

**BILL WALKER,
GOVERNOR**

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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Permit for Selling Big Game Trophies from an Estate

Dear Applicant:

Sale of big game trophies, skulls of big game animals (not including skulls of black bears, wolves, and wolverines), and any part of a brown bear is illegal without a permit issued by the Department of Fish and Game. Alaska regulation [5 ACC 92.031(b)] provides for the sale of game skins and trophies by a court appointed or duly authorized estate executor during a probate action. Permits are valid for six months and are renewable as long as the estate remains in probate. You may gift a big game trophy to anyone at any time without a permit.

Which species require a permit? A permit is required to sell trophies of species defined as big game in Alaska even if the animal was killed in another state or country. Those species are black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, muskox, and Dall sheep and wolves and wolverines taken under a hunting license. Wolves and wolverines taken under a trapping license are classified as furbearers, and hides or products made from hides of those species taken under a trapping license may be sold without a permit. The Department maintains harvest records for those species which include the type of license under which each animal was harvested and date of harvest.

What qualifies as a trophy? In Alaska “trophy” is legally defined as “a mount of a big game animal, including the skin of the head (cape) or the entire skin, in a lifelike representation of the animal, including a lifelike representation made from any part of a big game animal; “trophy” also includes a “European mount” in which the horns or antlers and the skull or a portion of the skull are mounted for display [5 ACC 92.990(42)]. Under certain conditions the Department believes that skulls of brown bears also qualify as trophies. Please see below.

Rugs – Rugs are also considered trophies, so a permit is required to sell them. The Department defines “rug” as the tanned skin of a big game animal including the skin of the head finished with a felt back and skull insert.

Skulls and antlers – A permit is required to sell skulls of big game animals except black bears, wolves, and wolverines. The Department will only issue permits for sale of skulls that are part of a “European mount” (horns/antlers attached to the skull or portion of skull) or skulls of brown bears that are cleaned and finished for display. In most cases horns or antlers that are not attached to any portion of a skull may be sold without a permit.

Game skins – Except for brown bear skins, tanned or untanned skins of big game animals including partial skins or whole skins that do not meet the definition of a “rug” may be sold without a permit. The Department will only issue permits to sell whole tanned brown bear skins

because partial skins or skins without paws and claws do not meet the legal definition of “game skin”.

Alaskan Trophies Outside Alaska – Unless the animal was taken with the intent of immediately exporting and selling a trophy made from it, sale of big game animal trophies taken in Alaska outside the state does not require a permit from Alaska or violate the Lacey Act.

Obtaining a Permit

To facilitate review and expedite processing of permit requests, the following items should be sent to this office as part of the permit application.

1. Completed application form (copy enclosed), including the full name of both the deceased and the executor (applicant) and signature of the applicant. Please provide detailed descriptions of all trophies including species, type of mount, etc.
2. A photocopy of a Letter of Testamentary, Letter of Administration, or Letter of Appointment authorizing the applicant to distribute the assets of the estate.
3. Application materials may be submitted to the Permits Section by e-mail, fax, or regular mail.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Permits Section at (907) 465-4148 or dfg.dwc.permits@alaska.gov or ADF&G, DWC, Permits Section, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811.

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