



# The Minnesota Trapper Education Program

## A cooperative agreement between the Minnesota Trappers Association (MTA) and the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

*97B.025 HUNTER AND TRAPPER EDUCATION. (b) The commissioner shall enter into an agreement with a statewide nonprofit trappers association to conduct a trapper education program. At a minimum, the program must include at least six hours of classroom, electronic, or correspondence instruction and in the field training. The program must include a review of state trapping laws and regulations, trapping ethics, the setting and tending of traps and snares, tagging and registration requirements, and the preparation of pelts. The association shall issue a certificate to persons who complete the program. The association shall be responsible for all costs of conducting the education program, and shall not charge any fee for attending the course.*

*Persons born after December 31, 1989, who have not been issued a trapping license in a previous license year, may not obtain a trapping license without a trapper education certification. The Minnesota Trappers Association will conduct trapper education courses statewide, free of charge to the participants, and issue certification cards that satisfy this trapping license requirement. Contact the MTA at [www.mntrappers.org](http://www.mntrappers.org) for class information. These courses include a mandatory field training portion that must be completed before certification. Please plan to take certification courses well in advance of the fur trapping season.*

## Policies

### Role of the Volunteer Instructor

Volunteers are necessary, effective, and important people within the Minnesota Trappers Association and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The uniqueness and value of volunteers in accomplishing jobs is well acknowledged by society. Volunteer instructors provide valuable training services in their communities and represent a strong, positive force which can help fellow citizens understand the need for safety and the issues

facing modern society. Each volunteer is unique. Some volunteers are motivated by a combination of reasons, such as an interest in promoting safe and responsible behavior of users of the out of-doors, personal fulfillment, prestige, or simply, good citizenship. The program recognizes the tremendous strength of a highly motivated instructional team and will do everything within its ability to provide instructors with the support to maintain an efficient and effective work force on its mission.

The compensation for volunteers isn't money. It is the satisfaction and feeling that what they are doing is important—that their contributions save lives, shape the future of outdoor recreation, help to conserve and protect the resources, make a significant difference on the quality of life, and that they are being effective in the proper instruction of others. As a non-paid volunteer, the volunteer instructor has the right to be assigned to a job that is worthwhile and challenging, to be informed about what is going on within the Association/Agency, and to be provided with training for the job he/she accepts. Besides being responsible to the MTA and DNR, a volunteer instructor is responsible for being dependable, prompt, efficient, neat, and pleasant. To be an effective volunteer requires sincere interest in the program, acceptance of supervision, and adherence to the program policies. The program will provide the best possible training to each volunteer prior to being certified to teach these classes. The program may also offer in-service training for instructors, and instructors will be expected to take advantage of every opportunity to expand their abilities and expertise.

## Instructors' Code of Ethics

The instructor serves as a representative of both the Minnesota Trappers Association and the Department of Natural Resources. The mission of the program is to “educate our residents in becoming responsible users of the resources who are conservation-minded and safety conscious.” The instructor shall maintain a professional attitude and exhibit actions which positively support the program and the department. As an example, the instructor often times is placed in situations which he/she is questioned on departmental actions beyond his/her scope of responsibility and knowledge. In these instances, the instructor should direct the inquirer to the proper agency for response. The instructor should not respond in a subjective manner nor express personal opinion publicly while on duty or participating in related activities.

The instructor may not agree with every action/activity undertaken by the Association/Department or program. However, the program shall not be used as a vehicle to state or demonstrate an individual's personal opinion. It is the primary function of the instructor to accomplish the mission statement in a professional manner and proper environment which will allow the student to gain knowledge in a manner by which he/she is able to formulate his/her own conclusions. Thus, it is important that information presented in the Minnesota program courses shall be presented factually and objectively. It is the instructors' responsibility to ensure compliance to this policy; any deviations shall be reported to the MTA Education Coordinator immediately. Instructor certification includes application documentation and investigation (including initial background check with the Minnesota Criminal Justice System for any “crimes of violence”) and ongoing training activities for improvement. The Minnesota instructor is a community-minded individual who is of good character and background, and is continually willing to improve his/her

expertise. These characteristics are indicative of the program's integrity. Policy requires that all future instructors be subjected to random background checks. It is expected that any instructor who is charged with any "crime of violence" shall immediately notify the MTA Education Coordinator in order that appropriate action be undertaken to preserve the integrity of the program, its mission, and his/her associate instructors. Such appropriate action may include no action, suspension, or dismissal.

