

# FISHING LICENSES & REGULATIONS

## FAQs

### Do I need a license to fish in Pennsylvania?

Yes, a valid Pennsylvania fishing license is required of persons age 16 and over. Anglers do not need to display licenses, but must be able to provide them either in print or on their digital device upon request of an officer. They are offered in annual and multi-year.

### How/where do I get a fishing license or required permits?

Buy licenses and permits:

- Buy online at [HuntFishPA](#)
- Buy at [License Issuing Agents](#), County Treasurer offices, or [Fish and Boat Commission offices](#).

### When do licenses go on sale?

Fishing licenses, permits and vouchers are usually available December 1 of the year prior to the license year, and is valid at purchase.

### When is a Trout Permit required?

When an angler "fishes for trout" and:

- Takes, kills, or possesses, while in the act of fishing, a trout from any PA or boundary waters.
- Fishes in waters under special trout regulations.
- Fishes in any Class A Wild Trout Waters or Wilderness Trout Streams or their tributaries.
- Fishes in streams and rivers designated as Stocked Trout Waters on March 1 through May 31.

### When is a Lake Erie or Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit required?

All anglers fishing Pennsylvania waters of Lake Erie, Presque Isle Bay and their tributaries, including waters that flow into those tributaries, are required to possess a valid Lake Erie Permit or Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit.

### What are Pennsylvania's fishing regulations & laws?

Regulations and laws are outlined in our [Pennsylvania Fishing Summary Book](#).

### Do I need a fishing license to take my young child fishing?

An adult who assists a child by casting or retrieving a fishing line or fishing rod is not required to possess a valid fishing license if the child remains within arms' reach of the assisting adult and is actively involved in the fishing activity.

An adult may assist a child by baiting hooks, removing fish from the line, netting fish, preparing the fishing rod for use and untangling the line without possessing a valid fishing license.

There are a number of Pennsylvania waters that are available to fishing exclusively for children 15 years of age and younger and persons who have certain physical or mental impairments.

## Do I need to provide my social security number?

Yes. The U.S. Congress has enacted a number of laws to improve enforcement of child support obligations. As part of a broad "welfare reform" effort, the U.S. Government has required that states implement requirements to encourage payment of child support. States that fail to implement these requirements face possible loss of federal welfare funds. Part of this law requires PFBC collect Social Security information from purchasers and holders of fishing licenses.

## I lost my license, now what?

Replace it at cost through a licensing agent or reprint it online at [HuntfishPA](#) for free.

## Who can get a resident license?

Only bona fide residents of Pennsylvania are eligible for resident licenses. A bona fide resident of Pennsylvania is a permanent resident of this state who has a fixed intent to return to the Commonwealth when he leaves it and who maintains a permanent place of abode here. For fishing license purposes, a person may not be a bona fide resident of Pennsylvania while claiming residence in another state. Students attending PA universities and colleges, but live in another state are not considered residents.

Positive proof of legal residency, usually a valid PA drivers license, will be required by the issuing agent when purchasing a Resident, Senior Resident or Senior Resident Lifetime fishing license.

## Do military personnel need a fishing license?

Yes. Those who are stationed in Pennsylvania under permanent change of station orders (PCS) for 6 months or more or who produce documentation proving same qualify for a resident fishing license. All others must obtain a non-resident or tourist license.

Certain active duty military personnel are exempt from Pennsylvania's fishing license requirement. To be eligible for the military waiver, an angler must:

- be a bona fide Pennsylvania resident,
- be on active duty,
- be stationed outside Pennsylvania, and,
- be here on authorized leave.

National Guard & Armed Forces Reserve licenses are available to those persons who provide documentation that within the previous 24 months the person was deployed overseas as a member of the reserve component of the armed forces for a period of 60 consecutive days or more or was released early from service because of an injury or disease incurred in the line of duty. This license is only available at Commission and county treasurer offices.

## Can I purchase a license as a gift for someone else?

Yes. Buy the gift voucher online or at an official licensing providing the gift recipient's name at purchase. A voucher cannot be used as a fishing license. Vouchers can be redeemed at any issuing agent. The voucher is non-refundable and expires as noted. Multi-year vouchers are also available.

## Who is eligible for a free license?

Disabled veterans who are PA residents and:

- (1) Have a disability incurred in any war or armed conflict consisting of loss or use of one or more limbs or total blindness.
- OR
- (2) are 100% disabled as certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

PA resident disabled veterans with disability ratings between 60% and 99% as certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and is a resident of this Commonwealth may get a reduced-fee resident fishing license by applying to the Fish & Boat Commission or a county treasurer.

## Can a non-resident student get a discounted license if they attend school in Pennsylvania full time?

Yes, through [HuntFishPA](#), or by visiting [license issuing agents](#) with proof of eligibility, such as a current college identification card, if requested by a Waterways Conservation Officer while fishing.

## Are permanently disabled persons eligible for a free license?

No, but no PA fishing license is needed for people who are totally blind, or have such severe physical or mental impairments that they are unable to cast or retrieve a line or bait hooks and remove fish if only one legal device is used and the person who is blind or has physical or mental impairments is within 10 feet of the device being used.

The attendant of the blind or impaired person also does not need a license while assisting in using the device.

## Do I need a license to fish on my own land?

Landowners and their family members who reside on their land throughout the year may fish on that land without a license. A pond or lake that is wholly within land owned by a homeowners association or a private club does not exempt the individual homeowners or club members from having a fishing license.

## I have/want a Senior Resident Lifetime license...do I have to buy a new Trout Permit and/or Lake Erie Permit each year?

Yes, for a Trout Permit. No, for a Lake Erie Permit. Some exemptions apply to licenses bought before 2015.

A person who purchases a Senior Resident Lifetime License and fishes in Lake Erie or its tributaries is only required to purchase one Lake Erie Permit valid for the licensee's lifetime.

1-Year Trout Permits are to be maintained with the license.

## If I buy only a multi-year license this year, can I add a trout, Lake Erie or combo permit next year?

Yes. You can purchase a 1-year Trout Permit, 1-Year Lake Erie Permit and 1-Year Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit as an add-on to your basic multi-year fishing license.

## What if I lose my multi-year license? How do I replace it?

A lost fishing license can be replaced at [HuntFishPA](#) or at any [issuing agent](#).

## Are multi-year vouchers available?

Yes, they are sold through the same outlets as licenses.

Multi-year vouchers expire on the expiration date printed on the voucher. All sales are final. No refunds are given for unused vouchers.