

Research by Public Safety Committee several years ago, provided by member Ann Cary Hevener, regarding firearm discharge distances in other states.

We contacted the wildlife commissions in the following states: Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. These states were selected because their climates and geography are more like parts of North Carolina than places in the north or west.

Here is what we learned:

Alabama requires that the use of firearms be no less than 50 yards from roadways.

Arkansas requires that firearms not be discharged closer than 150 yards from a residence unless the hunter has written permission from the homeowner.

Delaware has a 100-yard restriction from a house or building and 15 yards from any road. It is also unlawful to shoot across a road in that state.

Florida law states that it is unlawful to take or attempt to take wildlife on or upon the right-of-way of any federal, state, or county maintained road whether paved or otherwise. It is against the law to discharge any firearms over a paved road, right-of-way, highway, or occupied premises.

Georgia's code section says you can't hunt from a public road (an area maintained between ditches) and the state criminal law restricts the discharge of a firearm within 50 yards of a public road. The regulations regarding distance from buildings (including dwellings) are defined by community.

Kentucky law says that no person shall discharge any firearm, bow and arrow, crossbow or similar device upon, over or across any public roadway. Hunting is prohibited in highways or interstate medians and rights-of-way. Further restrictions may apply depending upon local ordinance.

Maryland law prohibits hunting or shooting at wildlife within 150 yards of an occupied structure or camp without permission of the owner or occupant.

Oklahoma does not allow shooting across roads, highways, or railroad right-of-ways or outside a fence line. (Hunters have to be on the land where they are hunting and no where near a road.) They have to be 400 yards from a church, schoolhouse, or public gathering place. Communities restrict distances from other buildings. In Oklahoma City hunting is only allowed in agriculturally-zoned areas and cannot take place within 600 feet of residences or places of business.

South Carolina law differs by town and county but the state law where there isn't a more restrictive local law is that hunting cannot take place closer than 300 yards from another person's residence and cannot take place on another's land without permission from the landowner.

Tennessee law states that it is unlawful to hunt on public land or to shoot within sight of 100 yards of a dwelling without the owner's permission. Hunters can't shoot from the road right-of-way or from vehicles.

Texas law is established by local law by community or even by subdivision of 10 acres or more.

Virginia does not allow the discharge of firearms across or within the road-right-of-way. Hunters cannot hunt or trap on another's land without landowner permission. Further restrictions apply depending upon community.

West Virginia does not allow shooting, hunting, or trapping upon fenced or posted grounds or lands of another person with out written permission form the landowner. Hunters cannot shoot from public roads unless 25 yards from the vehicle. They cannot shoot a firearm within 400 feet of a school or church or 500 feet of a dwelling or on or near a park of other place where persons are gathered for pleasure.