



Free and Reduced Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

FACT SHEET

How does a disabled veteran qualify for a free fishing license?

Section 2707 of the Fish and Boat Code of 1980, as amended, 30 Pa.C.S. § 2707, sets forth the standards for free and reduced resident fishing licenses for disabled veterans.

To qualify for a free fishing license, an applicant must:

Be a bona fide resident of Pennsylvania;
And qualify as one of the following:

- (1) Have a disability incurred in any war or armed conflict consisting of
 - (a) loss of one or more limbs;
 - (b) loss of use of one or more limbs; or
 - (c) total blindness.

OR

- (2) Be 100% disabled as certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

How does a disabled veteran qualify for a reduced fishing license?

Any disabled veteran who has a disability incurred in any war or armed conflict that consists of the loss of one or more limbs or the loss of use of one or more limbs, or total blindness, or who is between 60 and 99 percent disabled as certified by the United States Veterans Administration and is a resident of this Commonwealth may obtain a reduced fee resident fishing license upon application to the Fish & Boat Commission or county treasurer.

To qualify for a reduced fishing license, an applicant must:

Be a bona fide resident of Pennsylvania;
And qualify as one of the following:

- (1) Have a disability incurred in any war or armed conflict consisting of

- (a) loss of one or more limbs;
- (b) loss of use of one or more limbs; or
- (c) total blindness.

OR

(2) Be 60 to 99% disabled as certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Where can a qualified resident disabled veteran obtain a free or reduced fishing license?

Free or reduced fishing licenses can be obtained from county treasurers (listed within [Issuing Agents](#)), the Fish and Boat Commission's Harrisburg office or the six regional law enforcement offices (locations on [PFBC Directory page](#)).

What documentation is required?

First, the applicant must prove he is a bona fide resident in the same way as any applicant for a resident license. The most common proof of residence is a driver's license, but applicants who don't have a driver's license may prove residence by showing other positive proof of domicile in the Commonwealth.

Second, the applicant must show he or she is a qualified disabled veteran. The only acceptable documentation is written certification from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that the applicant has a qualifying disability incurred in any war or armed conflict.

Must the applicant prove the injury or disability was combat-related?

No. The law requires that the injury or disability be service-incurred in any war or armed conflict. The law makes no mention of combat. The Fish and Boat Code's requirements for free resident fishing license for certain disabled veterans are consistent with other Pennsylvania laws. For example, essentially the same requirements apply to applicants for free hunting licenses (34 Pa.C.S. § 2706). In addition, the Commonwealth's paralyzed veterans' pension program (51 Pa.C.S. § 7702), veterans emergency assistance program (51 Pa.C.S. § 8501), educational gratuity program (51 Pa.C.S. § 8701) and disabled veteran real estate tax exemption program (51 Pa.C.S. § 8902) address disabilities incurred during periods of war or armed conflict. These laws do not require that the qualifying disabilities be combat-related as long as they were incurred during war or armed conflict service. Some of these laws contain additional provisions recognizing disabilities incurred during peacetime as a result of hostile fire or terrorist attack.

Must the injury or disability have been incurred "in line of duty"?

Yes. The law requires that the injury or disability be "service incurred." This is synonymous with the term "in line of duty." The military services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determine whether the disability was incurred in line of duty. The term "in line of duty" means an injury or disability that was not incurred as a result of the member's misconduct and that did not exist prior to service. The term "in line of duty" is not limited to combat-related disabilities.

Would a soldier who sustained a qualifying 100% disability as a result of an automobile accident that occurred during a period of war or armed conflict qualify for a free fishing license?

Probably. If the disability were incurred "in line of duty" (that is, not due to the member's own misconduct) as certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, it is likely that the applicant would qualify.

How can a veteran qualify for a free lifetime resident fishing license?

The 100% disabled veteran must present documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to show the qualifying disability is permanent.

How can a veteran qualify for a reduced resident fishing license?

The 60 to 99% disabled veteran must present documentation yearly from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to show the qualifying disability.

Does a disabled veteran who qualified for a free fishing license have to pay for permits?

No. A Combination Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit will be issued free of charge to disabled veterans who qualify for free fishing licenses. This "combo" stamp is valid as a trout/salmon stamp and Lake Erie permit.

Does a disabled veteran who qualified for a reduced fishing license have to pay for permits?

Yes. If the veteran chooses to fish where the permit is required the price of the permit is not reduced.

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