



# Changes to applying for a Blue Mountains hunting ballot

You'll soon be able to apply for a Blue Mountains hunting ballot entirely online - but there's a few things you need to know.

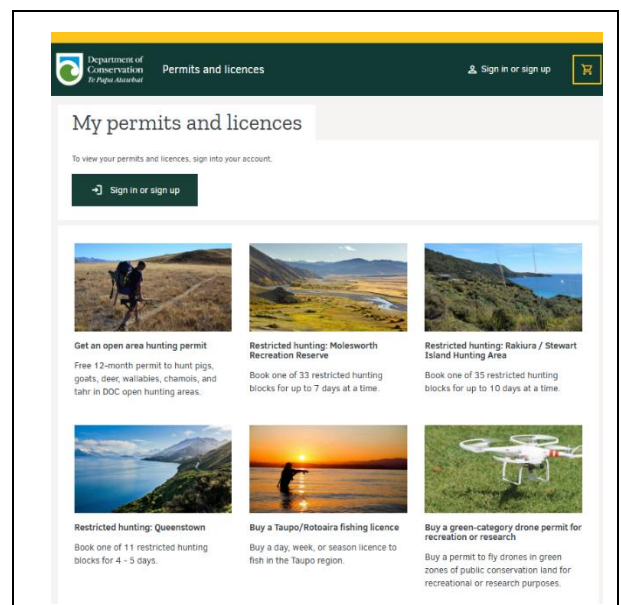
These changes will be introduced in early May. Here's a quick summary of the key changes.

## 1 Blue Mountains ballot applications will be managed through DOC's hunting permit system

DOC's hunting permit system is already used by hunters to book restricted hunting blocks on Stewart Island / Rakiura, Queenstown and the Molesworth Recreation Reserve and to get open hunting area permits. You can even use it to get a Lake Taupō or Lake Rotoaira fishing licence, and a permit to fly a drone on public conservation land.

From early May, you'll be able to use the system to apply for a Blue Mountains ballot, manage your hunting party and pay your administration fees, all online.

You can access the hunting permits system through <https://permits-licences.doc.govt.nz/>.



## 2 You'll need to set up an account in the system

To apply for a ballot or join a hunting party, you must have an account in the system.

Setting up an account doesn't cost you anything and only takes a few minutes. To set up an account you must have an email address that is unique to you. You can set up your account now by going into the DOC permits portal (<https://permits-licences.doc.govt.nz/>), selecting the 'Sign in or Sign up' button and then clicking the 'Sign up now' link at the bottom of the page. You'll be required to verify your e-mail address and set up a password.

If you already have an account for booking Stewart Island / Rakiura, Queenstown, Molesworth, or open hunting areas, you can use the same account—no need to create a new one.



## 3 Ballots will still be run monthly, but you won't be able to specify the exact dates you want to hunt

When applying for your ballot spot, you can indicate if you want a ballot spot on a weekend or a weekday for your preferred block. **However, you cannot specify what weekend or weekday you prefer.** If you have a bit more flexibility in your schedule can choose the 'Any dates' option to maximise your chance of winning a ballot. In this case, you'll be offered any available slot in the month for your preferred block.

Ballots will still be run monthly. Weekly ballot periods will be standardised and will NOT take public holidays into account. The standardised periods are **Monday – Wednesday, Thursday – Friday, or Saturday – Sunday.** These periods will not be adjusted if an observed public holiday falls on either a Monday or Friday.

If a weekly period runs over two months, the entire booking period will be available in one of the months (e.g. if the Monday and Tuesday falls on the last two days of a month and the Wednesday is the first day of the following month, the full 3-day period will be available in either the earlier or latter month's ballot). This will eliminate the historical practice of offering truncated hunting periods at the start or end of each month.

