

*Always ask first to
hunt on private land*



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HUNTING PRIVATE LAND:

It's a Privilege



"It is a luxury to be understood."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Hunters and landowners do not always understand each other. The hunter wonders why so much land is posted. The landowner, meanwhile, can't understand why the hunter doesn't understand.

As hunters, it is in our best interest to understand the landowner's situation and point of view. Doing so will lead to better relationships between hunters and landowners and more willingness by landowners to allow hunting on their property.

Hunters can build a more positive relationship with a landowner by:

- Understanding that rural life has changed dramatically in recent years.
- Putting yourself in the landowner's boots.
- Following safe guidelines before, during and after the hunt
- Being respectful and courteous, even if denied access to hunt.

Times Have Changed

It's a different world today than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Baseball is played indoors, farmers spend as much time in front of a computer as on a tractor seat, and there used to be more private land open to hunting.

But one thing remains the same: Access to private land is controlled by the landowner.

Perspectives Differ

When thoughts turn to hunting seasons, the hunter and the landowner may have distinctly different reactions.

The hunter might look forward to the age-old thrills and values associated with hunting - the splendor of a sunrise on a slough, the exhilaration of an approaching buck or tom turkey, or the expression of awe on a youngster's face as a rooster pheasant busts skyward.

Landowners might contemplate gunshots near their home, tire tracks in the fields, and trespassers. Landowners, in fact, might dread the approaching hunting season.



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Before the Hunt

The search for permission to hunt private lands should begin well before the hunting season.



- Mark attractive hunting areas on a county or topographic map, and then find out who owns the property.
- Phone or visit the landowner well ahead of time to introduce yourself and explain why you are calling.
- Keep in mind that in most cases you will be visiting the landowner's place of business. Be polite and friendly, sincere and brief.
- Offer to help with odd jobs, or do favors in exchange for the privilege of hunting.
- If your request is denied, be understanding and remain polite. Your reaction could have an important bearing on future interactions with the landowner, as well as his friends and neighbors.

During the Hunt

Landowners who permit you to hunt on their land are doing you a favor and placing their trust in you. To prove their trust was not misplaced:

- Respect the landowner's property as you would your own. Don't litter. Carry away litter left by others.
- Understand clearly where you can and cannot drive or park your vehicle and abide by those restrictions.
- Find out if there are certain times or places that you should avoid. Always attempt to let the landowner know where you will be and when.
- Know the property boundaries of the land you have permission to hunt and stay within those boundaries.
- Leave your name, address, phone number and also make, model and license number of your vehicle with the landowner. Some hunters have found it is well worth their while to have such cards printed up before the season.
- Always let the landowner know if anyone else will be hunting with you.
- Think before you shoot. Know your target and what is beyond it.
- Don't walk through unharvested crops without permission or hunt near livestock or buildings.
- Leave gates as you find them. Cross fences in a manner that will not break or loosen wires or posts.
- Keep your dog under control, especially when near domestic animals or livestock.
- Do not build or start fires at any time, unless you have specific permission from the owner.
- Do not cut, injure or permanently mark trees with an axe, nails or spikes.
- Always OBEY THE LAW & HUNT SAFE.

After the Hunt

Remember that you have been a guest on another person's property. Express your appreciation for the opportunity to hunt the land.

- Let landowners know when you have completed your hunt. The landowner may want to let others hunt on their land.
- Offer to share any game (cleaned) with the landowner.
- Follow up with a token of appreciation such as a gift certificate to a restaurant or perhaps a card with a hand-written note. (Alcohol is not considered a proper gift.)



No Excuse for Trespassing

ALWAYS ask for permission before entering private land. You need permission to hunt on agricultural land even if it is not posted. Trespassing is a misdemeanor. If convicted you could lose your license to hunt. All conservation officers and peace officers enforce trespass laws.

Remember, your actions reflect on all hunters.

Hunters Enter at Own Risk . .

A landowner who allows persons onto his or her land free of charge for recreational purposes (including hunting), as defined by Minnesota Statutes chapter 604A, is generally not responsible for or liable to such persons for injuries or damages they might sustain while on the land. For complete details, please refer to Minn. Stat. Ch. 604A.20–604A.27.

