

Are crossbows legal in California?

Using a **crossbow** for hunting is **legal** during all gun seasons. While a **crossbow** is not considered an *archery* weapon in **California**, it can be used as one (during archery season) by people with a disability or disease that makes it impossible for them to manually draw and hold the draw on a regular, vertical bow.

What states require a bow hunter safety course?

Any person who wishes to bow hunt in the following states is required to have a Bow Hunter Education Certificate: **Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Vermont**. The course can be taken in California to meet any state's requirement.

Where can I hunt in California and where do I get my hunting license?

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting>

Where do I find all the hunting regulations for each type of animal and bowstyle? <http://www.fgc.ca.gov/regulations/current/mammalregs.aspx>

§354. Archery Equipment and Crossbow Regulations.

- (a) Bow, as used in these regulations, means any device consisting of a flexible material having a string connecting its two ends and used to propel an arrow held in a firing position by hand only. Bow, includes long bow, recurve or compound bow.
- (b) Crossbow, as used in these regulations means any device consisting of a bow or cured latex band or other flexible material (commonly referred to as a linear bow) affixed to a stock, or any bow that utilizes any device attached directly or indirectly to the bow for the purpose of keeping a crossbow bolt, an arrow or the string in a firing position. Except as provided in [subsection 354\(j\)](#), a crossbow is not archery equipment and cannot be used during the archery deer season.
- (c) For the taking of big game, hunting arrows and crossbow bolts with a broad head type blade which will not pass through a hole seven-eighths inch in diameter shall be used. Mechanical/retractable broad heads shall be measured in the open position. For the taking of migratory game birds, resident small game, furbearers and nongame mammals and birds any arrow or crossbow bolt may be used except as prohibited by subsection (d) below. Notwithstanding the general prohibition of the use of lights in Fish and Game Code section 2005, arrows or crossbow bolts with lighted nocks that do not emit a directional beam of light may be used.
- (d) No arrows or crossbow bolt with an explosive head or with any substance which would tranquilize or poison any animal may be used. No arrows or crossbow bolt without flu-flu fletching may be used for the take of pheasants and migratory game birds, except for provisions of section 507(a)(2).
- (e) No arrow or crossbow bolt may be released from a bow or crossbow upon or across any highway, road or other way open to vehicular traffic.
- (f) No bow or crossbow may be used which will not cast a legal hunting arrow, except flu-flu arrows, a horizontal distance of 130 yards.
- (g) Except as described in [subsection 354\(j\)](#), crossbows may not be used to take game birds and game mammals during archery seasons.
- (h) Except as provided in [subsection 353\(g\)](#) of these regulations and in Section 4370 of the Fish and Game Code, archers may not possess a firearm while hunting in the field during any archery season, or while hunting during a general season under the provisions of an archery only tag.
- (i) No person may nock or fit the notch in the end of an arrow to a bowstring or crossbow string in a ready-to-fire position while in or on any vehicle.
- (j) Upon application to the department, the department may issue a Disabled Archer Permit free of any charge or fee, to any person with a physical disability, as defined in 354(k), which prevents him/her from being able to draw and hold a bow in a firing position. The Disabled Archer Permit authorizes the disabled archer to use a crossbow or device which holds a string and arrow in the firing position to assist in the taking of birds and mammals under the conditions of an archery tag or during archery season.
- (1) Applications for a Disabled Archer Permit as specified in Section 702 shall be submitted to the department at the address specified on the application....

How important is the draw weight of my bow for hunting?

Draw Weight or Energy? www.realtree.com/bowhunting/articles/low-poundage-bowhunting

Many state bowhunting regulations were written years ago, when recurves and less efficient compound bow designs dominated the deer woods. At that time, 40 pounds was often the draw-weight minimum published in state regulations, and that figure still stands in many places today. Perhaps it is an easy place to start and a good, round number to settle on as the ethical minimum for bowhunting. But is comparing a 40-pound recurve to a modern 35-pound compound a fair comparison? Which is easier for a new hunter to shoot? Where do draw length, arrow weight and broadhead design—all significant factors in penetration—factor in? Obviously, some of these lines are blurred, and it's one reason many states have done away with draw-weight minimums. That's not to say shooting adequate poundage isn't important when bowhunting—it is, but primarily because it's a large factor in the amount of kinetic energy a bow and arrow setup can produce. But these days, due to advancements in archery technology, it's possible to get enough kinetic energy to deliver a lethal hit on a big-game animal without relying exclusively on heavy draw weight provided, of course, the hunter can place the arrow in the right spot.

“Because shot placement is so important when bowhunting whitetails, it's difficult to say what the minimum draw weight or kinetic energy should be,” says Mitch King, director of government relations for the Archery Trade Association. “It has more to do with hunter ethics than anything. If I take a 90-yard shot with my 70-pound compound at a deer, the odds of making an ethical hit aren't good. But, a skilled shooter with a 35-pound bow is very likely to kill a deer when shooting at it from 10 or 15 yards. We've (the ATA) had technical committees compare the performance of recurves and compounds, and we routinely find that even today's very light compounds are outshooting the 40-pound recurves that were the benchmark minimum when many bowhunting regulations were set years ago.”

So, in the big picture, things boil down to a case-by-case basis and two factors—the hunter doing the shooting and the critter being hunted. Shot placement is the most important part of bowhunting regardless of your setup, but it's especially important with a lightweight setup. The story above proves that 28 pounds of energy behind a sharp, fixed-blade broadhead is “enough” to do the job within seconds on a hefty pig, a game animal with a reputation of being physically difficult to kill with a bow. But, if that hit had been a few inches forward, the shoulder blade likely would've changed the outcome. On the flip side, the same setup may not be adequate if the arrow were to hit even a rib on a larger animal such as an elk or bear. So a good conclusion could be that 30 or so pounds of energy is a good minimum starting point for whitetails and similar-sized game at close range, provided the shooter can place the arrow with absolute precision. With cutting edge technology being delivered in youth and ladies bows by a variety of manufacturers, that opens the door to a lot of new potential bowhunters—and that's kind of the idea, right?