## 4 You can only be part of one application for each monthly ballot

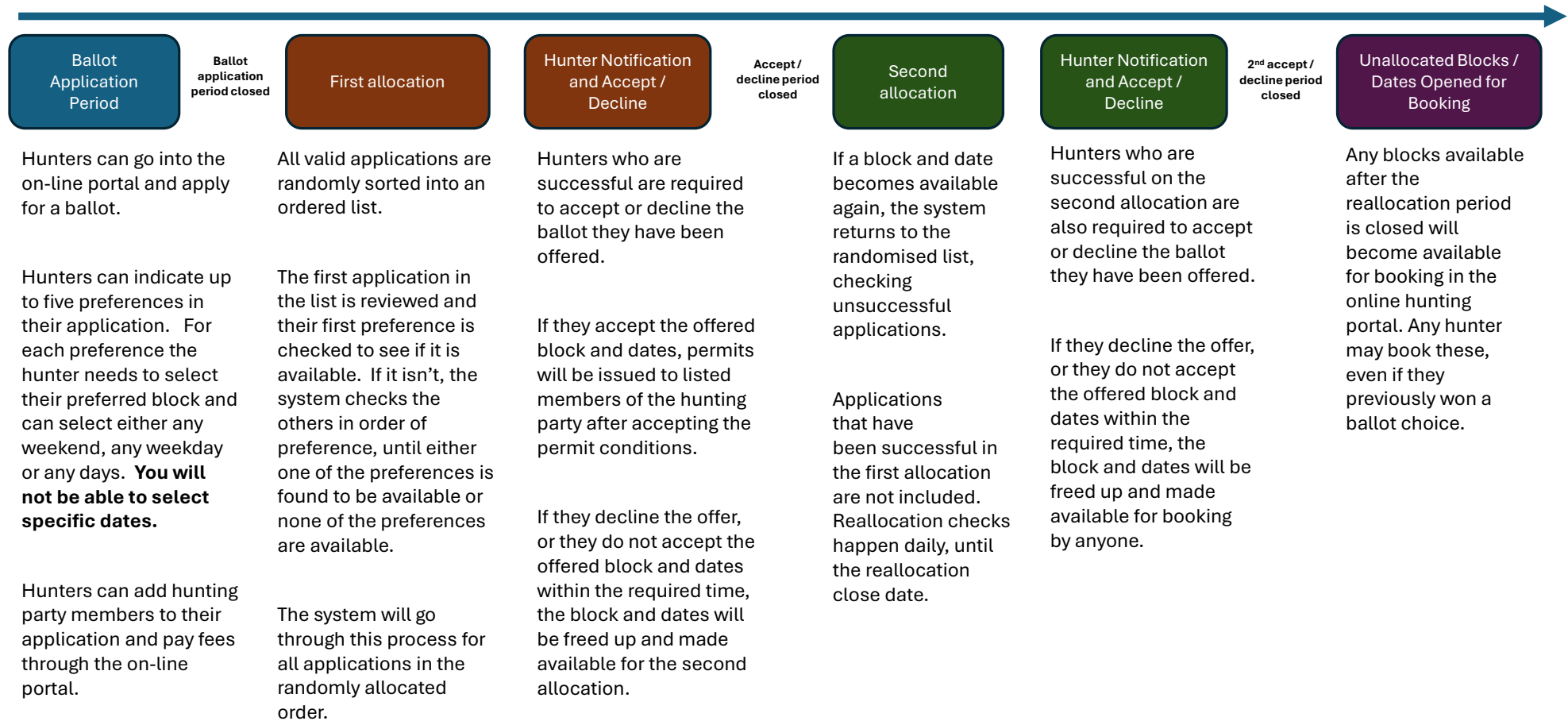
DOC wants to make sure that ballots are allocated fairly, and all hunters have an equal chance of securing an opportunity to go hunting.

To this end, hunters can only be part of one application for each monthly ballot event. If you are the person who has made the application, that is the only application you can be a part of. If someone else invites you to be part of another application, you'll need to decline that invitation. If you are invited to be a party member in multiple applications, you will need to accept one and decline the others.

**NOTE:** If DOC detects that a hunter has used different accounts to submit multiple applications, all applications that include that hunter will be excluded from the draw.

