
WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 19
ARTICLE 25

WV Legislature

§19-25-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this article is to encourage owners of land to make available to the public land and water areas for military, law-enforcement, homeland-defense training, or recreational, agricultural, or wildlife propagation purposes by limiting their liability for injury to persons entering thereon and for injury to the property of persons entering thereon and limiting their liability to persons who may be injured or otherwise damaged by the acts or omissions of persons entering thereon.

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§19-25-2. Limiting duty of landowner generally.

(a) Subject to the provisions of §19-25-4 of this code, an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes, or to give any warning of a dangerous or hazardous condition, use, structure, or activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes.

(b) Subject to the provisions of §19-25-4 of this code, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge as that term is defined in §19-25-5 of this code, any person to use such property for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes does not thereby:

(1) Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose;

(2) Confer upon such persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or

(3) Assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such persons.

(c) Subject to the provisions of §19-25-4 of this code, an owner of land who invites or permits without charge, as that term is defined in §19-25-5 of this code, any person to enter onto the owner's land for the purpose of utilizing the owner's land for any agricultural purpose does not thereby:

(1) Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose;

(2) Confer upon such persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or

(3) Assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such persons.

§19-25-3. Limiting duty of landowner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to federal, state, county or municipal government or any agency thereof.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, an owner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to the federal government or any agency thereof, or the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency thereof, for military, law-enforcement or homeland-defense training or recreational or wildlife propagation purposes owes no duty of care to keep that land safe for entry or use by others or to give warning to persons entering or going upon the land of any dangerous or hazardous conditions, uses, structures or activities thereon. An owner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to the federal government or any agency thereof, or the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency thereof, for military, law-enforcement or homeland-defense training or recreational or wildlife propagation purposes does not by giving a lease, easement or license: (a) Extend any assurance to any person using the land that the premises are safe for any purpose; or (b) confer upon those persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or (c) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of a person who enters upon the leased land. The provisions of this section apply whether the person entering upon the leased land is an invitee, licensee, trespasser or otherwise.

§19-25-4. Application of article.

Nothing herein limits in any way any liability which otherwise exists: (a) For deliberate, willful or malicious infliction of injury to persons or property; or (b) for injury suffered in any case where the owner of land charges the person or persons who enter or go on the land other than the amount, if any, paid to the owner of the land by the federal government or any agency thereof, the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency thereof.

Nothing herein creates a duty of care or ground of liability for injury to person or property.

Nothing herein limits in any way the obligation of a person entering upon or using the land of another for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes to exercise due care in his or her use of such land and in his or her activities thereon.

§19-25-5. Definitions.

Unless the context used clearly requires a different meaning, as used in this article:

“Agricultural purposes” means the raising, cultivation, drying, harvesting, marketing, production, or storage of agricultural products, including both crops and livestock, for sale or use in agriculture or agricultural production, or the storage of machinery or equipment used in support of agricultural production;

“Charge” means (A) For purposes of limiting liability for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes set forth in §19-25-2 of this code, the amount of money asked in return for an invitation to enter or go upon the land, including a one-time fee for a particular event, amusement, occurrence, adventure, incident, experience, or occasion which may not exceed \$50 a year per recreational participant: *Provided*, That the monetary cap on charges imposed pursuant to this article does not apply to the provisions of §20-14-1 *et seq.* of this code pertaining to the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority or activities sponsored on the Hatfield-McCoy regional recreational authority; (B) For purposes of limiting liability for military, law enforcement, or homeland-defense training set forth in §19-25-6 of this code, the amount of money asked in return for an invitation to enter or go upon the land;

“Land” includes, but is not limited to, roads, water, watercourses, rocks, boulders, caves, private ways, and buildings, structures, and machinery or equipment, when attached to the realty;

“Noncommercial recreational activity” does not include any activity for which there is any charge which exceeds \$50 per year per participant;

“Owner includes, but is not limited to, a tenant, lessee, occupant, or person in control of the premises;

“Recreational purposes” includes but is not limited to, any one or any combination of the following noncommercial recreational activities: Hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, rock climbing, bouldering, caving, rappelling, slacklining, pleasure driving, motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle riding, bicycling, horseback riding, spelunking, nature study, water skiing, winter sports, and visiting, viewing, or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic, or scientific sites, aircraft or ultralight operations on private airstrips or farms or otherwise using land for purposes of the user;

“Wildlife propagation purposes” applies to and includes all ponds, sediment control structures, permanent water impoundments, or any other similar structure created in connection with surface mining activities as governed by §22-3-1 *et seq.* of this code or from the use of surface in the conduct of underground coal mining as governed by that article and any rules promulgated because of the article, which ponds, structures, or impoundments are designated and certified in writing by the director of the Division of Environmental Protection and the owner to be necessary and vital to the growth and propagation of wildlife,

animals, birds, fish, or other forms of aquatic life and finds and determines that the premises have the potential of being actually used by the wildlife for those purposes and that the premises are no longer used or necessary for mining reclamation purposes. The certification shall be in form satisfactory to the director and shall provide that the designated ponds, structures, or impoundments may not be removed without the joint consent of the director and the owner; and

“Military, law enforcement, or homeland-defense training” includes, but is not limited to, training, encampments, instruction, overflight by military aircraft, parachute drops of personnel or equipment, or other use of land by a member of the Army National Guard or Air National Guard, a member of a reserve unit of the armed forces of the United States, a person on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, a state or federal law-enforcement officer, a federal agency or service employee, a West Virginia military authority employee or a civilian contractor supporting the military and/or government employees acting in that capacity.

§19-25-6. Limiting duty of landowner for use of land for military, law-enforcement or homeland-security purposes.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section four of this article to the contrary, an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for military, law-enforcement or homeland-defense training purposes, regardless of whether any charge is made therefor, or to give any warning of a dangerous or hazardous condition, use, structure or activity on the premises to persons entering for those purposes.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section four of this article to the contrary, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits, either with or without charge, any person to use the property for military, law-enforcement or homeland-defense training purposes does not thereby: (a) Extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose; (b) confer upon those persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or (c) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of those persons.

§19-25-7

Repealed.

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WV Legislature