## MTA/DNR Instructors' Policies

**Instructor Job Description Position Title-** Volunteer Certified Trapper  
Education Instructor

### Selection of Volunteer Certified Instructors

Instructors will become certified upon completion of their basic instructor training and any other specific training outlined.

### Appointment Procedure

1. Meet and maintain instructor qualifications (see qualifications).
2. Must be willing to be subject to a background investigation which includes a criminal background check for any "crimes of violence."

### Qualifications

The volunteer certified instructor must:

1. Have a basic knowledge of modern fur trapping.
2. Must be a current MTA member in good standing to host a course.
3. Be at least 16 years of age.
4. Complete a Trapper Education Instructor Certification Workshop (or online alternative.) or acceptance by Education Coordinator with proper required documentation.
5. Demonstrate a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to carry out program responsibilities.
6. Demonstrate the abilities necessary to perform the duties and responsibilities of a volunteer certified instructor. (See duties and responsibilities section.)
7. Demonstrate a devout interest in facilitating course ethics based upon responsibility and respect.

### Disqualifications

An individual will not be certified as an instructor, or will be decertified as an instructor, if the individual:

1. Has been convicted of a child protection crime.
2. Has been convicted of a crime or offense that is inconsistent with serving as a role model to children, or adults.
3. Has been convicted of a crime or offense where the conviction tends to take away from the instructor's ability to instill ethical values in students.
4. Is presently under charge or indictment for an offense described in 1-3.

5. Has engaged, or engages in conduct that would tend to bring discredit to the instructional program.
6. Is under a legal restriction or disability that prevents the individual from carrying out one of the duties associated with instructing a particular course.

## **Responsible To**

Minnesota Trappers Association/ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

The volunteer certified instructor shall:

1. Carry out the course of instruction for students following the guidelines and outline from the program.
2. Ensure that program students are well trained, safe, and ethical as demonstrated by written examination and appropriate behavior.
3. Develop a team teaching method of instruction (whenever possible).
4. Follow state guidelines and instructions from this manual and the MTA and DNR.
5. Strive to expand the program by increasing the number of courses in their communities.

### ***6. REPORTING OF MALTREATMENT OF MINORS,***

***M.S. 626.556 states, "It is the public policy of this state to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized, through physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse." Instructors who recognize or are aware of any students who have been abused in one of these ways will immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, police department, or the county sheriff.***

7. Recruit new instructor candidates.
8. Maintain familiarity with new facilitating techniques, learning aids, and program content.

## **Additional Training**

A volunteer certified instructor must attend required refresher training courses as required by the program.

## **Evaluation**

The volunteer certified instructor may be evaluated by the MTA/DNR and/or volunteer certified instructor on the following:

1. Random evaluations
2. Attendance at training events.
3. Student registration forms
4. Student evaluation forms.

## **Term**

Volunteer certified instructors will retain their certification provided they are meeting the requirements of their job description.

## **Inactive Instructors**

Instructors who do not host, assist hosting or provide In Field Training to students after a period of **two years** will be placed on an inactive list. Inactive instructors will not receive mailings from the program and cannot receive program supplies without special approval by Education Coordinator or MTA Board of Directors.

## **Recertification After Becoming Inactive**

Any instructor, once inactivated, must go through the normal certification procedure that new instructors are required to complete. Generally Instructor Certification Workshops are offered prior the MTA General Membership Meeting usually held in January and annual MTA Convention generally held in July/August. Dates and times for these events are published on the website. An online alternative to instructor certification is currently in development. To begin the process, contact MTA Education Coordinator at [www.mntrappers.org](http://www.mntrappers.org) for additional opportunities.

## **Volunteer Instructor Rules of Conduct**

### **Location of Course**

All classes should be held in public locations whenever practical. This would include schools, fire halls, civic centers, VFWs, American Legions, Izaak Walton Leagues, conservation clubs, and various firearm facilities. Conducting a class in a non-public place must be approved by the Education Coordinator.

An exception is with Amish students.

### **Use of Facilities**

A member of the instructor team needs to be responsible for determining that the facility is used according to the policies and agreement for its use. This includes what areas and equipment can be used and how each is used. All instructors and participants must be made aware of all building regulations and must follow them. Special care must be taken to leave the facility in a condition acceptable to the person in charge of granting permission for its use. State law maintains that there is no smoking either in school buildings or anywhere on school grounds.

### **Supervision of Youth Courses**

All youth classes will have one certified instructor and at least one additional instructor or adult present at all times during the course.

