

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep

Compulsory registration for harvested sheep

Important new changes to the registration process for harvested Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep

Before submitting their sheep for Compulsory Registration, all Hunters are now required to:

- Remove the cape and lower jaw
- Make an Appointment at a Designated Office to register their sheep.

Registration changes in 2019/2020

All persons who kill a male bighorn sheep over one (1) year of age must submit the sheep to a Designated Office for compulsory registration. Registration provides:

- means to collect critical information for wildlife management and enforcement
- legal authority to possess a specimen when appropriate.

Starting in the 2019-20 hunting season, all hunter killed rams must be submitted to Designated Offices only by appointment with the cape and lower jaw removed, and eyes intact. These include rams killed under the authority of a hunting licence (resident, non-resident, non-resident alien), or harvested by Métis or First Nation hunters.

Hunters should also remove excess meat and fat from the base of the skull before presenting the sheep for registration.

What changes are taking place

Standard jig

All hunter-killed rams over one (1) year old will be registered using the “jig”. The jig is a standardized device for measuring bighorn sheep and determining legal status. In other jurisdictions, the jig has improved:

- likelihood of successful prosecutions of short sheep
- efficiency and precision of data collected

Photo 1. Trophy Sheep securely placed in jig for determining legal status



Photo 2. Full-curl Trophy Sheep securely placed in jig for determining legal status



Designated offices

Moving to Designated Offices will better enable data collection by trained staff, and improve data quality for sheep management in Alberta. It is also expected to result in new information (example: annuli measurements in all offices, percent of rams harvested the first year they become legal).

Making an appointment to have your sheep registered at a Designated Office

You can make an appointment by calling one of the 17 Designated Offices listed below. It is best to call a minimum of 3 business days ahead if possible.

The 17 Designated Offices in the province are:

Location	Telephone
Athabasca	780-675-2419
Bonnyville	780-826-3142
Calgary	403-297-6423
Cochrane	403-932-2388
Edmonton	780-427-3574
Edson	780-723-8244
Grande Prairie	780-538-5263
Hinton	780-865-8264
Lethbridge	403-381-5266
Medicine Hat	403-529-3680
Peace River	780-624-6405
Pincher Creek	403-627-1116
Red Deer	403-340-7052
Rocky Mountain House	403-845-8230
Slave Lake	780-849-7123
Stony Plain (Spruce Grove)	780-960-8190
Whitecourt	780-778-7112

If appointment is not made

If you don't make an appointment at a Designated Office, staff may be unable to register your sheep. If no staff are available, hunters may still drop off sheep (provided freezer space is available), but the ram will be kept and hunters will need to return at a later date to retrieve the ram when registration has been completed and all data collected.

Mandatory removal of cape and lower jaw

It is also a legal requirement that the lower jaw and cape be removed, and that the eye be intact. If a ram is delivered that is not caped, the sheep will be refused and hunters will have to return at a later date to deliver the caped sheep. A sheep with cape on and lower jaw present cannot be placed in the jig.

A hunter may choose to have a taxidermist remove the cape to meet the registration requirements, rather than removing it themselves. Some taxidermists may request a hunter provide them a bill of lading to grant the taxidermist permission to take possession of unregistered (unplugged) sheep. The hunter should ensure that while the taxidermist is removing the cape that they do not alter the skull and eye, or prepare it for taxidermy before its registered.

Registering non-hunter killed sheep

Found dead, accidental deaths or sheep killed by non-hunting means may be registered at any Environment and Parks office in the province.

It is recommended that you call ahead to make an appointment. You will find all the Fish and Wildlife District phone numbers in the Hunting Guide.

- Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations
<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/1485-4287>

Reminder

Hunters are reminded to review the definitions for each sheep regulation so that they are certain it exceeds the definition prior to harvesting the ram.