

CFB Suffield Elk Hunt 2023-24: General information guide

CFB Suffield Elk Hunt Management Program (EHMP)

General requirements

All participants in the hunt are required to observe the following protocols:

Age restrictions and identification

- All hunters and helpers must be at least 18 years of age or older.
- No one under the age of 18 will be granted access to the Range and Training Area (RTA). Government-issued photo identification is required for all participants.

First Nations hunting

- First Nation hunters will be required to pre-register for access to CFB Suffield during hunt seasons. To pre-register, please email: p-sufehmp@forces.gc.ca

Daily participation limit

- A daily participation limit has been established at a maximum of 140 hunters per day during the designated hunt dates (See *Hunting dates and schedule* section below).
- The number of helpers is limited to the number that can legally travel in the hunter's vehicle.

Arrival and safety briefing

- All participants must attend a daily safety briefing at the [CFB Suffield Recreation Centre](#) in Ralston, Alberta. **Parking lot opens at 6:00 am. Briefing starts at 6:45 a.m. each day of the hunt.**
- **Vehicles must be in place no later than 6:30 a.m. daily.**
- Anyone late for the safety brief for that day will not be able to hunt that day.
- All participants are to remain in their vehicle once guided to a designated row in the parking lot (except for use of on-site portable toilets).
- Hunting maps, waivers and vehicles passes will be provided to each vehicle either upon entering the parking lot or when parked. Registration will occur with all participants in their vehicles.
- If hunters wish to hunt the National Wildlife Areas (NWA), which are walk in-walk out hunt areas, they must indicate their desire to enter the NWA draw when asked. NWA draws will be conducted during the safety/orientation brief. Only one draw entry can be entered per vehicle.
- Briefing will be delivered via FM frequency. If issues arise, participants will be required to read/review the handouts themselves.
- Waivers and other forms will be collected prior to leaving the parking lot.
- Vehicle passes will be issued during or after the safety/orientation briefing.

Visit: <https://mywildalberta.ca/hunting/hunting-draws/cfb-suffield-elk-hunt.aspx>

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Departure and Hunter Check Station

- **All participants must be off the Range and Training Area (RTA) by no later than 6:00 p.m.** Not complying with this timing could result in a ban for the remainder of the 2023/24 EHMP seasons.
- If hunters want to submit elk heads for CWA testing, **the heads must be removed prior to arriving at the exit point/Hunter Check Station.**
- When done hunting for the day, hunters are to remain in their vehicles when exiting the RTA at the Hunter Check Station. Range Control and Provincial personnel will approach all vehicles at the Hunter Check Station to collect vehicle pass, record any elk data, and collect volunteered elk heads for CWA testing.

Hunting dates and schedule

This year's EHMP will take place from October 25, 2023 to January 27, 2024. The schedule for the 2023/24 hunt is as follows:

- Season 1 – October 25 to 27, 2023
- Season 2 – November 2 to 4, 2023
- Season 3 – November 18 to 20, 2023
- Season 4 – January 9 to 11, 2024
- Season 5 – January 17 to 19, 2024
- Season 6 – January 25 to 27, 2024

NOTE: For safety reasons, each hunter will be booked into specific dates and times in order to distribute participation across the entire hunt period.

Daily timeline

All timings listed are subject to change as required. Although timings may change for various reasons (example: poor weather in the morning, first day of the season, slower than expected registration, etc.), here is what a typical daily timetable looks like (**NOTE:** Day one of each week is typically slower than days two and three):

Time	Activity
6:00 am	Hunters start arriving at the Ralston Recreation Center parking lot: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upon entry, briefing packages are handed out, to include hunt map, waiver, etc.• Names are submitted for NWA hunts (1 per vehicle).• Vehicles are lined up in rows (5 to 6 rows to be confirmed).• Hunters and helpers must remain in their vehicles (except to use portable toilets).• Registration begins down the line of vehicles (example: hunter and helper names, phone numbers, etc.).
6:45 am	Vehicles tune into radio station (FM frequency will be given upon entry). Safety Briefs start (typically later on day one of each week).
7:30 am	Safety Briefs end (approximate timing).
7:40 am	Signed waivers and other relevant paperwork are turned in. Vehicle passes are issued and vehicles start to exit parking lot through exit point(s).
8:00 am	Gates are opened and controlled by Range Control (W12 and S24).
9:00 am	Gates are closed (approximate timing).
6:00 pm	(1800 hours) All participants must be off ranges via the Range Control Building (Hunter Check Station). Hunters and helpers remain in vehicles (except to use portable toilets).

