

Cars and Guns

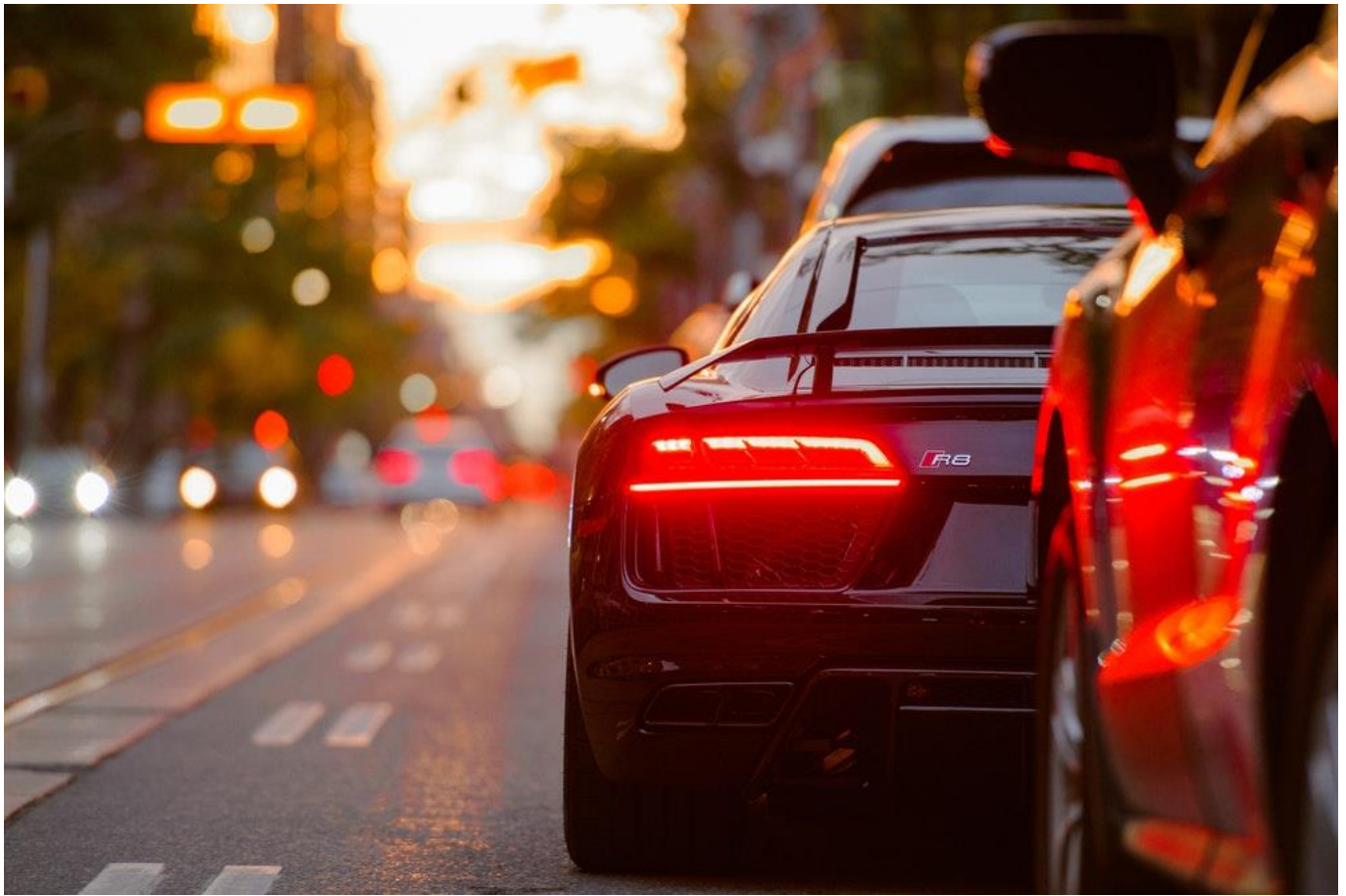


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Driving in Alaska



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What do I need to know about getting a driver's license in Alaska?

It is illegal to drive without a valid driver's license or permit in your possession. That means you must carry the actual license or permit with you. Knowing the number of your permit or license is not enough.

