



# CONGESTED SHOOTING AREA ORDINANCE REVISIONS

## CONGESTED SHOOTING AREA *RESIDENTS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*

One of Washoe County's adopted strategic goals for Fiscal Year 2015-16 is to work together to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment for all of Washoe County's residents. To help answer some of the questions, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers are provided below about congested shooting area revisions in unincorporated Washoe County.

### ***Question 1: What is a Congested Shooting Area?***

**Answer 1:** Nevada State Law (NRS 244.364-3) states that "A board of county commissioners may proscribe by ordinance or regulation the unsafe discharge of firearms." The Congested Shooting Area is the area determined by the Washoe County Commission wherein the discharge of firearms would result in the greatest risk of injury to people.

### ***Question 2: What is considered a "firearm"?***

**Answer 2:** By county ordinance the term "firearm" means any weapon the discharge of which in the ordinary manner contemplated by its design and construction will or is likely to cause death or great bodily harm. This includes the following:

- Pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, machine gun, submachine gun, muzzle loading firearm, black powder weapon, b-b gun, air rifle, bow, or crossbow.

### ***Question 3: Why did the County Commission change the current boundary?***

**Answer 3:** Residential areas within Washoe County have been growing and in many locations subdivisions containing multiple residences are outside the congested boundary. Additionally annexation of lands by the City of Reno, where discharge within the city limits is prohibited, are not properly identified. Another factor is the increase of outdoor recreation that the citizens in this area enjoy, increases the density of people in areas where safety conflicts have been reported. The County Commission takes its role of providing a safe area to live very seriously and the existing boundary is not adequate.

### ***Question 4: The old boundary had square edges, but many locations of the new boundary are not straight, why is that?***

**Answer 4:** The old boundary followed section lines laid out and used for surveying. Those work well if you have a map, and more importantly know how to navigate with the map. Many people rely on smart phones these days, and do not use maps. The new boundary in locations where it was possible use landmarks to denote the boundary. An example of this is the use of the main Peavine Peak access roadway which now serves as the congested area boundary.



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**Question 5: I understand that I cannot shoot in an area designated as congested; does that mean that I can shoot everywhere else?**

**Answer 5:** Along with the congested area boundary, Washoe County Code includes safety regulations for areas outside the boundary. In Washoe County the following also applies:

- It is unlawful to discharge a firearm across a federal highway, state highway, county road or highway.
- Except in the Warm Springs Defined Area you cannot discharge a gun, pistol, rifle or other firearm, with the exception of shotguns, air rifles or B-B guns, within 5,000 feet of any occupied dwelling.
- Except in the Warm Springs Defined Area you cannot discharge any shotgun, air rifle or B-B gun within 1,000 feet of any dwelling.

**Question 6: What about in the Warm Springs Defined Area?**

**Answer 6:** In the Warm Springs Defined Area you may discharge any firearm as long as you are not within 500 feet of a dwelling located on another parcel.

**Question 7: How do I know if I am in the boundary or out of it?**

**Answer 7:** The Washoe County Technology Services Department administers geospatial data through the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) division. This information is available in a web version as well as a mobile version for use on your smartphone.

<http://wcgisweb.washoecounty.us/CongestedAreas/>

**Question 8: What about Hunting?**

**Answer 8:** The ordinance now contemplates that there are areas within the congested shooting boundary that may be well suited for big game hunting. Due to the increased education specific to Hunter's Safety and the ability to obtain a license an exemption specific to large game hunting has been inserted to allow active hunting within the congested boundary:

- If you are in the possession of and while lawfully hunting under the authority of a valid big game tag issued by the Nevada Department of Wildlife and are further than 5,000 feet from a dwelling you may hunt with any legal weapon.
- Additionally you may hunt by the use of archery equipment as long as you are further than 1,000 feet from an occupied dwelling.

**Question 9: You mentioned big game, what about bird hunting?**

**Answer 9:** The ordinance does not allow for hunting birds and small game within the congested area boundary.



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**Question 10:** *If I see someone shooting illegally, what can I do?*

**Answer 10:** The Washoe County Sheriff's Office should be immediately contacted at 775-785-WCSO (9276).