

HUNTING IN MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP

Middletown Township is a community that still boasts many large areas of woods and fields, often on adjoining properties that may extend for several miles at a time. In addition to providing a very enjoyable atmosphere, these large tracts of open area serve as a natural habitat for many animals, including deer. There are times, however, when this type of natural setting can become a concern.

Some residents in Middletown may find themselves now, or in the future, in a situation where they become aware of hunting activities on their property or on a neighbor's property. Most often, these activities are being conducted in full compliance with existing laws, although situations do develop where these activities are being conducted improperly.

This pamphlet addresses frequently asked questions about hunting in Middletown Township. Any additional questions can be addressed to Middletown Township at 610-565-2700.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HUNTING IN MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP:

Q: Is hunting permitted on Township-owned property?

A: No. Hunting of any kind is expressly prohibited on any Township-owned property.

Q: Who is responsible for protecting a property owner from hunting activities?

A: The State Game Commission Regional headquarters for the Southeast region can be contacted at: 448 Snyder Road, Reading, PA 19605, (610) 926-3136. Problems that are not directly covered by the State Game Laws should be reported to the PA State Police Barracks: (484-840-1000). If the problem is taking place on private property that is not yours, call the property owner involved and report the problem to them. Also, contact one of the above agencies if the problem is a potential game law violation.

Q: Who do I call if I observe someone trespassing on my property?

A: Trespassing complaints are enforced by the State Police in Middletown Township. The Game Commission does not enforce trespassing problems. The State Police will investigate trespassing complaints only upon the complaint of the involved property owner, unless the property owner has provided a blanket intent to prosecute for trespassing apprehensions, at which point trespassing reports will be accepted from other parties. The fact that property is posted against hunting or trespassing in general does not mean that it cannot be hunted upon. A property owner can give permission to individuals to hunt on the property while excluding the public at large.

If hunting is a problem in your immediate area, it is suggested that property owners contact each other before the start of hunting season to determine whether any permission has or will be given for hunting on their properties. This may clarify a situation when hunting activity is observed during the hunting season and a property owner cannot be quickly contacted.

Q. Can someone be arrested for carrying a gun?

A: Currently, carrying a firearm in public is not necessarily a violation of the law. All hand guns and short barrel rifles require firearms licenses. Hunting rifles and bows and arrows do not require permits for use or transportation. Under the state game laws, it is unlawful to possess a firearm of any kind in or on any vehicle unless all shells or cartridges have been removed from that firearm. Under the Uniform Firearms Act, the discharge of unlawful firearms is automatically prohibited. Within this category are automatic weapons, sawed-off long guns and unregistered short guns.

Q: Can the State Police provide any assistance to me?

A: Although the State Police do not routinely investigate hunting complaints, they will respond to trespassing complaints where the complaint is being made by a property owner or where they have assurance that the property owner will prosecute an apprehension. Also, the State Police will investigate reports of persons carrying firearms, to determine whether any public safety problems exist. Also, where there is some indication that an activity in the judgment of the responding officer involves “reckless endangerment” they have enforcement capability.

Q: If I see a hunting or gun violation, what should I do?

A: For violations of the State Game Laws, the Regional Game Commission should be contacted (See contact information above). For hunting occurring on Township-owned property, notify Middletown Township at 610-565-2700. During weekend hours, call the State Police to report trespassing. Hunting is not permitted at any time in Ridley Creek State Park unless by special state program. Complaints about illegal park hunting should be made to the Ridley Creek state Park office during park hours, 8AM—4PM (892-3900) or referred to the State Police Media Barracks after hours. Complaints of trespassing should be made to the State Police Media Barracks, where trespassing is occurring on your property. Where trespassing is occurring on a neighbor’s property, a call should be made first to the property owner whose property the violation is occurring on. Then, if a trespassing violation is occurring, the State Police Barracks should be notified.

Q: What can I do to minimize the illegal hunting activities in my area?

A:

- Familiarize yourself with the general game law provisions and provisions on trespassing.
- Limit your property to hunting by erecting a fence or other enclosure, provide a verbal warning to all persons seen on your property, and/or post no trespassing signs at frequent locations along your entire property boundary.
- Call the State Police or Game Commission any time any illegal hunting activity or trespassing is taking place in your area. If the activity is taking place on your property, be prepared to pursue a trespassing complaint through the court system and advise the State Police of this.
- Work with your neighbors to keep an eye on each other's properties, and report all suspicious persons or vehicles in your area, particularly during hunting season.
- Participate in a neighborhood watch program to assist in keeping an eye on problem properties, and consider participation in your neighborhood's Townwatch program to undertake a more aggressive patrolling posture.
- Determine in advance whether your neighbors intend to give permission to anyone to hunt on their property during hunting season. Also determine in advance whether your neighbors will prosecute trespassers, and if so ask them to put that intent in writing and submit it to the State Police for file purposes. In that situation, a trespassing complaint can be followed up on by the state Police, even if no contact can be made with the property owner at the time that the violation is occurring.

All information on this brochure is subject to change and any questions should be directed to the Southeast Region Game Commission office (610) 926-3136. More information can be found by visiting the Pennsylvania Game Commission website at www.pgc.state.pa.us.

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