

** Amendments may be required to remain consistent with statutory authority.*

Proposal 88

5 AAC 92.104. Authorization for methods and means disability exemptions.

Allow Crossbow Use in Archery-Only Hunts and Areas for Qualifying Purple Heart Veterans with Physical Challenges and Alaskan Seniors Age 62 or over as follows:

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

Amend **5 AAC 92.104 (Authorization for methods and means disability exemptions)** by adding a new subsection for automatic authorization, and make conforming changes to 5 AAC 92.085 and 5 AAC 92.530 as needed.

Proposed new language (to insert as subsection (f) or similar):

“(f) Notwithstanding other provisions of this chapter, the department shall issue a methods and means exemption authorizing the use of a crossbow in any hunt or area restricted to bow and arrow only—including the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area under 5 AAC 92.530(7)—to an applicant who:

- (1) is an Alaska resident Purple Heart recipient and provides documentation of physical challenges (e.g., wheelchair confinement, prosthetics, or a VA-certified service-connected
- (2) disability that prevents effective use of a conventional bow); or is an Alaska resident 62 years of age or older;

and who possesses a valid ADF&G-approved crossbow education certification card. The exemption shall be issued upon one-time submission of proof of eligibility (Purple Heart/VA documentation for veterans; proof of age and residency for seniors) and shall remain valid for the life of the hunter (or five years, renewable). No physician statement is required for those meeting the above criteria. The crossbow must meet all requirements in 5 AAC 92.085(15). The department may include reasonable conditions for safety and fair chase.”

This applies **statewide**, explicitly including the DHCMA north of the Yukon River along the Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Current regulations prohibit crossbows in any hunt or area restricted to “bow and arrow only” (5 AAC 92.085). This includes premium archery-only hunts statewide and specific management areas such as:

- **The Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area (DHCMA)** (5 AAC 92.530(7)): Portions of Units 20 and 24–26 extending five miles from each side of the Dalton Highway (Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor), from the Yukon River north to the Arctic Ocean. In this corridor, big game may be taken by bow and arrow only (firearms are prohibited for big game hunting within the corridor).

While disabled hunters can seek individual **Methods and Means Disability Exemptions** (5 AAC 92.104), the process is burdensome for recurring use. Purple Heart veterans confined to wheelchairs, using prosthetics, or with other service-related physical challenges often cannot effectively draw or hold a conventional bow. Alaskan seniors age 62+ face similar age-related limitations but are not automatically eligible.

These restrictions limit access for deserving Alaskans in archery-only opportunities statewide **and specifically exclude them from the DHCMA north of the Yukon River**—a unique, remote area along the pipeline corridor that offers important hunting access via the Dalton Highway. Opening this corridor (and all archery areas) to qualifying crossbow users honors veterans’ service, supports senior participation, promotes hunter retention, and maintains fair chase and conservation goals without affecting bag limits, seasons, or wildlife populations.

Why is this proposal necessary? (Rationale and benefits)

- **Equity and access:** Provides meaningful opportunity for Purple Heart veterans and seniors in archery-only hunts **and the DHCMA**, where conventional bow use may be physically impossible.
- **Targeted and limited impact:** Only a small number of qualifying hunters; crossbows must still meet strict standards (100 lb draw, etc.) and certification requirements. No change to seasons, bag limits, or overall harvest.
- **Administrative efficiency:** One-time approval vs. repeated per-hunt exemptions.
- **Precedent and fairness:** Builds on existing disabled veteran free licenses and senior programs. The DHCMA was established for access and wildlife protection—allowing crossbows for these groups aligns with that intent while removing unnecessary barriers.
- **Other solutions considered:** None. The current exemption process is too cumbersome for statewide and corridor use by clearly defined groups.

Supporting information (attach if desired):

- Your Purple Heart documentation or personal story.
- Letters from veterans’ groups, senior organizations, or local Advisory Committees.
- Current ADF&G crossbow and exemption forms.

This updated proposal ensures Purple Heart veterans with physical challenges and seniors 62+ can hunt ethically with crossbows in archery-only areas **throughout Alaska, including the important Dalton Highway/Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor north of the Yukon River.**

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

PROPOSED BY: Daniel McDowell, The Last Frontiersman (OI-F26-027)
