

# Apprentice Hunter Validation Survey Results

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## INTRODUCTION

The Apprentice Hunter Validation (AHV) survey was conducted to better understand the characteristics, motivations, and opinions of AHV purchasers. The first year of the AHV program was 2007, and the survey offered an opportunity of see how the new program was functioning.

AHV holders are permitted to hunt for a year without first having completed Firearms Safety Training. They are required to hunt with an adult mentor, who must be within an unaided sight and hearing distance. In addition, they will be required to complete Firearms Safety Training if they choose to continue to hunt in Minnesota.

In 2007, 2,856 individuals aged 11 to 27 purchased an AHV (see table). All Minnesota hunters born after December 31, 1979 (up to 27 years old for this study) are required to complete Firearms Safety Training. Many of the purchasers are youngsters, but a sizable portion are young adults in their 20's. Most purchasers are male; however, nearly 30 percent (28%) were female, well above the 10 percent of MN resident hunters who are female. A large share of purchasers (42%) was from the Twin Cities seven-county metro area, a share that exceeds the 28 percent of MN resident hunters from the metro area.

Most AHV purchasers (77%) come from families containing at least one hunter (based on survey results).

### Characteristics of Apprentice Hunter Validation (AHV) purchasers (2007 AHV purchasers aged 11 to 27)

	Population of AHV purchasers
<b>Number of AHV purchasers</b>	2,856
<b>Age class of AHV purchasers (percent)</b>	
11 to 15	30%
16 to 21	30%
22 to 27	40%
Total percent	100%
<b>Gender of AHV purchasers (percent)</b>	
Male	72%
Female	28%
Unknown	0%
Total percent	100%
<b>Origin region of AHV purchasers (percent)</b>	
Northwest	12%
Northeast	10%
South	22%
Central, non-Metro	14%
Metro 7-county	42%
Total percent	100%



## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A sample of 1000 AHV purchasers was taken from the population of purchasers. The sample was a good representation of the overall population along all the relevant demographic and hunting-license-type dimensions.

In late winter 2008, a survey was mailed to the sample, followed by a second mailing to non-respondents some four weeks later (survey instrument is in Appendix A). The overall return rate was 50 percent, which is acceptable for this type of work, although the initial target was 60 percent (see table). The return rate was highest for the youngest age class, females, and non-metropolitan regions of the state.

Survey return rates	
	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Overall</b>	50%
<b><u>Age class</u></b>	
11 to 15	61%
16 thru 20	43%
21 thru 27	46%
<b><u>Gender</u></b>	
Female	61%
Male	46%
<b><u>Region of MN</u></b>	
NW region	48%
NE region	47%
South region	55%
Central region (no metro)	60%
Metro region (7 county area)	45%

## SURVEY RESULTS

### Hunting-related experience

Nearly all of the AHV purchasers (99%) indicated that they went hunting. Some 8 percent of the purchasers appeared to have hunted without a required license, according to licensing records, apparently mistaking the \$3.50 AHV for an actual license. About half of these were 16 or older—all of whom are required to have a license—and the other half were under 16 and hunted deer, which requires a license.

Half of all AHV purchasers indicated they would not have hunted without the AHV program, and another quarter were not sure if they would have hunted (see table). Thus, somewhere between half and three-quarters of AHV purchasers went hunting as result of the program.

The large majority of AHV holders (91%) plan to continue hunting in Minnesota. To do so they will have to complete Firearms Safety Training. At the time of the survey (March 2008), few (9%) had enrolled in the training program, although near three-fourths (73%) planned on enrolling before their AHV expires.

Would you have hunted if the Apprentice Hunter Validation program did not exist?	
<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	24%
No	50%
Do not know/not sure	<u>26%</u>
Total percent	100%

The most common species hunted was deer, followed by upland game birds, and waterfowl (see table). Many AHV purchasers can hunt preferred species near home: 40 percent can hunt such species within 10 miles of home, 59 percent with 25 miles (about a half-hour drive), and 74 percent within 50 miles (about an hour drive).

What species did you hunt for? (could hunt more than one species)	
<u>Species hunted</u>	<u>Percent of hunters</u>
Deer	76%
Upland game birds (e.g., pheasant, grouse)	34%
Waterfowl	16%
Turkey	0.4%
Other	5%

The adult hunting mentor was most commonly the father (44% of cases), followed by friends (29%). Husbands, uncles, father in laws, and grandfathers were each between 4 percent and 6 percent.

The most common reason (or motivation) for hunting was social affiliation (‘I wanted to spend time with family-friends’) (see table). This is followed by connection with the outdoors, and being invited to hunt by family members and friends. The primary reason to vary greatly by age class, although older AHV purchasers are more likely to have been invited to hunt, and to want to get some meat to eat.