## 5 There will be two rounds of ballot allocations, and any unallocated spots remaining after the second round will be available to book on a 'first come, first serve' basis

The system aims to maximise hunting days through the ballot allocation process. To achieve this, the ballot allocation process will go through several steps once the ballot application process has closed:



**IMPORTANT:** If you are successful and you are offered a block and date, you must accept the offer before the ballot is confirmed and your permit is issued. If you don't accept the offer within the specified timeframe, the offer will be rescinded and the block and date will be made available for the second chance allocation.

## 6 July will be the first ballot run in the system

We'll continue using the current process for all ballots up to and including the June ballot. The July ballot will be run entirely through the new system with paper or scanned forms no longer being accepted once applications for the June ballot close. The key dates for the July ballot are as follows:

	July Ballot
Applications open	Thursday 7 May
Applications close	Monday 1 June
1 <sup>st</sup> allocation notification	Saturday 6 June
Hunters must accept or decline offered ballots by:	Friday 12 June
2 <sup>nd</sup> allocation round completed by:	Thursday 18 June
Unallocated blocks / dates available for general booking	Saturday 20 June
First hunting day	Thursday 2 July

## 7 You'll be able to choose up to five ballot options in preferential order

When applying for a ballot, you'll be able to select up to five ballot options (the block you want plus whether you want any weekend, any weekday or any time in the month) in preferential order.

You'll also be able to see statistics on each block showing the typical level of demand for that block. This will help you identify the blocks where you have the best chance of success.

**Once you submit your ballot application, you cannot change your preferred options.** You can, however, go back into your application and add people to, or remove people from, your hunting party, or update hunting party member details.

For your ballot application to be included in the ballot draw, you must have paid administration fees before the draw is made and you'll need to make sure your hunting party meets the minimum party size requirements.

## **⑧ Hunting Party Members must agree to be part of a ballot application, and – if the application is successful – agree to the associated conditions before being issued their permit**

After the system goes live, everyone in your hunting party will need their own permit.

When you apply for a ballot, you'll be able to list the other members of your hunting party. They'll be sent an e-mail or text message alerting them that they have been included in your application. Through the on-line system, they must confirm that they are happy to be part of the application (and they can only be part of one application each month).

If the application is successful, each hunting party member will also need to review and accept the terms and conditions before being issued their permit. Anyone hunting without a permit – even if they are part of a successful application – is doing so illegally.

## **⑨ We will resume charging application fees**

Currently, DOC has paused taking application fees for Blue Mountains ballots. When these ballots are transitioned to the new hunting permits system, we will start charging application fees again.

However, through the new system, you will be able to pay your fees online using a credit or debit card when you make your application.

## **⑩ Don't have an e-mail address or internet connection?**

To use the system, you will need to have internet access and an e-mail address that is unique to you. If you don't have these, you can still apply for a ballot by calling 0800 ASK DOC (0800 275 362) or e-mailing [info@doc.govt.nz](mailto:info@doc.govt.nz). The DOC Customer Service Centre can make a ballot application on your behalf, and you can be notified of your application result by text or via post.

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## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Why are we moving the Blue Mountains ballots onto the hunting permits system?**

This is all part of DOC's push to have a more nationally consistent approach to issuing hunting permits. Hunters have also asked for a greater ability to do things online. The hunting permits system was initially rolled out for the Stewart Island / Rakiura restricted blocks, and since then has been extended to cover permits for open hunting areas, and book restricted blocks in Queenstown and on the Molesworth Recreation Reserve.

Incorporating the Blue Mountains ballots into the system is the next step in the evolution of the hunting permits system. Following on from this, the system will be expanded to cater for further hunting ballots in 2026.

### **When are these changes going to be introduced?**

The first ballot for the Blue Mountains will be for the July 2026 monthly ballot. Applications for this ballot will open on 7 May.

## Can I still use the MS Word or .pdf application form to apply for a ballot once the hunting permits system is live?

No. Applications for the July ballot and beyond must be made in the system. Paper or scanned application forms will not be accepted.

