on by the Sponsor.

5. The Sponsor’s responsibility is to try to provide answers to questions, help solve problems and assist in developing falconry skills and skills relating to the care and maintenance of raptors (seasonal advice should be included in the consultations).

6. The Sponsor is expected to provide information regarding various aspects of falconry, including building of facilities and making equipment. In addition, the Sponsor should inspect the facilities and equipment before the inspection by the Minnesota DNR.

7. The Sponsor is not responsible for acts by the Apprentice that are unlawful or constitute mismanagement, and such acts shall not reflect upon the abilities or reputation of the Sponsor. However, if the Sponsor becomes aware of situations relating to the Apprentice which may adversely affect the health and welfare of the bird, the sport of falconry, or MFA, they must act accordingly by contacting the MFA and Falconry Coordinator.

8. The Sponsor may recommend revocation of the permit, for good cause only. The Sponsor should report to the MFA’s Officers on the progress of the Apprentice. The Sponsor should also inform the Falconry Coordinator of pertinent issues relating to the Apprentice’s permit.
The Apprentice:

1. The MFA recommends all Apprentices read:
   - *North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks* by Frank Beebe and Harold Webster is considered the handbook on falconry, with many exam questions based on this book.
   - *Falconry: Art and Practice* by Emma Ford.
   - *Falconry and Hawking* by Phillip Glasier.
   - *The Falconer’s Apprentice* by William Oakes.
   - *Falconry…Facilities and Equipment Guide* by the Minnesota Falconers Association (may be out of print).
   - Any other materials recommended by the Sponsor.

3. The Apprentice must maintain their facilities, equipment, and hawk in good condition and to abide by all Federal/State regulations, the MFA By-Laws, and MFA Code of Ethics.

5. It is the Apprentice’s responsibility to keep in close contact with their Sponsor over the phone and in person. They should ask questions and request clarification on any issues that they do not understand or feel they need assistance.

6. The Apprentice has the right to appeal to the MFA Officers for a change of Sponsor if a personality or other major conflict arises. The Committee shall review and make appropriate recommendations. The Apprentice should also call the Falconry Coordinator to assist in the change of sponsorship.

Membership in the North American Falconers Association (NAFA) and MFA are recommended, but not required. Membership helps falconers obtain the most up-to-date information on falconry and to improve, aid, and encourage competency in the art of falconry.