Daily attendance

Hunters are not required to attend day one of their hunt week. Each morning of the hunt days is exactly the same, with the exception that those who already submitted their paperwork will not need to submit it again. Only new hunters and helpers will be required to submit their paperwork on the first day they arrive.

About the Elk Herd Management Program at CFB Suffield

Since 2012, an Elk Herd Reduction Program was implemented by the Government of Alberta. Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Suffield has supported the province's efforts to reduce the elk population by granting access to the base for an annual hunt.

As of 2017, this provincially run hunt continues but has been renamed the Elk Herd Management Program (EHMP) at CFB Suffield.

Purpose of the EHMP

An elk herd was re-introduced at CFB Suffield in 1997. From a population of about 200 elk in 1997, the population grew to more than 7,000 by 2014. Because there are few predators in the area of CFB Suffield, without hunting, this population was projected to increase by more than 20 per cent annually.

The EHMP aims to reduce the number of elk in CFB Suffield's Range and Training Area (RTA). As of February 2022, the herd is estimated to be approximately 2,500 head.

Who may participate

Hunters ages 18 and up who have received EHMP tags from the Government of Alberta are eligible to participate in the hunt. All hunting tags must be acquired through the Government of Alberta. **CFB Suffield does not issue hunting tags.** For more information, visit the AlbertaRELM website at: <https://www.albertarelm.com/cust.howtoobtaintags.page>

First Nations hunters and communities

First Nations members, age 18 and up, who are recognized by the Province of Alberta's regulations and laws to be eligible for hunting in southeastern Alberta will be able to register to hunt during the EHMP. First Nations hunters who have pre-registered with CFB Suffield will be granted access on an availability basis to the EHMP through a registration process.

First Nations hunters must submit their request to hunt and register with CFB Suffield in advance by contacting the following email address: p-sufehmp@forces.gc.ca

Indigenous community members that are not recognized by the provincial regulations to hunt in southeastern Alberta will not be granted access to the range by CFB Suffield unless they are in possession of EHMP tags or provincial regulations are amended to grant further eligibility.

NOTE: CFB Suffield does not determine hunting eligibility and shall adhere to provincial law with respect to wildlife management. Only elk (antlered and/or antlerless) can be harvested at CFB Suffield and only during the EHMP.

Location

[CFB Suffield](#) is located 5 kilometres north of the Trans-Canada Highway along Highway 884. It is approximately 50 kilometres northwest from the City of Medicine Hat.

Access to CFB Suffield's Range and Training Area (RTA)

Hunters will be granted access to parts of CFB Suffield's Range and Training Area (RTA) on a daily basis after attending the mandatory daily Safety Briefing.

While it is not usually a busy time for Military training on the base during the period when the EHMP is taking place, some sections of the RTA will be restricted for safety reasons. Some areas may be out-of-bounds due to Military training, while other range users like oil and gas workers, range biologists and others may also be in the RTA.

Visit: <https://mywildalberta.ca/hunting/hunting-draws/cfb-suffield-elk-hunt.aspx>

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NOTE: Restricted or out-of-bounds areas may change daily and will be identified accordingly at the daily morning Safety Briefing. **Entering any area identified as restricted or out-of-bounds will result in expulsion from the RTA.**

CFB Suffield Range and Training Area (RTA) Safety Caution

The Range and Training Area (RTA) at CFB Suffield is a Type 2 Military Range. **This means that live firing of Military munitions has occurred throughout the RTA.** Although CFB Suffield strives to locate and remove all unexploded ordnances, there is still a risk that some unexploded ordnances remain.

All participants will be briefed further during the morning Safety Briefings. All participants will be required to submit a signed waiver to say that they understand and accept the risk associated with hunting on a Type 2 Military Range. Waivers will be submitted during the registration process which follows the morning Safety Briefing. There is no requirement to submit paperwork in advance and the waiver will be provided upon entry prior to the daily Safety Briefing.

Conditions and requirements

Hunters must comply with all of the following conditions and requirements in order to participate in the hunt:

Mandatory documentation

The following documentation is required for registration (bring this paperwork in with you to the morning brief):

- Government-issued photo identification
- Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) for firearms (see *Firearms requirements* below for additional details)
- Vehicle registration and proof of insurance
- **For provincially registered hunters:** elk hunting license and hunting tags.
- **For First Nations hunters:** Government-issued Secure Certificate of Indian Status Card.

