

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2-8a

§18-2-8a. Hunter safety orientation program.

(a) The Legislature finds that:

- (1) Firearms and hunting are important parts of West Virginia's history, culture, and economy;
- (2) Unfortunately, the use of firearms while hunting or at any other time can be dangerous when the firearms are not handled in a careful and safe manner; and
- (3) Therefore, the opportunity of participating in a hunter safety orientation program should be offered to students in certain grades.

(b) The State Board of Education shall establish and implement a program of instruction of hunter safety orientation with appropriate classes and hands-on training. The hunter safety orientation program may be scheduled for the regular hours of the school day, so as to work in conjunction with the regular course schedule, or may be scheduled outside of the regular hours of instruction for the school day, if the resources and student interest allow. To the extent possible, the hunter safety orientation program shall be conducted at school facilities and scheduled so that students attending the program class may also make use of regularly provided student transportation.

(c) The State Board of Education shall, with the advice of the state Superintendent of Schools and the Director of the Division of Natural Resources, promulgate a rule in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this code for the implementation of a hunter safety orientation program for use in the public schools of this state. The rule shall, at a minimum, include the following provisions:

- (1) The hunter safety orientation program shall be offered at least once every spring semester in every middle school of the state. At the option of each county board of education, the hunter safety orientation program may also be offered during the fall semester in any middle school in the state or may be offered in any high school in the state: *Provided*, That the demand to take the hunter safety orientation program is sufficient and that certified instructors are available. If there is an insufficient number of students at a middle school requesting or registering for the class in a given semester, the school shall not be required to conduct the class that semester. The county board of education shall have the discretion to establish the minimum number of students requesting the safety orientation program class in a semester necessary to provide the class that semester.
- (2) The hunter safety orientation program is voluntary to students;
- (3) The hunter safety orientation program shall include instruction relating to:

(A) The protection of lives and property against loss or damage as a result of the improper use of firearms; and

(B) The proper use of firearms in hunting, sport competition, and the care and safety of firearms in the home;

(4) The hunter safety orientation program may use materials prepared by any national nonprofit membership organization which has as one of its purposes the training of people in marksmanship and the safe handling and use of firearms; and

(5) The hunter safety orientation program shall be conducted by an instructor employed or certified by the Division of Natural Resources or who has other training necessary to conduct the program as determined by the state board.

(d) The Division of Natural Resources shall issue a certificate of training, required by §20-2-30a of this code, to any student who completes the hunter safety orientation program.