

New Law in 2022: Civil Trespass with Hunting Dog



Effective August 8, 2022

Continuing Maine's Outdoor Traditions

Public access to private land is a longstanding tradition in Maine. More than 94% of land is privately owned, and more than half of that is open to the public for outdoor recreation. This access is an incredible gift.

Hunting with dogs is part of Maine's hunting heritage and a method used by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) to maintain healthy wildlife populations.

To help alleviate conflicts between private landowners and hunters pursuing bear, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, and fox with hunting dogs, a group of landowners and hunters formed a stakeholder group led by MDIFW. The group identified solutions to meet the needs of both hunters and private landowners, resulting in the Civil Trespass with Hunting Dog law outlined below.

Civil Trespass with Hunting Dogs

The new Civil Trespass with Hunting Dogs law, effective August 8, 2022, applies to **anyone** who is using a dog to:

1. Hunt for bear, coyote, fox, bobcat, or raccoon; **or**
2. Train for bear, fox, and raccoon

It does not apply to anyone who is using a dog to hunt snowshoe hare, waterfowl, ruffed grouse, woodcock, wild turkey, and other species of waterfowl or migratory birds.

Permit Requirement: Persons 16 years of age or older engaged in hunting bear, coyote, fox, bobcat, or raccoon OR who are training to hunt bear, fox, or raccoon are required to have a Dog Training and Hunting Permit. Permits are available for purchase for \$12 (plus agent fee) online at mefishwildlife.com or at a local license agent. Proceeds from this permit go to the Landowner Relations Fund.

- Exception: A person who is training or hunting with a dog under the supervision of and in the presence of a registered Maine hunting guide who has a valid Dog Training and Hunting Permit is exempt from possessing the Dog Training and Hunting Permit.

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Collar Requirements: Any dog engaged in hunting bear, coyote, fox, bobcat or raccoon or training to hunt bear, fox and raccoon are required to have a functioning tracking collar which allows the handler to track the dog's location at all times. The collar must have the name, phone number, and address of the dog owner.

A person is in violation of civil trespass with a hunting dog if:

- They turn a hunting dog loose onto posted property.
- They turn a hunting dog loose onto property where the landowner has communicated to the dog handler that they do not want hunting dogs on their property.
- A hunting dog enters property upon which a hunting dog has been previously found and a law enforcement officer has warned any handler of the hunting dog (within the past 365 days) that hunting dogs are not permitted on the property.

If a person is convicted or adjudicated of civil trespass with a hunting dog in violation of section 10657-A, that person is ineligible to obtain a dog training and hunting permit for at least one year.

These laws will be added to the 2022-2023 Hunting Law Book Summary by July 15, 2022.