[View more information to help keep you safe while learning to drive.](#)

Kinds of Driver's Licenses

In Alaska there are several different kinds of driver's licenses. The ones that young drivers need to know about are:

- an instruction permit (also known as a learner's permit);
- a provisional driver's license;
- a minor's driver's license; and
- a regular driver's license.

What is an instruction permit?

An instruction or learner's permit allows you to learn to drive under direct supervision of another responsible person. To get an instruction permit, you must:

- be 14 years old;
- have your parent's consent;
- pass a written knowledge test;
- pass a vision exam;
- furnish your social security number, proof of your residence address, your date of birth and your name; you can find a list of the kind of documents that will satisfy this requirement in the [State of Alaska Driver Manual](#).
- pay a fee.

When you drive with an instruction permit, an adult licensed driver must sit in the passenger seat next to you. The adult driver must be at least 21 years old and have at least one year of driving experience. A learner's permit from another state is not valid in Alaska; you must obtain an Alaska instruction permit before driving in Alaska. An instruction permit is valid for two years.

What is a provisional driver's license?

You must be at least 16 years old to be eligible for a *provisional* driver's license. However, even if you are 16, you must have held a valid instruction permit for at least six months and have forty hours of driving experience before you can apply for and obtain a provisional driver's license. If you have been convicted of any traffic law violations, you will have to wait six months before you can apply for the provisional license.

To obtain a provisional driver's license, you must:

- be at least 16 years old;
- have your parent's consent;
- have held an instruction permit for at least six months;
- have at least 40 hours of driving experience;
- pass an alcohol and drug awareness knowledge test;
- pass a road skills test;
- furnish your social security number, proof of your residence address, your date of birth and your name; you can find a list of the kind of documents that will satisfy this requirement in the [State of Alaska Driver Manual](#).
- pay a fee.

When you drive with a provisional license, you may not carry passengers under the age of 21, except siblings. You may not drive between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Once you reach the age of 18, these restrictions no longer apply to you. You may but are not required to obtain a minor's driver's license after you have held a provisional license for six months.

Are there penalties for violating a provisional license?

Yes, the penalty for violating the restrictions of a provisional license is a \$200 fine. Also, a 2 point violation will appear on your driving record.

What is a minor's driver's license?

After you have held a provisional license for at least six months, you can graduate to a regular driver's license unless you have been convicted of any traffic violations or illegal use of drugs and alcohol laws. If you have been convicted of any of these laws, you will have to wait another six months before you can apply for the regular license. If you are under 21 when you get a regular driver's license, you will be issued a minor's license that expires 90 days after your 21st birthday. After you turn 21, you must pass the drug and alcohol awareness test to renew your license and be issued an "over 21" driver's license.

To graduate to a regular driver's license and remove the provisional license restrictions, you must:

- be at least 16 years old;
- have your parent's consent;
- hold a provisional license for at least six months;
- furnish your social security number, proof of your residence address, your date of birth and your name; you can find a list of the kind of documents that will satisfy this requirement in the [State of Alaska Driver Manual](#).
- pay a fee.

Are the rules different if I live in rural Alaska?

Some drivers living in certain rural communities in Alaska do not have to get an instruction permit. If you live in a rural community and are at least 16 years old, you can get a provisional driver's license or an Off-Highway License, which is not subject to the restrictions that apply to provisional licenses. You do not have to pass a road skills test to get an Off-Highway License.

If you have an Off-Highway license and then successfully complete all the required tests, including the road test, you can get a regular driver's license or a Valid Without a Photo License. A Valid Without Photo License is available if you live in rural Alaska and cannot easily get to an office of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Financial Responsibility and Mandatory Insurance

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Do I have to buy car insurance?

If you own or drive a car, you must have automobile insurance on the car. You must also carry proof of insurance (an insurance card) at all times.

Alaska's financial responsibility law requires a vehicle owner or driver to have *liability insurance* to protect others if you cause an accident that hurts another person or damages their property. The smallest amount of liability insurance allowed by Alaska law is \$50,000 per person, \$100,000 per accident for bodily injury or death and \$25,000 for property damage per accident. Certain rural areas in Alaska are exempt from these mandatory insurance requirements.