## How do I set up an account in the system?

Setting up an account is easy. It only takes a few minutes and doesn't cost you anything. You just need to go into the hunting permits system and opt to sign up for a new account. You'll need a unique e-mail address (i.e. one that is just used by you) and you'll be asked to verify that email. Once you have done that, it's just a case of setting your password, and entering your address and date of birth.

If you forget your password, you can use the 'Forgot your password?' function to reset it.

## I've already set up an account in the system. Can I use this to apply for a Blue Mountains ballot?

Yes. You will be able to use the same account to book restricted blocks in Queenstown, Stewart Island / Rakiura and in the Molesworth Recreation Reserve. You can also use it to get an open hunting permit.

## When I apply for a ballot, can I specify the dates I want?

No. You can indicate if you want a ballot spot on a weekend or a weekday for your preferred block. **However, you cannot specify what weekend or weekday you prefer.** If you have a bit more flexibility in your schedule can choose the 'Any dates' option to maximise your chance of winning a ballot.

## Why are there now two rounds of ballot allocations?

Eventually, the ballot process introduced with the Blue Mountains will be rolled out to all hunting ballots across New Zealand. This means that the ballots process will be standardised nationally, and it's been agreed that every ballot should have two allocation rounds to try and maximise the chance of a successful ballot.

Although this is a significant change for Blue Mountains hunters, it just means that hunters who were unsuccessful in the first allocation can have another go at getting a ballot if someone subsequently decides they don't want the ballot that was offered to them.

## If I am successful with my ballot application but don't accept the spot I am offered, what happens to that spot?

If you don't accept the ballot spot you've been offered, then the system will assume that you no longer want that spot and make it available to other hunters, either through the second round of allocations or as a leftover block once the second allocation process has concluded.

Accepting an offered ballot spot is easy. You will just have to log into your account, review and accept the terms and conditions for your spot, and your permit will be issued immediately.

## Will I still be able to book blocks that haven't been allocated through the ballot process?

Yes. After the second allocation has been completed, any leftover blocks and time periods will be made available on a first come, first serve basis. These leftovers – which will normally be made available on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the previous month - can also be booked through the hunting permits system.

While the leftovers are open to anyone, any hunters who were unsuccessful with their ballot application will be notified when these blocks are available. If you book one of the leftover blocks, there is no charge and you can book these blocks right up to the day before hunting is due to begin.

## Why do hunting party members need their own permit?

Part of the wider changes to the way hunting permits are managed is to ensure that every individual hunter has a permit rather than just be a part of a group permit. This approach has been rolled out with the way restricted hunting blocks are permitted and ensures that every individual is aware of, and have accepted, the terms and conditions of hunting on that block.

## What happens if a hunting party member doesn't agree to be part of a ballot application or accept permit conditions?

If a hunting party member doesn't agree to be part of a ballot application, then they won't be included in the hunting party if the application is successful. Similarly, if they don't accept the permit conditions, they won't be issued with their permit.

The hunters who make the ballot application, will be able to see the status of their listed hunting party members. They are also able to re-add any hunting party members who have been removed from the ballot application.

## Are there any changes to the way I get the gate access code?

No. Anyone who needs vehicle access through the Ernslaw One blocks during a weekday will still need to get the gate access code as they do now (details are on the DOC website). For those hunting on weekends, codes will be sent to you on the preceding Friday.

## What happens if I don't have an e-mail address or don't want to set up an account?

You can still apply for a ballot, but you'll need to contact DOC calling 0800 ASK DOC (0800 275 362) or emailing [info@doc.govt.nz](mailto:info@doc.govt.nz).

If you are invited to be part of a hunting party, you will need to set up an account and accept the invitation and permit conditions for that block. Again, if you don't want to set up an account or don't have an e-mail address then you will need to contact DOC and they can accept or decline the invitation on your behalf.

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## Need further help?

Call DOC on 0800 ASK DOC (0800 275 362) or e-mail [info@doc.govt.nz](mailto:info@doc.govt.nz).

[www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/)