

Opinion: Rules to follow during hunting season

By Armando Avina

With hunting season upon us, and increased citizen concern regarding target shooting in congested areas, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office would like to remind residents of county ordinances governing discharge of firearms in congested areas.

Washoe County Code 50.094 to 50.154 states that it is unlawful to discharge:

- * any gun, pistol, or rifle, with the exception of shotguns, air rifles, or BB guns, within 5,000 feet of an occupied dwelling.
- * Shotguns, air rifles, or BB guns within 1,000 feet of an occupied dwelling.
- * a firearm from, upon, over or across any federal or state highway or any county road or highway.
- * a firearm within a Nevada State Park, unless otherwise designated by the administrator.
- * Within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service, it is prohibited to discharge a firearm in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site or occupied area, or across or on a National Forest System road or a body of water adjacent thereto, or in a manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result in such discharge, or into or within any cave.

If shooters follow those parameters; they are generally allowed to shoot in any area not designated as a "no shooting" or "congested area." It is important to reiterate three key

points:

A “congested area” is a geographic location where discharge of any firearm is prohibited. Because congested areas are generally densely populated, it has a high risk of personal injury.

A “restricted congested area” is a location where residents must be a minimum of 1,000 feet from any occupied dwelling. In restricted congested areas, residents are allowed to discharge shotguns, air rifles and BB guns. A person is not allowed to discharge any gun, pistol, rifle or any other firearm in this area.

A “non congested area” is a location where residents must be 5,000 feet away from an occupied dwelling. In these areas they may shoot guns, pistols, rifles, shotguns, air rifles, BB guns, or any other firearms.

With that in mind, the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office takes residents safety very seriously. Last year, the sheriff’s office received numerous complaints by homeowners, hikers, bicyclists, and off road vehicle enthusiasts in the Caughlin Ranch area concerning recreational shooters who discharged firearms close to residential areas. The Washoe County Sheriff’s Office, with assistance from the Washoe County and Reno Roads Departments, posted congested area signs and maps warning that shooting in a congested area could result in heavy fines.

Residents are encouraged to practice safe shooting in established and lawfully authorized and licensed rifle ranges, gun clubs or shooting gallery’s.

If citizens have concerns about activity that may be illegal, or dangerous, they should immediately call the Sheriff’s Office at (775) 832.9276.

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Office.