Why did you want to hunt?				
<u>Reason</u>	----- Age class of respondent -----			<u>Total</u>
	<u>11 to 15</u>	<u>16 thru 20</u>	<u>21 thru 27</u>	
I wanted to spend time with family-friends	68%	71%	72%	70%
I wanted to connect with the outdoors	57%	51%	57%	55%
I was invited to hunt by a family member-friend	44%	56%	66%	56%
I hunted when I was young and decided to take up hunting again	10%	10%	12%	10%
I wanted some game to eat	29%	34%	41%	35%
Other	15%	25%	17%	18%

AHV purchasers have limited awareness of hunting programs, and very few have ever participated in a program (see table). The programs with the highest awareness are Advanced Hunter Education, and Minnesota Bowhunter Education.

Awareness and participation in hunting programs		
<u>Program</u>	<u>Awareness of program (percent)</u>	<u>Participation in program (percent)</u>
Advanced Hunter Education	31%	2%
Minnesota Bowhunter Education	25%	1%
Hunting summer camp	10%	0%
Turkey Clinic	9%	0%
Bear Clinic	8%	0%
Becoming an Outdoors Woman	6%	0%

Prior to 2007, many AHV holders had hunting and firearms experience: 44 percent had experience as a hunter carrying a firearm or bow and arrow, 59 percent had been a observer in a hunting party, and 70 percent had firearms experience. The bulk of the firearms experience (88%) was with family or friends. The most common age group for all of these experiences was 8 to 12.

Purchasing an AHV

AHV purchasers heard of the program primarily from family and friends (56%). Other notable sources were Minnesota Hunting Regulation Handbook (15%), sellers of hunting licenses (12%), and the MN DNR website (9%).

AHV purchasers gave three primary reasons for taking advantage of the program: desire to hunt, but lack of time to take Firearms Safety Training (71%); the desire to experience hunting before Firearms Safety Training (52%); and the desire to hunt, but inability to get into Firearms Safety Training (44%) (see table).

Reason for purchasing an AHV (more than one reason can be indicated)	
<u>Reason</u>	<u>Percent indicating reason</u>
● I wanted to hunt but lacked time to begin Firearms Safety Training.	71%
● I wanted to experience hunting before taking Firearms Safety Training.	52%
● I wanted to hunt but could not get into a Firearms Safety Training course.	44%
● I wanted to hunt and did not know how to enroll in a Firearms Safety Training course.	16%
● I wanted to hunt but had only partly completed Firearms Safety Training.	10%
● I wanted to hunt but did not have the computer equipment to take the on-line Firearms Safety Training (for those 18 and older).	6%
● Other reason.	14%

## Firearms Safety Training

As noted above, the large majority of AHV holders (91%) plan to continue hunting in Minnesota. To do so they will have to complete Firearms Safety Training. At the time of the survey (March 2008), few (9%) had enrolled in the training program, although near three-fourths (73%) planned on enrolling before their AHV expires.

At present, Firearms Safety Training is offered in two basic formats. For those under 18, training consists of a classroom course, coupled with a final range and field day. Those 18 and older can take an on-line or home-study equivalent of the class room course, coupled with a final range and field day.

Most AHV purchasers under 18 (77%) know how to find a Firearms Safety Training classroom course in their area. The preferred timing of the classroom course for those under 18 is the summer months, followed by spring (see table).

Not everyone is aware of the on-line and home-study option (see table). Overall, 40 percent were aware. For those 18 and older, 57 percent were aware. Awareness dropped to 19 percent for those under 18.

What months are best for you to take a Firearms Safety Training classroom course?  
(more than one month can be indicated; only asked of people under 18 years old)

<u>Month</u>	<u>Percent indicating month</u>
January	25%
February	31%
March	44%
April	40%
May	33%
June	53%
July	48%
August	53%
September	23%
October	16%
November	18%
December	16%

Prior to receiving this survey, were you aware of the on-line or home-study Firearms Safety Training course for people 18 and older?

<u>Response</u>	<u>----- Age class of respondent -----</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>11 to 17</u>	<u>18+</u>	
Yes	19%	57%	40%
No	73%	39%	54%
Do not know/not sure	<u>8%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>6%</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

The kind of firearms safety course AHV purchasers prefer varies greatly by age class. Those under 18 strongly prefer the current offering (classroom course), while those 18 and over strongly prefer the on-line course.

