

# Hunter orange: The do's and don'ts

by [Tom Goldsmith](#) June 29th, 2016



This is the minimum amount of hunter orange you should wear (no matter your quarry) to stay legal when a big game gun season is open.

## What legal hunter orange looks like

Ontario's hunter orange (formerly called blaze orange) regulations came into effect on September 1, 1997. That's almost twenty years ago, yet each autumn at hunt camps around the province, debates continue about what kind and amount of hunter orange clothing and gear are legally required.



Though not legally required, wearing some hunter orange when heading into or out of a turkey hunting spot is a good idea.

I get it; old habits die hard. A well-worn and faded vest or coat may be thought of as lucky or just plain comfortable, but it might be past its days as a legal hunting garment.

Most of the confusion, infractions, and worst-case-scenario injuries could be avoided if hunters would simply review and comply with the regulations each year so that they are current with the laws. That said, the legal language used in the regulations can be confusing.

“The garment referred to in subsection (1) must be solid and not open mesh clothing with a minimum total area of not less than 400 square inches above the waist and visible from all sides. O. Reg. 665/98, s. 26 (2).”

“Hunter orange” means a daylight fluorescent orange colour with a dominant wave length between 595 and 605 nanometers, excitation purity of not less than 85 per cent and a luminance factor of not less than 40 per cent, but does not include camouflage hunter orange colouring. O. Reg. 665/98, s. 26 (5).”

Here are a few tips on how to stay legal and safe in the field during hunting seasons.

WHEN TO GO ORANGE		SEASON IN PROGRESS				
YOUR QUARRY		Deer gun season	Moose gun season	Bear season	Elk season	Bow only season
	Deer	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	N/A	NOT REQUIRED
	Moose	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	N/A	NOT REQUIRED
	Turkey	N/A	MANDATORY (WMU 59)	RECOMMENDED	N/A	NOT REQUIRED
	Bear	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	N/A
	Small game	MANDATORY	MANDATORY	RECOMMENDED	MANDATORY	NOT REQUIRED
	Migratory bird	NOT REQUIRED*	NOT REQUIRED*	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED*	NOT REQUIRED

All licensed bear hunters may remove their hunter orange clothing while in the tree stand. They must put full legal orange clothing back on when off the stand. \*With the exception of woodcock, for which hunter orange is mandatory. Wearing hunter orange when going into or out of the hunting area is always recommended.

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Check out these must-know rules for muzzleloader hunters [here](#).

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### Not legal

Despite what your buddies might tell you, or what your local shop sells, the following clothing is

not OK to hunt in during a big game gun season in Ontario:



### From the ministry

I contacted David Critchlow, provincial enforcement specialist for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry about misinterpretations of the regulations. Critchlow was happy to provide some clarity and plain talk about who must wear what and when. He summarized the law this way. “Essentially, if there is a gun season for moose, deer, or elk [open], *all* hunters, except people hunting migratory birds other than woodcock, must wear hunter orange.” Critchlow also confirmed that these regulations are in effect even if you are hunting inside a camouflaged ground blind.

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He also pointed out that, “Outside these gun seasons, the only requirement to wear hunter orange is for bear hunters who are *not* in a tree stand.”



Some upland hunting vests contain a bit of hunter orange. These are not acceptable when a big-game gun season is in progress.

Critchlow went on to offer this sage, common sense advice, “Of course, hunter orange is a good idea for anyone to wear in the bush, whether a hunter or not, during hunting season.”

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