Youth must be supervised at all times including before and after class. For all youth that have not been picked up 15 minutes after class dismissal, a call should be made to their parent/guardian.

## **Touching is Out**

Because of the very real problems current in our society concerning improper touching, the MTA/ DNR has made it a policy that no instructor is to touch any student while acting in the position of MTA/ DNR instructor for any MTA/DNR trapper education program. This policy is necessary to protect both you as an instructor as well as the MTA/DNR. Instructors are to use other means than touching to communicate ideas. Instructors are encouraged to demonstrate and verbalize student positions, rather than touching any students.

## **Rule Statement**

Students look to the instructor for leadership and guidance. The instructor should strive to be a sterling example of a safe, mature ethical and responsible person. Professional conduct is the standard for the program. The instructor is a role model representing a positive image to help ensure the future privilege of hunting/outdoor recreation.

## **Appearance**

Instructor appearance makes an impression on students and lends credence to the ethical concepts taught in the course. Instructors should be clean and neat in their appearance.

## **Conduct**

1. The use of alcoholic beverages prior to or during a course or field activity is inconsistent with the purpose of the program and is prohibited.
2. Offensive language must be avoided in the classroom or at any other time related to the program. Complaints of instructors using offensive language during a course may result in the revocation of that individual's instructor certification.
3. Open criticism of other instructors or disagreements between instructors in front of a class is unproductive, detrimental, and leaves a poor impression. Complaints of instructors disagreeing during a course may result in the revocation of that individual's instructor certification. Instructors can settle their differences in private. A classroom is no place to "air dirty linen."
4. Eating or smoking is not appropriate for instructors during periods of classroom instruction—save these activities for break time. Be sure students know of designated smoking and eating areas.
5. Boasting about personal violations of written laws has no place in the program.
6. All instructors will comply with the policies, guidelines, and rules governing the program.
7. Think and demonstrate safety, ethics, and responsibility.
8. Criticism of the program, the Minnesota Trappers Association/ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, or individuals associated with the program will not be tolerated.
9. Endorsement of specific manufacturers or products is prohibited. If a product is used or demonstrated, be sure to make students aware that the MTA/ DNR does not endorse or recommend any one product over another.

## **Certification Status**

Certification as a volunteer instructor is and must continue to be considered both an honor and a privilege. Both as a group and as individuals, instructors represent a proud and honorable tradition of volunteer citizen involvement in providing community service. The actions of each individual reflect not only upon his/her fellow volunteers but also upon the Minnesota Trappers Association, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the State of Minnesota. Although you are a volunteer, it is because you recognize the responsibility entrusted to you in training the people of our state that instructors have continually insisted upon maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct. It is essential that instructors adhere to the program and policies outlined in this manual. Failure to do so may jeopardize the funding of the entire program and individual certification. Therefore, it is imperative that instructors understand and agree to abide by the Instructors' Creed both in and outside of the classroom.

## **Items the Volunteer Instructor is Provided**

1. Registration forms, student manual, and other materials for the students.
2. All necessary forms for certification and instruction.
3. Information for obtaining videos and other learning aids.
4. The opportunity for volunteers to meet periodically with the MTA Education Director/Coordinator and DNR Personnel.
5. Information on the activities of the program.
6. A periodic review of volunteer performance and an account of volunteer activities.
7. Annual recognition and appreciation for outstanding volunteer service.

## **Decertification**

An instructor may be decertified or become inactive by the program coordinator if:

1. The instructor has falsified any information on the instructor application.
2. The instructor has engaged in any disqualifying or prohibited conduct.
3. The instructor has failed to conduct or assist in a program at least once every two years.
4. The instructor has failed to conduct the program in the manner set forth by policy.
5. The instructor fails, after two notices, to provide the MTA Education Coordinator with the required records of students trained or any funds collected or expenses incurred.
6. The instructor has been identified by staff or appointed representatives as not adequately completing the instruction program.
7. Any other grounds which warrant the belief that the educational programs and the customers of such programs would be best served by discontinuing the service of the individual instructor.

## **Decertification Process and Appeal Procedures**

All volunteer instructors serve the MTA and DNR. Decertification, and appeals of decertification decisions, will be conducted using the following procedures:

1. The coordinator will give notice to an instructor when the coordinator believes that decertification is appropriate. The notice will be in writing and will contain reasons for the decertification and a summary of the evidence supporting those reasons. The notice

will be sent by United States mail to the address last provided by the instructor. Unless appealed within thirty (30) days of the date that the notice was sent, the decertification will become final.

