

BOWHUNTING EQUIPMENT STANDARDS BOW DRAW WEIGHT MINIMUM



In hopes of stimulating awareness and improved customer confidence and compliance through reductions in regulatory complexity, ATA initiated the development of recommended equipment standards to guide bowhunting regulation development in the US. Initially, ATA conducted a survey of all 50 states' 2016-17 bowhunting regulations to compile the regulations specific to big game hunting equipment during Archery Only season. Over 60 regulatory metrics detailing legal equipment used for bowhunting deer and other related guidelines were evaluated and compared across states and regions. Equipment variables measured but not presented herein were determined by ATA to be either consistent across states or of limited relative value to be addressed at this time.

Bow Draw Weight Minimum: Most states (33/50) specify a minimum poundage draw weight that must be used for hunting. Eleven states are silent on required minimums, and six states have no minimum draw weight. Specified draw weights include 30lb, 35lb and 40lb minimums for White-tailed deer.

RECOMMENDATION: For states desiring to adopt a minimum draw weight standard, ATA Recommends that a 30# minimum draw weight be used for typical big game hunting

Justification: This regulation may be considered a potential barrier to entry since individual strength varies considerably across all users and other factors such as shot placement and shooting distance can have greater impact on killing shots than draw weight. While many factors contribute to the ethical harvest of an animal when using archery gear, archery bow draw weight is just one of many critical factors that can impact harvest success. Other critical factors include draw length of the bow, arrow weight, broadhead type, shot distance, and most importantly shot placement. ATA has compared current modern 30-pound draw compound bow performance versus traditional 40-pound recurve bow performance as well as surveyed states that currently have a specified 30-pound or less minimum draw weight for bowhunting. These states reported no issues with this either a 30-pound or no minimum draw weight. Based on this feedback, the technical review of modern compound bows, and the belief that the majority of hunters understand their equipment competencies and effectiveness based on the game and conditions of their hunt, the ATA supports a 30-pound minimum draw weight for typical bowhunting.

Additionally, ATA encourages a robust education and mentoring engagement prior to participation in archery hunting. This coupled with the belief that the majority of hunters understand their equipment competencies and effectiveness based on the game and conditions of their hunt, the ATA supports eliminating un-necessary and complex equipment regulations for typical bowhunting.