The person driving the vehicle is the person responsible for making sure the vehicle is insured before driving the vehicle. If you drive without insurance, or without proof of insurance in your possession, you may be fined or your driver's license may be suspended. Your insurance company can provide extra cards so that every driver in a family has one with them.

When you apply for auto insurance, the company may ask for a credit report and use your

credit history in part to set the rate. Automobile insurance can be expensive in Alaska. It is a good idea to find out how much insurance will cost *before* you buy a car because having insurance is part of the price of driving a car.

What do I do if I am in an accident?

First, STOP. In Alaska, you must stop after an accident that results in injury, death, or damage to property. You must help any injured person at the scene of the accident. You also must exchange names, addresses and vehicle license numbers with the driver of the other vehicle. If you do not do these things, you may be charged with a crime called leaving the scene of an accident. You could be fined or imprisoned for leaving the scene of an accident.

Will my parents have to pay if I cause an accident that damages another car?

When parents consent to a child under 18 getting a driver's license, they agree to accept liability for damages the minor child may cause by driving a vehicle. That means that you and your family will have to pay for any damage you cause.

Other laws related to driving



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Do I have to wear a seat belt when I drive? What if I am a passenger in a car?

Yes. Alaska law requires everyone in the vehicle to use a seat belt.

Can I use my cell phone or smart phone when I drive?

It is against the law to drive with a visual screen device in operation. This includes a computer, a DVD player, or a smart phone playing a video or using a map app. You can answer your smart phone and talk, but you cannot text while driving.

What is reckless driving?

Reckless driving means driving in a way that creates a substantial and unjustifiable risk of harm to a person or to property. Another definition is willfully disregarding the safety of persons or property while you are driving.

If you are convicted of reckless driving, your driver's license will be revoked.

What is the law about littering and unsecured loads?

Littering means throwing or discarding waste material on private or public property or water. Driving with an unsecured load is a kind of littering that means driving or moving a vehicle on a public highway or right-of-way when it is not constructed, loaded, or covered to prevent its load from dropping, leaking, or otherwise escaping from the vehicle. Both these actions are against the law in Alaska. The penalty for littering in Alaska is a fine of up to \$1000. A person who litters or allows unsecured materials to escape from a vehicle can also be sentenced to clean up litter for a period of time.

What can happen if I drive after I have been drinking?

If you are under 21, it is against the law for you to consume alcohol. If you are under 21 and you consume alcohol and then operate a vehicle, you can be arrested or cited for the offense of a minor operating after consuming alcohol. If you refuse a chemical breath test, or if your breath test shows any quantity of alcohol, your driver's license or permit to drive will be revoked.

If you operate a vehicle and have a breath or blood alcohol concentration of .08 or more, you are presumed to be driving under the influence (DUI). If you drive in Alaska, you have consented to a chemical test of your breath to determine the alcohol concentration of your blood or breath. You are also DUI if you are under the influence of a controlled substance or inhalant. The DMV will revoke your driver's license or privilege to drive or obtain a license.

You can read more about the crimes of DUI, breath test refusal, and other alcohol-related crimes in Sections 1 and 2 of this Guide.

Guns, knives, and other weapons



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If I am a minor, can I own a gun in Alaska?

Alaska law forbids anyone under 16 from possessing a firearm of any kind without permission from a parent or guardian. "Possess" means you have control of the gun. You can be in control of a gun even if you do not have it with you at the moment. For example, you can be in possession of a gun hidden under your mattress at home.

If you are over 16 years old, you may generally possess a firearm, but there are some limits. You may not possess any guns on school property. This rule means, for example, that you may not have a hunting rifle in your vehicle in the school's parking lot! You may not have a gun at a day care center, at a courthouse, where liquor is sold, or in a bar. You may not have a gun in your possession if you are drunk or high. If you are on parole after being convicted of a felony, or are adjudicated delinquent for some serious offenses, you may not carry any firearm. Probation terms often limit possession of firearms, especially guns that can be concealed (like handguns or very short-barreled shotguns or rifles).

If you are carrying a gun and come in contact with any law enforcement officer, you must immediately tell the officer that you are in possession of a firearm.

