



STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

Law Enforcement Division

6980 Sierra Center Parkway, Ste 120 • Reno, Nevada 89511  
(775) 688-1549 Fax (775) 688-1551

MEMORANDUM

September 24, 2016

**To:** Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife, and Interested Publics

**From:** Tyler Turnipseed, Chief Game Warden

**Title:** **Commission General Regulation 458, Electronic Rifle Triggers, Caliber and Cartridge Length, and Smokeless Powder Restrictions, LCB File No. R144-15 – For Possible Action/Public Comment Allowed**

**Description:** The Commission will consider Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) changes to remove restrictions on the use of some black powder substitutes that may be considered smokeless for hunting; prohibit the use of laser tracking “smart rifles” for big game hunting; limit the use of excessively large military type cartridges for big game hunting; and remove the restrictions on cartridge length for hunting big game with a handgun.

**Presenter:** Chief Game Warden Tyler Turnipseed

**Agenda No:** 26

**Commission General Regulation 458: Electronic Rifle Triggers, Caliber and Cartridge Length, and Smokeless Powder Restrictions.**

This proposed change to NAC 503.142 has five separate parts.

- The first proposed change deals with muzzleloader hunts. Regulation currently states that smokeless powder is prohibited. In 2011, we sent a letter to every holder of a muzzleloader big game tag because it was determined that Blackhorn 209, which had become very popular with muzzleloader hunters, would actually be considered a smokeless powder because of its chemical makeup, and therefore illegal for big game hunting. The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners (NBWC) then received a petition to legalize Blackhorn 209 in 2013. The NBWC agreed to look at the situation, but chose not to remove the sentence stating that smokeless powder is prohibited. This current proposed change would remove the sentence, “The use of smokeless powder is prohibited” from the regulation, thereby making smokeless powders, such as Blackhorn 209, legal to use during a muzzleloader-only hunt.

- The second proposed change would make it illegal to hunt a big game mammal with any firearm equipped with a sighting system using a computer or electronically controlled firing mechanism. This change is in response to the development of laser-tracking “smart rifles.” These rifles acquire “laser lock” on a target and then automatically fire the round when the riflescope’s crosshairs meet up with the laser lock point. The scopes are Wi-Fi enabled to show real time images to anyone wirelessly hooked up to it, and allow for shooting the rifle without even looking through the scope. The company producing these rifles guarantees accuracy within half an inch at distances over a mile on targets moving up to 30 miles per hour once “laser lock” is acquired. See product videos at [tracking-point.com](http://tracking-point.com).
- The third proposed change would limit the use of huge military type cartridges, such as the .50 BMG. These large rifles have crossed over from the military and become more available to civilians in recent years. The proposed regulation change would limit the case length of a hunting cartridge to 3 inches and bullet caliber to .50 inches. .50 BMG rounds are approximately 3.90 inches in case length. A similar military type round developed in 2005 is the .416 Barrett with a case length of about 3.26 inches. Virtually all other commonly used hunting cartridges have a case length less than 3 inches.
- A fourth proposed change would relax the minimum handgun cartridge length restrictions. The proposed language states that a person may hunt big game mammals with a handgun if the handgun uses a centerfire cartridge of caliber .22 or larger and has a barrel length of 4 inches or more. This language change would remove the restrictions on minimum cartridge length.

**SECOND REVISED PROPOSED REGULATION OF THE  
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

**LCB File No. R144-15**

July 18, 2016

EXPLANATION – Matter in *italics* is new; matter in brackets ~~[omitted material]~~ is material to be omitted.

AUTHORITY: §1, NRS 501.105, 501.181 and 503.150.

A REGULATION relating to hunting; deleting the prohibition against using smokeless powder in a muzzle-loading firearm while hunting a big game mammal; revising the circumstances under which a person may use a handgun to hunt a big game mammal; making it unlawful to use certain firearms and cartridges while hunting a big game mammal; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