Access to National Wildlife Areas (NWA)

- Access to the CFB Suffield National Wildlife Areas (NWA) will be granted through a draw each morning.
- Those interested in hunting in the NWA must enter their info for the draw for either the northern or southern NWA.
- NWA access draws take place daily, and names must be entered daily prior to the daily Safety Briefing.
- Those successfully drawn for the NWA may also hunt the main hunting area.
- Hunters must be accompanied by at least one helper/hunter to hunt in the NWA. Hunters cannot hunt alone in this area for safety reasons.
- The NWA is a walk-in and walk-out area where no motorized vehicles are permitted off road. The area is remote and cellphone/wireless connectivity is very limited.

Mandatory and recommended equipment for hunting in the NWA

Some additional equipment is mandatory to have for hunting in the CFB Suffield NWA and all hunters are required to have certain items in their possession. **The following equipment is mandatory and will be checked:**

- Charged mobile phone (must have this at all times)
- Flashlight

- Handheld GPS or compass (other than a mobile phone). iPad and tablets with the proper app installed are acceptable.
- High visible clothing (vest or jacket) must be worn at all times when outside of vehicle while on the range. A high visible hat is encouraged.

Also recommended (but not mandatory):

- A method of animal retrieval, such as a game hunting cart or sled.
- Spare batteries for flashlight and GPS

Firearms requirements

- All hunters must have their Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) for firearms, or must be in direct supervision of someone who has a PAL. Direct supervision means close enough to see at all times and talk without a raised voice.
- There are no firearms or ammunition restrictions as long as they meet Federal and Provincial rules and regulations.
- Hunters can bring a spare rifle, but it must be always encased when not in use.
- Helpers cannot carry firearms.

Fuel requirements

Hunters must ensure they have sufficient fuel for their day's activities. Once vehicles enter the Range and Training Area (RTA) they must remain there until ready to depart for the day (there is no going off and back into the RTA on the same day).

CANEX (Esso) gas station

- The CANEX (Esso) gas station at the base has regular, premium and diesel fuels available.
- CANEX hours:
 - Weekdays | 7:30 am to 7:00 pm
 - Weekends | 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
- CANEX also sells some food, clothing and supplies.

Other area fuel stations

- The next closest fuel station to CFB Suffield is in Redcliff, Alta., which is approximately 40 kilometres southeast on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Vehicle requirements

Permitted and recommended vehicles

- Four-wheel drive, pickup trucks and SUVs are strongly recommended.
- Light cargo trailers are permitted for the transport and storage of harvested animals.
- Non-motorized bicycles (with or without small trailers) are permitted. Their usage includes the National Wildlife Areas (NWA). If bicycles are used, fat-tire bicycles are strongly recommended due to sandy soil.
- Repair kits are strongly encouraged due to low-lying cactus plants in the area.

NOTE: A vehicle pass to enter the Base will be issued to each vehicle during registration.

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Restricted vehicles

- All-terrain vehicles (quads, four-wheelers, snowmobiles, etc.) are not permitted in the Range and Training Area.
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones) are not permitted.

Restrictions

- There is a zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use or possession in the Range and Training Area, including any drug that will impair an individual's judgement or cognitive ability. If a participant is found to be in possession of these items, they and their hunting party will be banned immediately upon entering the base. All vehicles will be searched.
- No photography or videography is allowed.
- Speeding will not be tolerated.
- CFB Suffield is a controlled airspace, and therefore, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones) are not permitted.
- Base personnel are not able to assist with the recovery of a disabled vehicle during the EHMP. In the event that a vehicle gets stuck or breaks down, towing and recovery will be an owner's responsibility. Most towing companies can be called out to the Range and Training Area, but they will need to be escorted by Range Control personnel.
- Base personnel will not assist with animal retrieval, unless a wounded animal enters an out-of-bounds area.

Contact

To contact Alberta Environment and Parks:

- **Email:** AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca
- **Toll Free:** 1-877-944-0313

To contact CFB Suffield regarding the EHMP:

- **Email:** p-sufehmp@forces.gc.ca
- **Phone:** 403-544-5555 (**NOTE:** This phone line is only manned during the hunt dates).