

ROADS, TRAILS, MOTOR VEHICLES AND WILDLIFE

What You Need to Know

Motor vehicles, from pickups and SUVs to motorcycles and ATVs, have changed hunting and some of those changes have created challenges for hunters, land managers and wildlife.

Consider the following:

- Roads that are open to motor vehicles increase access into big game habitat, and, as a result, the number of hunters increases. Generally, the number of hunters in an area is directly related to the number of roads.
- The combination of more hunters and their increased mobility in roaded areas increases the vulnerability of deer and elk to harvest. Deer and elk in a heavily roaded area are more likely to be killed during the hunting season, and for that reason these areas have fewer old bulls or bucks. It also means that hunting seasons have to be shorter to prevent over harvest.
- Research shows that slow moving vehicles on primitive roads and trails are more disturbing to elk than fast moving vehicles on highways. Slow moving vehicles traveling cross-country have the same effect. Deer and elk often flee from the sound of motor vehicles and may leave the area.
- Cross-country travel with motor vehicles can create a network of new travel ways that cause erosion, spread noxious weeds, and damage fish and wildlife habitats. Much of this cross-country travel occurs during the hunting season. To reduce these impacts, Idaho's land and wildlife managers ask all hunters using motorized vehicles to stay on roads and trails and use designated routes where they are established. Do not travel cross-country with a motor vehicle.

Look for Designated Routes on Public Lands

The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have already established designated routes in several areas of Idaho.

Please pay attention to the travel system in the areas you hunt.

For more information about travel management on Idaho's Federal lands, contact these offices or websites:

- U.S. Forest Service 208-373-4007 website: www.fs.fed.us
- Bureau of Land Management 208-373-4007 website: www.id.blm.gov
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation online mapping application: <http://trails.idaho.gov>

Access management helps wildlife and hunters. Please observe established road closures and access restrictions. Report road closure violations by calling 1-800-632-5999, or any Idaho Fish and Game, BLM or U.S. Forest Service office.

Motor Vehicle Use

Wisely managing roads, trails and motor vehicles will:

- Yield more old bucks and bulls.
- Permit more hunting opportunity.

- Allow longer seasons.
- Decrease erosion.
- Reduce conflicts.
- Reduce damage to habitat and the spread of noxious weeds.

Best of all, it will make hunting better.

Remember!

- Observe road closures and access restrictions.
- Say no to cross-country travel.
- Stay on roads and trails open to motorized travel.
- Use designated routes where they're established.
- Follow Idaho's *Motorized Hunting Rule*.

Motorized Hunting Rule

To resolve many hunters' concerns about off-road travel, the Fish and Game Commission adopted restrictions on motor vehicle use while hunting big game animals, including moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goats in designated units. The rule only applies from August 30 through December 31. The rule no longer applies to hunting of upland game birds or upland game animals.

Motorized Hunting Restrictions

The use of motorized vehicles by hunters as an aid to hunting big game animals is restricted in certain areas. This use restriction is in addition to all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and orders; including, but not limited to, any motorized vehicle licensing, registration, and permitting requirements and traffic laws. Hunters must comply with all motorized vehicle limits or prohibitions instituted by the landowner or land manager. Also, this use restriction rule is not an exception from, and is in addition to, the statutory prohibition against hunting from or by the use of any motorized vehicle set forth in Idaho Code Section 36-1101(b)(1).

Use Restriction. In designated units from August 30 through December 31, big game hunters may use motorized vehicles only on established roadways which are open to motorized traffic and capable of being traveled by full-sized automobiles.

Exceptions. This use restriction rule shall not apply to the following permissible motorized vehicle uses by hunters off of an established roadway:

- a. Holders of a valid Handicapped Person's Motor Vehicle Hunting Permit may use a motorized vehicle as allowed by the land owner or manager.
- b. Hunters may use a motorized vehicle to retrieve downed game if such travel is allowed by the land owner or manager.
- c. Hunters may use a motorized vehicle to pack camping equipment in or out if such travel is allowed by the land owner or manager, but hunters may not hunt while packing camping equipment.

- d. Private landowners, their authorized agents and persons with written landowner permission may use a motorized vehicle on their private land, but they may not hunt from or by the use of any motorized vehicle.

in wait for, any wildlife whether or not such wildlife is then or subsequently captured, killed, taken, or wounded. Such term does not include stalking, attracting, searching for, or lying in wait for, any wildlife by an unarmed person solely for the purpose of watching wildlife or taking pictures thereof.

Restricted Units

The motorized hunting use restrictions applies to units 29, 30, 30A, 32, 32A, 36A, 37, 37A, 45, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 52A, 53, 56, 58, 59, 59A, 66, 66A, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, and 78.

