



SWIFT COUNTY ORDINANCE No. 2026-01

MAINTAINING FIREARM LIMITATIONS FOR DEER HUNTING IN SWIFT COUNTY

WHEREAS, since 1942, the State of Minnesota had restricted the types of firearms used to hunt deer due to concerns with landowner rights, hunter and public safety, and prudent management of the State's deer population; and,

WHEREAS, during its 2025 session, the Minnesota Legislature adopted, and the Governor signed, an Act effective for the 2026 firearms deer hunting season, repealing Minnesota Statute § 97B.318: **ARMS USE AREAS AND RESTRICTIONS; REGULAR FIREARMS SEASON**. which designated Swift County as part of the shotgun-only use deer hunting area; and,

WHEREAS, that same act added Minnesota Statute § 97B.031, subdivision 7, which permits a County Board of Commissioners to adopt an ordinance, after notice and public hearing, to limit the types of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within its county, including restrictions of the same scope and type previously allowed by the former Minnesota Statute § 97B.318; and,

WHEREAS, the Swift County Board of Commissioners finds that the extent of firearms limitations contained in the former Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318 promotes the health, safety and welfare of residents, guests, and hunters within Swift County; mitigates incidents of potential trespass by discharge of firearms or entry onto another's land; and, preserves the ability to responsibly manage Swift County deer populations; and,

WHEREAS, the Swift County Board of Commissioners is empowered by Minnesota Statute § 97B.031, subd. 7, to maintain such firearms limitations as were contained in the former Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318 through the adoption of an ordinance after due notice and public hearing; and,

WHEREAS, having now held the duly noticed public hearing required by law on _____, 2026, and considering the written and oral comments offered by the public, the Swift County Board of Commissioners finds preservation of the shotgun use area for the firearms deer hunting season in Swift County is prudent and appropriate;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Swift County Board of Commissioners does hereby ordain:

AN ORDINANCE LIMITING FIREARMS ALLOWED FOR DEER HUNTING IN SWIFT COUNTY

Section 1. SHOTGUN USE AREA AND FIREARMS LIMITATION

- 1.1 The "shotgun use area" for purposes of this Ordinance is defined as the entire territory within the boundaries of Swift County, State of Minnesota.
- 1.2 During the regular firearms deer hunting season in the shotgun use area, only legal shotguns loaded with single-slug shotgun shells, legal muzzle-loading long guns, and legal handguns may be used for taking deer. Legal shotguns include those with rifled barrels.

Section 2. PENALTIES

A violation of this ordinance shall be deemed a misdemeanor and that violation may be punished as such with up to the corresponding maximum penalty allowed by Minnesota Statutes §§ 375.53, 609.033, 609.034, or other applicable law.

Section 3. ENFORCEMENT

The Swift County Sheriff, Swift County Deputy Sheriffs, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conservation officers have the authority to enforce the provisions of this ordinance.

Section 4. EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect _____, 2026, and remain in effect until such time it is proactively repealed in accordance with law.

ADOPTED by the Swift County Board of Commissioners this ____th day of _____, 2026.

Eric Rudningen, County Board Chair

ATTEST:

Tesa Tomaschett, County Administrator

Seal