What kind of Firearms Safety Training course do you prefer?			
<u>Response</u>	<i>----- Age class of respondent -----</i>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>11 to 17</u>	<u>18+</u>	
Classroom course, with range and field day	80%	15%	45%
On-line course taken over the internet, with range and field day	12%	73%	45%
CD-based course for a personal computer, with range and field day	5%	6%	6%
Combination of classroom, on-line, and CD-based course	2%	3%	3%
Other	<u>0%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2%</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

## APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument (four pages long)

# APPRENTICE HUNTER VALIDATION SURVEY

## SECTION ONE — This section asks questions about your hunting experience.

1. After receiving the Apprentice Hunter Validation, did you go hunting? (Check one)

Yes (please answer questions 1a to 1d)

No (please answer question 1e)

1a. IF YES, what species did you hunt for? (Check all that you hunted for)

Deer     Waterfowl     Upland game birds (e.g., pheasant, grouse)

Turkey     Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

1b. IF YES, who was the licensed hunter that served as your mentor so you could hunt with an Apprentice Hunter Validation? (Check one)

Father     Mother     Grandfather     Uncle     Friend

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

1c. IF YES, why did you want to hunt? (Check all that apply)

I wanted to spend time with family/friends

I wanted to connect with the outdoors

I was invited to hunt by a family member/friend

I hunted when I was young and decided to take up hunting again

I wanted some game to eat

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

1d. IF YES, would you have hunted if the Apprentice Hunter Validation program did not exist?

(Check one)     Yes     No     Don't know/not sure

1e. IF NO, what was the main reason you did not hunt? (Check one main reason)

Did not have the time to hunt     Did not feel comfortable going hunting

Did not have a place to hunt     Did not have the money to go hunting

Did not have a mentor

Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Prior to 2007, did you have any experience as a hunter carrying a firearm or bow and arrow?

(Check one)     Yes     No

2a. IF YES, how old were you when you had your first hunting experience? \_\_\_\_\_ Age

3. Prior to 2007, did you ever go along with a hunting party as an observer? (Check one)

Yes     No

3a. IF YES, how old were you when you had your first experience as an observer? \_\_\_\_\_ Age

4. Prior to receiving this survey, were you aware of the following hunter education programs?  
(Check one for each program)
- |                                  |                              |                             |  |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| a. Advanced Hunter Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |
| b. Minnesota Bowhunter Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |
| c. Turkey Clinic                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |
| d. Bear Clinic                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |
| e. Becoming an Outdoors Woman    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |
| f. Hunting summer camp           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not sure |

5. Did you ever participate in any of the following hunter education programs?  
(Check one for each program)
- |                                  |                              |                             |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Advanced Hunter Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| b. Minnesota Bowhunter Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| c. Turkey Clinic                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| d. Bear Clinic                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| e. Becoming an Outdoors Woman    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| f. Hunting summer camp           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**SECTION TWO — This section asks questions about your purchase of the Apprentice Hunter Validation.**

6. I purchased an Apprentice Hunter Validation because . . . (Check one for each)
- |   |                              |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| . . . I wanted to experience hunting before taking Firearms Safety Training.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . I wanted to hunt but lacked time to begin Firearms Safety Training.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . I wanted to hunt but could not get into a Firearms Safety Training course.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . I wanted to hunt and did not know how to enroll in a Firearms Safety Training course.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . I wanted to hunt but had only partly completed Firearms Safety Training.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . I wanted to hunt but did not have the computer equipment to take the on-line Firearms Safety Training (for those 18 and older). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| . . . Other (please describe) _____   |                              |                             |

7. Prior to receiving this survey, were you aware of the on-line or home-study Firearms Safety Training course for people 18 and older? (Check one)
- Yes     No     Don't know/not sure

8. From whom did you first hear about the Apprentice Hunter Validation program? (Check one)
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/friend                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota Hunting Regulation Handbook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper                     | <input type="checkbox"/> MN DNR telephone information center   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MN DNR website                | <input type="checkbox"/> Seller of hunting licenses            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) _____ |  |

**SECTION THREE — This section asks questions about your future hunting-related plans.**

9. Do plan to continue hunting in Minnesota? (Check one)  
 Yes     No     Don't know/not sure

10. Are you currently enrolled in Firearms Safety Training? (Check one)  
 Yes     No

10a. IF NO, do you plan on enrolling in Firearms Safety Training before your Apprentice Hunter Validation expires? (Check one)  
 Yes     No     Don't know/not sure

11. What kind of Firearms Safety Training course do you prefer? (Check one)  
 Classroom course, with range and field day  
 On-line course taken over the internet, with range and field day  
 CD-based course for a personal computer, with range and field day  
 Combination of classroom, on-line, and CD-based course  
 Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

 ***If you are 18 or older, please skip to question 14 on the next page.***

12. Do you know how to find a Firearms Safety Training classroom course in your area? (Check one)  
 Yes     No     Don't know/not sure

13. What months are best for you to take a Firearms Safety Training classroom course?  
(Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> January	<input type="checkbox"/> February	<input type="checkbox"/> March	<input type="checkbox"/> April
<input type="checkbox"/> May	<input type="checkbox"/> June	<input type="checkbox"/> July	<input type="checkbox"/> August
<input type="checkbox"/> September	<input type="checkbox"/> October	<input type="checkbox"/> November	<input type="checkbox"/> December

