Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 95
"Game Harvest Reporting and Landowner-Tenant Registration"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.48, 483A.1, 483A.8, 483A.8A, and 483A.24

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code sections 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.48, 483A.1, 483A.8, 483A.8A, and 483A.24

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

September 23, 2025	6200 Park Avenue, Second Floor
12 noon to 1 p.m.	Des Moines, Iowa

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department of Natural Resources (Department) at denise.roberg@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov or by telephone at 515.350.8434 at least seven days before the event.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si necesita ayuda en un idioma que no sea inglés, comuníquese con el Departamento de Recursos Naturales (Departamento) al denise.roberg@dnr.iowa.gov o civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov o por teléfono a 515.350.8434 al menos siete días antes del evento.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Denise Roberg
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Email: denise.roberg@dnr.iowa.gov

Free language access: If you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge. Contact the Department at denise.roberg@dnr.iowa.gov.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Comuníquese con el Departamento al denise.roberg@dnr.iowa.gov.

Purpose and Summary

Proposed Chapter 95 establishes the harvest reporting process for deer and turkey hunters and the eligibility verification process for free landowner or tenant licenses.

In accordance with Executive Order 10, the rules have been edited for length and clarity by removing outdated provisions. The proposed rules also include two new additional methods for hunters to report harvests, bringing the total to five methods that are available to hunters. This will increase efficiency and convenience.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Deer and turkey hunters and landowners and tenants of Iowa land will bear the costs.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Deer and turkey hunters, landowners and tenants of Iowa land, and citizens of Iowa will benefit.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

There are no monetary costs to this proposed rulemaking.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

These proposed rules reduce uncertainty about harvest reporting requirements and landowner and tenant eligibility for free licenses. Failure to have these rules would lead to confusion from customers.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

Department staff administers the programs, reviews eligibility and answers questions from impacted persons.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

These proposed rules do not have a direct impact on State revenues.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

The minimal costs are outweighed by the benefits to collecting information about the deer and wild turkey population in the State and ensuring that free licenses are not obtained fraudulently or by mistake.

Inaction would be contrary to statutory requirements. Inaction would also cause confusion among customers and lead to additional free licenses being issued by mistake with a negative impact on State revenues.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

The harvest reporting program is required by the Iowa Code and has been tailored to collect the information from hunters in a variety of ways for the convenience of the hunter.

The eligibility verification process is not costly or intrusive and allows a one-time enrollment instead of requiring renewal. The information collected is the minimum possible to help confirm eligibility under the Iowa Code for free licenses.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

No alternative methods were considered.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

There is no substantial impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 571—Chapter 95 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 95
GAME HARVEST REPORTING AND LANDOWNER-TENANT REGISTRATION

571—95.1(481A) Harvest reporting system. Deer and turkey hunters must report each deer and wild turkey harvested to the department of natural resources (DNR) harvest reporting system. The hunter whose name is on the transportation tag is responsible for making the report. Hunters who do not bag a deer or wild turkey do not report.

95.1(1) *Reporting deadlines for deer and turkey.* A harvest report must be made by midnight on the day after the animal is tagged or before the animal is taken to a locker or taxidermist, is processed for consumption, or is transported out of state, whichever occurs first.

95.1(2) *Method of reporting.* Hunters may report the harvest in one of five ways:

a. Through the electronic licensing system for Iowa (ELSI) application.

b. By texting the registration number to 1.800.771.4692 and following the prompts.

c. By calling the DNR toll-free harvest reporting telephone number at 1.800.771.4692.

d. By reporting through the Internet using the DNR online harvest reporting system.

e. By visiting an ELSI license agent during the license agent's normal business hours.

95.1(3) *Report confirmation.* The hunter will be given a confirmation number to write on the harvest report tag to verify that the hunter has reported the kill. The harvest report tag and confirmation number must remain attached to the deer or wild turkey until the deer or wild turkey is processed for consumption.