**Legislative Counsel's Digest:**

Existing law requires the Board of Wildlife Commissioners to adopt regulations necessary to preserve, protect, manage and restore wildlife and its habitat and to establish the manner and means of taking wildlife. (NRS 501.105, 501.181) Existing law also makes it unlawful, except by Commission regulation, to hunt big game mammals in any manner other than with certain handheld rifles and longbows. (NRS 503.150) Existing regulations prohibit the use of smokeless powder in a muzzle-loading firearm while hunting a big game mammal during a type of hunt that is restricted to muzzle-loading firearms. Existing regulations also authorize a person to hunt big game mammals with a handgun if the handgun has a barrel length of 4 inches or more and uses certain centerfire cartridges of caliber .22 or larger or caliber .24 or larger. (NAC 503.142) This regulation: (1) deletes the prohibition against using smokeless powder; and (2) authorizes a person to hunt a big game mammal with a handgun if the handgun uses a centerfire cartridge of caliber .22 or larger and has a barrel length of 4 inches or more. This regulation also makes it unlawful to hunt a big game mammal with: (1) any firearm that is equipped with any sighting system using a computer or electronically controlled firing mechanism; (2) a rifle if the rifle uses a centerfire cartridge that is smaller than caliber .22 or larger than caliber .50; or (3) a rifle that uses a centerfire cartridge with a case length of more than 3 inches.

**Section 1.** NAC 503.142 is hereby amended to read as follows:

503.142 The Commission hereby establishes the following exceptions to paragraph (b) of subsection 1 of NRS 503.150:

1. During a type of hunt that is restricted to muzzle-loading firearms, a person may hunt a big game mammal only with a muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading musket, and may use only a lead ball, a lead bullet, a semi-jacketed bullet or a metal alloy bullet that expands. ~~The use of smokeless powder is prohibited.~~ Only black powder or a black powder substitute may be used as a propellant. A sabot round may be used. The muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading musket must have the following characteristics:

(a) A wheel lock, matchlock or flintlock ignition system, or a percussion ignition system that uses a primer or percussion cap;

(b) A single barrel of caliber .45 or larger; and

(c) Except as otherwise provided in NAC 503.146, open sights or peep sights. The use of a sight that is operated or powered by a battery, electronics or a radioactive isotope such as tritium is prohibited.

↪ The muzzle-loading rifle or the muzzle-loading musket is deemed to be not loaded if the priming compound or element, such as the priming powder or the unfired primer or percussion cap, is removed.

2. During a type of hunt that is restricted to muzzle-loading firearms, it is unlawful for a person hunting under the authority of a tag for such a hunt to carry in the field a firearm or bow and arrow except for:

(a) A muzzle-loading rifle or a muzzle-loading musket with the characteristics set forth in subsection 1; or

(b) A flintlock or percussion handgun, except that it is unlawful to use such a handgun to hunt a big game mammal.

3. During a type of hunt in which the use of any legal weapon is authorized by a regulation of the Commission, a person may hunt a big game mammal with a muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading musket only if:

(a) The muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading musket has:

- (1) A single barrel of caliber .45 or larger; and
- (2) Open sights, peep sights or a rifle scope.

(b) The person uses a lead ball, a lead bullet, a semi-jacketed bullet or a metal alloy bullet that expands. A sabot round may be used.

↪ The muzzle-loading rifle or muzzle-loading musket is deemed to be not loaded if the priming compound or element, such as the priming powder or the unfired primer or percussion cap, is removed.

4. A person may hunt big game mammals with a ~~rifle if the rifle uses a centerfire cartridge of caliber .22 or larger.~~

~~5. A person may hunt big game mammals with a~~ handgun if the handgun uses a centerfire cartridge ~~of caliber .22 or larger and~~ has a barrel length of 4 inches or more . ~~and:~~

~~(a) Uses a cartridge of caliber .22 or larger with an overall loaded length of 2 inches or more; or~~

~~(b) Uses a cartridge of caliber .24 or larger with a case of length no less than the length of the case of a cartridge for a Remington magnum of caliber .44.~~

~~6. 5. It is unlawful to hunt a big game mammal with:~~

~~(a) Any firearm that is equipped with any sighting system using a computer or electronically controlled firing mechanism; or~~

*(b) A rifle if the rifle uses a centerfire cartridge that is smaller than caliber .22 or larger than caliber .50 or a centerfire cartridge with a case length of more than 3 inches.*

6. A person may hunt deer and mountain lion with a shotgun no larger than 10 gauge and no smaller than 20 gauge. Only rifled slugs or shotgun rounds with sabots that contain a single expanding projectile may be used when hunting deer. A shotgun that is used to hunt deer or mountain lion pursuant to this subsection may be equipped with a smoothbore barrel or a barrel that is partially or fully rifled.