Defined Terms

- a. A full-sized automobile is any motorized vehicle with a gross weight in excess of 1,500 pounds.
- b. An established roadway is defined as any road that is established, built, maintained, approved or designated by any government entity or private landowner for the purpose of travel by full-sized automobiles. An established roadway shows evidence of repeated use by full-sized automobiles, and may include a traveled way of natural earth with depressed wheel tracks and little or no vegetation in the tracks.
- c. A hunter is a person engaged in the activity of hunting as defined in Idaho Code Section 36-202(j). *“Hunting” means chasing, driving, flushing, attracting, pursuing, worrying, following after or on the trail of, shooting at, stalking, or lying*

Owyhee Wilderness

The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 designated 517,000 acres of public lands in Owyhee County in southwestern Idaho as Wilderness. Please be aware of the wilderness boundaries and regulations. For more information see: www.blm.gov/idaho.

Highway rights-of-way

The entire width between the boundary lines of every highway publicly maintained when any part is open to the use of the public for vehicular travel, with jurisdiction extending to the adjacent property line, including sidewalks, shoulders, berms and rights-of-way not intended for motorized traffic. No person shall shoot from a public highway or discharge any firearm from or across a public highway.

Special Vehicle Restrictions

State and federal agencies and private landowners have established road closures in key big game areas to protect deer and elk populations. Please check with regional Fish and Game, U.S. Forest Service, or Bureau of Land Management offices for information regarding vehicle restrictions on roads, trails, and unroaded areas.



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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: MOTORIZED HUNTING RULE

What changes were made to the Motorized Vehicle Use Rule?

- The name changed to Motorized Hunting Rule to make it clear that this rule applies to hunters using motorized vehicles as an aid to hunting. The rule is now specific only to hunting of big game animals, including moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat, in designated units, and only applies from August 30 through December 31.
- Between these dates and in the designated units, specific to all big game hunting, hunters may use motorized vehicles only on established roadways that are open to motorized traffic and capable of being traveled by full-sized automobiles.
- The rule no longer applies to hunting of upland game birds or upland game animals.

What is an “established roadway?”

- An established roadway is any road that is established, built, maintained, approved or designated by any governmental entity or private landowner for the purpose of travel by full-sized automobiles. An established roadway shows evidence of repeated use by full-sized automobiles, and may include a traveled way of natural earth with depressed wheel tracks and little or no vegetation in the wheel tracks.

Where can I find out which are established roads open to use by full-sized vehicles and which are trails on national forest or BLM land?

- For questions about the status of a road or trail in the area you plan to hunt, please contact the appropriate land management agency. National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Maps and BLM Travel Maps list road, trail and other allowable uses. Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation’s Statewide Online Map, available at <http://www.trails.idaho.gov/>, also lists what type of motorized use is allowed on Forest Service and BLM lands statewide, as well as local land management agency contact information.

Does the new rule apply to all hunting statewide?

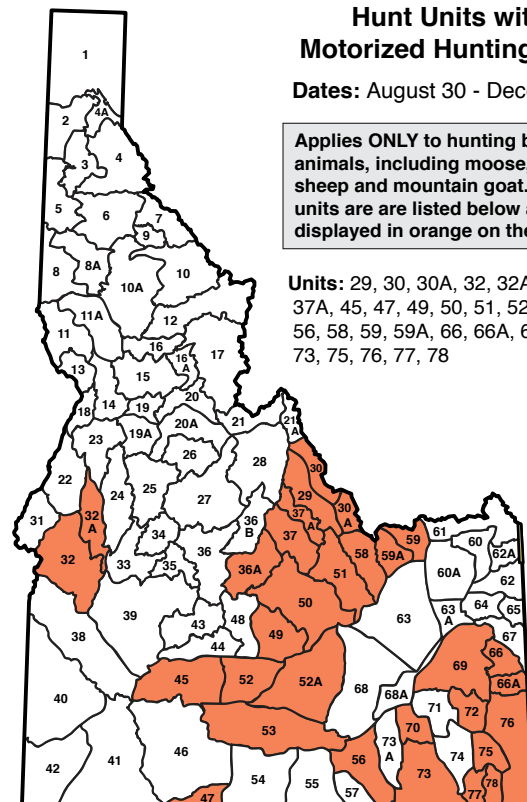
- No. The rule now applies only to hunting of big game animals, including moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat, in designated units from August 30 through December 31. The rule does not apply to upland game animals or birds in hunts within designated units.

As a hunter, can I use a motorized vehicle on USFS or BLM designated trails in Big Game Units covered by the motorized hunting rule?

- Only if the use is permissible in the exceptions in the motorized hunting rule. For example, if motorized travel is allowed by the USFS or BLM, you may use a motorized vehicle to retrieve downed game or pack in or out your camping equipment. However, you may not hunt while packing camping equipment. It’s important that you know what specific type of motorized use is allowed for the area you are hunting.
- Hunt Units with Motorized Hunting Rule: See map below.

What can I do to stay out of trouble or to avoid conflicts with other hunters?

- When in doubt, stay on the road. Know and follow the vehicle use restrictions for the area you are hunting, have applicable maps, and review tips on the Stay on Trails website at stayontrails.com



Hunt Units with Motorized Hunting Rule
Dates: August 30 - December 31

Applies **ONLY** to hunting big game animals, including moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat. Affected units are listed below and are displayed in orange on the map.

Units: 29, 30, 30A, 32, 32A, 36A, 37, 37A, 45, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 52A, 53, 56, 58, 59, 59A, 66, 66A, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78