571—95.2(481A) Verifying eligibility for free landowner or tenant licenses. Eligibility for free and reduced-fee deer and wild turkey hunting licenses, hereafter referred to as free licenses, is defined in Iowa Code section 483A.24 and 571—98.6(483A) and 571—106.17(481A). The ELSI will not issue free licenses to persons who have not registered their eligibility with ELSI.

95.2(1) *Farm unit.* As provided in 571—subrule 106.17(6), all the land under the lawful control of the landowner or tenant is considered one farm unit no matter how it is subdivided for business purposes. No one may be registered as eligible for free licenses on more than one farm unit. Registering on one parcel of land within the farm unit will allow the landowner, tenant or family member to hunt on all land in the farm unit.

95.2(2) *Who may obtain free licenses.* One member of the landowner family (the landowner or an eligible family member) may obtain a free any-deer license. Members of the landowner family may divide the free antlerless-deer-only licenses for which the family is eligible among themselves in any way they choose. If there is a tenant on the same property, one member of the tenant family (the tenant or an eligible family member) may also obtain a free any-deer license. Members of the tenant family may divide the free antlerless-deer-only licenses for which they may be eligible among themselves in any way they choose. One member of the landowner family and one member of the tenant family may each obtain one free spring turkey hunting license and one free fall turkey hunting license.

95.2(3) *Method of registration.* A landowner or tenant may register on the Internet through ELSI or by mailing an affidavit obtained from DNR. The online system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An online registrant may obtain a free license once the registration process is complete.

A person who registers through the mail or by fax may have to wait up to ten business days after the form is received by DNR to obtain a free license.

95.2(4) *Information verifying eligibility.* In order to register, a landowner, tenant or qualifying family member must have a customer record in ELSI. When registering, landowners, tenants and family members will be required to provide their ELSI customer number or their Iowa driver's license number or social security number and their date of birth to identify their ELSI customer record.

a. Landowners. A landowner shall provide the parcel identification number (PIN) from the landowner's current property tax statement for one parcel of qualifying land owned by the landowner and the number of the county where the land is located. Qualifying family members shall be registered to the same parcel of qualifying land as the landowner.

b. Partnerships, corporations or other forms of joint land ownership. Each owner of a jointly owned farm unit and the owner's qualifying family members who wish to receive free licenses for that farm unit shall register with the same county number and PIN. Only one joint owner or family member may obtain the one any-deer license available for the farm unit. The other joint owner(s) and family members may divide any other free licenses to which they are entitled among themselves in any way they choose.

c. Tenants. A tenant shall provide an affidavit that contains the name, address, and telephone number of the owner of the qualifying land rented by the tenant; the county number where the land is located; and the landowner's PIN from one parcel of that qualifying land. If a tenant rents land from more than one landowner, the tenant shall provide the required information about only one landowner. The tenant's qualifying family members shall be registered to the same parcel of qualifying land as the tenant.

d. Signature required. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 483A.24(2)*"f,"* all affidavits submitted to register eligibility for free licenses shall bear the signature of the landowner, tenant, or family member attesting that the information contained therein is true.

95.2(5) *Forms.* Instructions and affidavits may be obtained online at www.iowadnr.gov, at DNR offices, or by calling 515.725.8200.

95.2(6) *Registration expiration and renewal.* A registered landowner, tenant, or eligible family member may obtain free licenses as allowed in 95.2(2) provided the registration information and eligibility status remain valid. If the registration information or eligibility status of a registered landowner, tenant, or eligible family member changes, that individual must mail a DNR affidavit form or contact the DNR by telephone. The DNR will periodically review registration information to verify eligibility status and will inactivate registrations when the registration information fails to indicate eligibility.

95.2(7) *Penalties.* Free licenses will not be issued to an applicant until a legible and complete affidavit is received by DNR. An illegible or incomplete affidavit will be returned to the applicant for correction. A person who has made a false attestation in obtaining a license in violation of Iowa Code section 483A.24(2)*"f"* shall be guilty of a simple misdemeanor and subject to license revocation as provided in Iowa Code sections 483A.21 and 483A.24(2)*"f"* and 571—subrule 106.8(3).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.48, 483A.1, 483A.7, 483A.8, 483A.8A, and 483A.2.