If you are in a federal park or wildlife refuge in Alaska, you may carry a gun, but you cannot fire the gun, show off any weapon (including a gun) in the view of others, or use a gun in any other way. Park rules also prohibit you carrying a gun into a ranger station or park administrative office.

If I am a minor, can I buy a gun in Alaska?

Not from a dealer. Under federal law, you must be 18 years old to purchase a shotgun or rifle, and you must be 21 years old to purchase a handgun from a federally licensed firearms dealer (like a gun shop, pawn shop, or Fred Meyer store). These age restrictions also apply to buying ammunition. Federal law also prohibits unlicensed sellers from selling handguns or handgun ammunition to anyone under 18.

In Alaska, you do not need a special state permit to buy a gun if you meet the age requirements described above. But you may be prohibited from purchasing any firearms if you have been convicted of a felony, or adjudicated a delinquent minor.

Do I need a permit to carry a concealed weapon in Alaska?

No, but you must be at least 21 years old to carry a concealed weapon. Alaska law does not require a permit to carry a concealed weapon, but the State of Alaska does issue concealed carry permits to persons over 21. These permits are useful if you want to take a handgun to another state that requires a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

If you are under 21, Alaska law forbids you from knowingly possessing a deadly weapon when the weapon is concealed on your person and you are away from your own dwelling or land. The rule does not apply to an ordinary pocketknife or a “defensive weapon” like mace spray. There is also an exception if you are engaged in a lawful outdoor activity, like hunting, fishing, or trapping, that necessarily requires use of a deadly weapon for personal protection.

Can minors possess knives in Alaska?

There are no specific state laws on possessing knives. If you are under 21, you may not carry a “deadly weapon” if it is concealed on your person, or in certain places like schools. A knife may be considered a “deadly weapon.” Many schools forbid all knives from school grounds, including school buses.

Are some weapons always illegal in Alaska?

Switchblades, gravity knives, and metal knuckles are all illegal in Alaska.

Fireworks



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Can I set off fireworks in Alaska?

Usually local governments, not the state, set the rules for fireworks. Bigger towns and developed areas are more likely to regulate or entirely prohibit fireworks. In Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough, fireworks are illegal all year except in limited areas on New Year's Eve, if the risk of fire is low. The City of Houston, which allows fireworks, is an exception. In Fairbanks, you generally need a permit to discharge fireworks. In Juneau, some areas allow fireworks and some areas ban them, so be sure to ask before you set off any fireworks. Outside regulated communities, you may still face penalties in state and federal parks or refuges, especially in fire season.

Keep in mind that you, or your parents if you are a minor, may have to pay for damage you cause by setting off fireworks. This may include the cost of fighting wildfires.

Crossing the Canadian Border



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Unless you fly to Juneau, the only way to or from our capital city is to drive through our

neighbor to the east – Canada. Since July 2009, a law called the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requires more documentation to travel through Canada. The rules for travelling through Canadian waters are much the same.

What do I need to go through Canada?

If you are 16 years of age or older, you need one of the following: A passport, a US passport card, an enhanced Tribal Card, a Merchant Mariner's card, an enhanced drivers' license (if you live in a border state that has them available), or a trusted traveler card like NEXUS, FAST, or SENTRI. If you are under 16 and you are traveling with a parent who has proper documents, you can present an original birth certificate. If you are under 18, your parents can apply for a passport for you; if you are 18 or older, you can apply for a passport yourself.

When you get to the border, present one of the above. You will also need proof of US citizenship to reenter Alaska. Canada won't allow you across the border if you don't have the documents needed to leave Canada. As long as you don't have any outstanding warrants in the USA or Canada, or any criminal convictions in either country, you will be granted access. If you have been convicted of DUI – even as a minor – you will not be allowed to enter Canada.

What do I need to drive through Canada?

Canada will recognize your minor's or regular Alaska drivers' license. As in Alaska, you must have proof of insurance with you. Your Alaska proof of insurance card is adequate, as long as you are a tourist.

You also need to understand speed limits and distances posted in kilometers per hour. The rural road speed limit is 100 km/h, about 62 miles per hour.

What are the rules about taking guns across the border?

