

Dedicated hunter FAQ

What is a dedicated hunter?

A dedicated hunter is defined by the Firearms Control Act (FCA) as a person who is a member of an accredited association who has passed the relevant training course and who regularly participates in hunting activities.

Break that down please?

An accredited association means an association that has been accredited by the SAPS as a hunting association. This involves meeting quite a list of criteria, so it is not a simple thing to achieve.

The training course (and subsequent test) is meant to help a hunter who may not have all the needed skills to get up to speed. Those hunters who can convince their association that they are good enough should be able to skip the training and go straight to the test.

Regular participation is not defined by the legislation so the associations have had to make up their own. This varies from association to association but amounts to a certain number of hunting (or hunting related) activities in a year.

Why would I need to become a dedicated hunter?

The Act offers certain privileges to dedicated hunters. You may only have a maximum of four firearms for non-dedicated purposes, that means for occasional hunting, occasional sport shooting and self-defence, combined you may not have more than four firearms. However in the dedicated hunting category theoretically there is no limit to the number of firearms that can be licenced, provided you can motivate the application successfully. Also non-dedicated categories have limits on the amount of ammunition and primers that may be held, while for dedicated categories those limits are lifted.

How is bona-fide hunter different to dedicated hunter?

Bona-fide hunter was a category that existed in the old Arms and Ammunition Act of '69. To qualify you had to apply directly to the SAPS, and once you had it you did not need to do anything to keep it.

How do I become a dedicated hunter?

Go through your hunting association's training course if you need to, successfully pass the test and then fill in the application form. This application form may ask you to provide a hunting "CV", to give your association an idea of your hunting experience. Your application will then be considered by your association. No doubt there will be a charge from your association for this.

Is it as easy as that?

It is as easy as that to achieve it, but then you have to maintain your status.

Maintain dedicated hunter status? How?

Talk to your association on this subject as not all the associations have exactly the same requirements. As "active participation" is not defined by the legislation it is up to each association to specify what they require. You should find out what is expected of you before embarking on becoming dedicated, because if you cannot comply with those requirements you risk losing your dedicated status; which can have serious consequences for you.

You mean I can lose my dedicated status?

Yes you can, for a number of reasons:

- Failure to comply with your association's activity requirements
- Not maintaining your membership
- Your association revoking it as a result of disciplinary measures

Please explain each of those

- *Failure to comply with your association's activity requirements:*

CHASA for example require their dedicated members participate in three hunting or hunting related activities a year. These are not limited to activities within your association, any hunting activity will qualify. Examples of related activities would be: working up a load on the range, attending a talk on a hunting topic or participating in a club shoot. If you have any questions about what qualifies discuss them with your committee.

- *Not maintaining your membership:*

If you do not renew your membership with your association it is surely unreasonable to expect your association to keep you listed as an ordinary member, never mind a dedicated member. Here we must sound a friendly warning, it is your responsibility to inform your association if you change your details such as your address. If your association sends your renewal reminder to your old address and as a result you do not renew your membership that cannot be your association's fault.

- *Your association revoking it as a result of disciplinary measures*

If you have been found guilty of some form of misconduct and your membership is terminated you must obviously lose your dedicated status as well. Please take note that if you are found guilty of an offence that involves the Firearms Control Act your association is obliged to report this to the CFR in their annual report.

What if I cannot go on a hunt this year?

If you are unable to actually go on a hunt in a specific year all is not lost. There are many legitimate reasons why a hunter may not be able to go into the bush: financial reasons, being out of the country, medical condition etc. Taking part in your association's AGM, major shoots and other such events would all be taken into consideration in circumstances like this. You should probably approach your association the moment you realise you will be in this position.

What happens if I lose my dedicated status?

This can have very serious consequences for you. If you have used your dedicated status as motivation for your firearm licences, and you then lose that dedicated status it follows that the basis for you owning those firearms is potentially gone. Your association gives a report to the CFR at the end of the year of all members who have lost their dedicated status, you can expect the CFR to investigate whether you should still be entitled to keep your hunting firearms. Further, section 26 of the Act requires you to report to the Registrar (CFR) within 30 days if any of your circumstances have changed, losing your dedicated status would surely qualify as changed circumstances. In other words if you have not notified the CFR about your change of status and they only find out about it from your association's annual report you face being prosecuted for not reporting your change in circumstances as well as losing all your firearms. This is a very serious matter.

Can't I just join another association?

The various hunting associations have agreed to share names of those members who have lost their dedicated status with each other, so it won't be quite that easy. You may well have to explain to the new association why you were in trouble with your previous association.

What if I want to leave my association for another?

That can certainly be done. The mechanism would depend on which association you are moving to. If you are moving from one CHASA member association to another then your new association can check with the CHASA office to confirm your dedicated status and then register you as dedicated with your new association. As this change is internal to CHASA it will not involve the CFR. If you are not moving with the CHASA stable then you need to contact the new association and ask them to recognise your dedicated status with your current association, and then notify the CFR that you have changed associations and that they have awarded you dedicated status. That way when your old association reports you are no longer a member the CFR is aware of this and therefore do not need to investigate you. It is likely there will probably a charge for this to cover the admin involved.

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JULY 2007