2. An instructor may appeal the decertification notice. The appeal must be in writing and must be postmarked, or received by the coordinator, within the time frame set forth in Paragraph 1.

3. The coordinator will notify the appellant of the time and place for an appeal hearing within ten (10) days of receiving a written appeal. The MTA Board of Directors will review the matter with the appellant represented and make a ruling. All Board decisions shall be final.

4. The hearing will not exceed three (3) hours in length. At the hearing, the coordinator will present the board with the grounds and evidence supporting decertification. The appellant may testify, present evidence, and make arguments with respect to the coordinator's evidence and the appropriateness of decertification.

5. Within ten (10) days following the hearing, the Board will notify the appellant in writing of their decision. The decision of the Board is final.

**Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to MN-DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4047 or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.**

## Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to:

- 1) Make the instructor aware of areas needing improvement.
- 2) Make the Association/Department aware of areas instructor needs further training.
- 3) Allow for examination of curriculum changes needed. All courses will include participant evaluations to provide feedback to instructors. A copy of this evaluation is at the end of the *Volunteer Instructor Procedures manual for Minnesota Trapper Education*.

Instructors' evaluations may also be completed by peer instructors. Each instructor may be evaluated periodically and a report submitted Association. Instructors may be asked to observe courses and evaluate the instructor. The instructor will notify the MTA Education Coordinator of any substandard performances observed.

## Instructor Benefits

Personal satisfaction: As the name "volunteer" would imply, the compensation for classroom instructors, clinic instruction, and instructor mentors is not money. There are no expenses paid or any monetary compensation for volunteer work. (Unless otherwise noted below.) It is in the satisfaction of knowing that what you are doing is important, that your contributions will save lives, and positively influence the attitudes and actions of those who share or will share the out-of-doors with you.

## Insurance Coverage for Trapper Education Programs

A certificate of liability insurance will be issued for each trapper education course if requested two weeks in advance specifying the physical location of class activities. It is in everyone's best interest to secure this certificate in the event of an accident. Although an instructor's personal auto/homeowners insurance may cover an individual instructor, a certificate of liability insurance will protect both the instructors, the MTA and the DNR more thoroughly. There is no additional charge for this certificate. Requests should be directed to MTA Secretary or MTA Education Coordinator (contact information available at [www.mntrappers.org](http://www.mntrappers.org)) at least two weeks in advance of your scheduled class.

## Physically Challenged

Trapper Education Programs will be available to any individual desiring to take a course, regardless of physical ability. Instructors will make reasonable accommodations for any student wishing to take the course. A Correspondence Course option will be made available for those unable to attend a traditional course.

## Charges for Class

There are no fees associated with the Trapper Education Program however; instructors may offer to provide refreshments etc. that they may charge a nominal fee to cover expenses only. Reasonable charges for building rentals etc. may be reimbursed by the MTA. An MTA Requisition Form is included in the back of the *Volunteer Instructor Procedures Manual for Minnesota Trapper Education*. Questions regarding items eligible for reimbursement should be directed to Education Coordinator. Copies of requisition forms should be supplied to Education Coordinator for accounting purposes and originals sent to MTA Treasurer.

MTA Treasurer contact information available at [www.mntrappers.org](http://www.mntrappers.org)

## The Instructor's Creed

As a volunteer instructor, I will remember:

- When students are involved, I have taught.
- Most human beings are poor speakers and poor listeners, so I have a challenge.
- Just talking is the least effective teaching method.
- It is easier to teach if you get students involved.
- The bottom line is what they learn—not what I teach.
- The future of outdoor recreation depends on effective education.
- I will develop the art of assisting discovery.
- You can teach a lesson for a day, but if you teach curiosity, you teach for a lifetime.
- Nothing improves hearing more than praise.
- The mediocre instructor tells, the good one explains, the superior one shows, the great one inspires.

- The future of this recreational activity depends upon effective safety, education, and student behavior.

Your Students Say: Tell me and I'll listen, but I may forget. Show me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll understand.

# Minnesota Trapper Education Instructor Code of Conduct Acceptance Document

I hereby accept the terms outlined in this document (pgs 1-10) and agree to abide by them as a Certified Trapping Instructor with the Minnesota Trappers Association and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

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FULL LEGAL NAME

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ADDRESS

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DATE OF BIRTH

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MN DRIVERS LICENSE OR MN ID NUMBER

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Signature and Date

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Approved by Name and Title  
Today's Date

\* This entire document (pgs 1-11) must be returned to Education Coordinator in order to process Instructor Application.