The rules about guns in Canada are strict. All handguns, bear spray, pepper spray, or mace brought into Canada must be listed on the Canadian National Handgun Registry before you bring them in. You must have an Authorization to Transport (ATT) permit obtained in advance from a Provincial or Territorial Chief Firearms Officer.

Trying to bring an unregistered handgun across the border is a serious offense. If you are caught doing so, the following will happen.

- You will be detained at the Canadian border station and will be turned over to the custody of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
- You will have the right to speak to an attorney and also the right to speak with a representative from the U.S. consulate. But the nearest US consulate is in Vancouver – a long way from the Border at Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory.
- Your car will be impounded. You will have to pay a significant fee to have it released.
- You also will have to pay a minimum fine of \$1,000.

- Your handgun will be confiscated and you WILL NOT be able to regain possession of it.
- It is also likely that you will be barred from re-entry into Canada.

If you are traveling to Canada with a hunting rifle or shotgun to go hunting, you must obtain a proper Canadian hunting license and declare your firearm. The fee for a Firearms Declaration is

\$50. Visitors who borrow a firearm must first obtain a Non-Resident's 60-Day Possessor License (\$30). U.S. residents should register weapons with U.S. Customs before traveling to Canada to assure that you can reenter the US with the gun. Hunters are allowed to bring 200 rounds of ammunition; shooters entered in a competition can bring 1,500 rounds of ammunition. All hunting guns must be properly secured and stored.

Weapons that are prohibited include fully automatic guns, converted automatics, assault-type weapons and handguns with a barrel length less than 105mm (4 inches), and replicas of such weapons. Certain knives are also prohibited. A complete list can be found at the Canada Border Services Agency website. Canadian customs officials will automatically confiscate prohibited firearms. They will not be returned, and will ultimately be destroyed. The gun owner is not given the option to withdraw the request to enter Canada and return to the U.S. in order to retain possession of the prohibited firearm.

What are the rules about taking drugs across the border?

No illegal drugs are permitted. Yes, marijuana is illegal in Canada.

Any prescription drug brought across the border must be accompanied by a valid prescription and must be in the original packaging. If you can't prove your prescription drug is legal by showing the prescription and original packaging, it is likely to be confiscated. You might have to pay a fine.

What are the rules about taking alcohol and tobacco across the border?

You are allowed to bring alcohol and tobacco with you on your trip to Canada if you are over 21 years old. But there are limits on the amounts allowed. Usually you have to stay a minimum of 24 hours to bring alcohol or tobacco into Canada.

Alcohol you can take into Canada is limited to 40 ounces of liquor, 1.6 quarts (about 2 bottles) of wine, or 9 quarts of beer or ale (about 24 12-ounce cans of beer). You must be 21 years old to bring alcohol back into the USA, and the amount is very limited (1 liter). Check with US Customs before you leave.

In Canada, the legal drinking age varies from province to province. In the two provinces on the Alaska border, Yukon Territory and British Columbia, the legal drinking age is 19.

If you are 21 years old, you can bring up to 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, 6.4 ounces of tobacco, or 200 tobacco sticks into Canada.

What happens if I am arrested in Canada?

If you are arrested, you will be given the opportunity to speak to a lawyer. You will be fingerprinted, photographed, and, if your offense is minor, you may be released on your own recognizance. You likely will have to pay a bail fee; for a minor offense, it will be under \$1,000. You will have to pay in Canadian dollars. You will not be allowed to continue your trip in Canada and authorities will return you to the US. You may have to pay for your trip home.

The bail fee will be returned if you show up for your court date. An arrest based out of Beaver Creek border crossing has court proceedings at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Penalties vary depending on the offense you committed. Impaired driving is a fine of \$1,000 and your ability to drive in Canada is suspended for six months. Underage drinking is a straight fine of \$115. If you are caught with an illegal drug, the penalty depends on your past criminal record. You could face jail time or a substantial fine. If the Canadian police determine you are a flight risk, it is unlikely that you would be granted bail and they would detain you until your court date.

Although the charges will not carry over into the United States, and Canada cannot extradite you for minor offenses, if you do not return for your court date, Canadian authorities will issue a warrant for your arrest. Having an outstanding warrant on your record will prevent you from being able to travel internationally. Regardless of the offense, it is likely that any penalty will include a permanent ban from entry into Canada.

What do I need to consider about coming back into the USA?

You are prohibited from bringing back items that are deemed detrimental to the general welfare of the USA. This includes narcotics, drugs, drug paraphernalia, obscene publications, seditious or treasonous material, lottery tickets, fireworks, poisonous or toxic substances, and switchblade knives. You must have proof of citizenship to reenter the USA. If your passport or Tribal Card is stolen, you must go in person to the nearest consulate to get a temporary passport. Your driver's license is not proof of citizenship.

Hunting and Fishing in Alaska



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Is hunting and fishing important in Alaska?

You bet. Ask anyone and they will probably say that among their hobbies or their favorite activities are hunting and / or fishing. The founders of our state were hunters and fishermen too and they recognized that fish and game were so important that they reserved fish, wildlife, and water to the people for common use in Alaska's Constitution.

What do I need to do to hunt and fish in Alaska?

When you hunt or fish, you should use common sense, safety, and have the proper attitude of respect toward the land, people, and animals.

Before you go out into the field, make sure you have a proper license. A good place to start looking for information is the [Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#).

If you are 16 or older, you must have a license for sport fishing, hunting, or trapping. You can purchase your license online or at most sporting goods stores. If you are fishing for king salmon, you need to buy a king salmon stamp. If you want to hunt for bear, sheep, mountain goat, bison, and other large game, you may need to enter a special drawing and you will need a special permit. If you are new to hunting, you should go with an experienced hunter or guide. You need a special stamp to hunt waterfowl.

Everyone who hunts should also know how to hunt safely. You must take a hunter safety course. You should also learn how to take care of the fish or game you catch or kill. Wanton waste of fowl or game meat is a crime in Alaska, punishable by a fine up to \$10,000 and a year in prison. Dumping or wasting fish, or improperly disposing of fish carcasses, is also a crime, and it puts others in danger by attracting bears.

Where can I hunt and fish in Alaska?

That depends. Alaska is full of private land, state owned land, federally owned land, and native lands. You may need permission to hunt or fish on certain lands. The best thing to do is start to look at a map of the area you want to hunt or fish. It is a good idea to contact your local [Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#) office, to get more detail about the area you want to hunt or fish.

In addition to sport fisheries, there are personal use fisheries for salmon, hooligan, herring, and shellfish in different parts of Alaska. Some require a permit; some do not. All have limits. Check with the Department of Fish and Game before you go.

In addition to where you can fish or hunt, there are complicated regulations about the equipment and methods you can use in different areas. For example, you may not use bait, treble hooks, or lead weights in many fisheries. You may not be able to use powered vessels. There may be emergency closures of certain areas. You should ALWAYS check the

regulations for the area you are going – there are changes every year.

When can I hunt and fish in Alaska?

First, you should only hunt or fish when the season is open. That will depend on the rules, so you should [check the rules](#), ask an Alaska Department of Fish and Game office, or check with [Alaska Wildlife Trooper](#). Even in a posted season there may be emergency closures.

Who needs a license to hunt and fish in Alaska?

Everyone needs a license to hunt and fish in Alaska. That is the general rule. There are exceptions. For example, if you are not yet 16, and an Alaska resident, you do not need to purchase a sport-fishing, hunting or trapping license. If you are under 16 and you are going to commercially fish or help on a commercial fishing boat, you need a crewmember license and you should call the [Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission](#) about that. It can get confusing, so again, the best thing is to ask.

What happens if I don't follow the rules on hunting and fishing?



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You may be issued a citation, and you may have to go to court. You may have to pay a fine and attend a remedial class. You could be charged with a crime and the seriousness of that will depend on what you did. Some hunting and fishing crimes, especially those that involve

commerce or were for personal profit, carry prison terms as well as fines. Your fishing tackle, gun, vehicle, and other equipment may be seized and forfeited. You may lose your license and be denied future licenses.

Why are there so many laws and rules about fishing and hunting in Alaska?

Because fish and game belong to all the people, and fish and game is important to most Alaskans for food, survival, recreation, and earning a living.

How can I get more information about hunting and fishing in Alaska?

Contact the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, or the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

