

West Virginia Recreational Use Statute

WEST VIRGINIA CODE ANNOTATED

CHAPTER 19. AGRICULTURE

ARTICLE 25. LIMITING LIABILITY OF LANDOWNERS

W. Va. Code s 19-25-1 (1994)

s 19-25-1. Purpose

The purpose of this article is to encourage owners of land to make available to the public land and water areas for military training or recreational or wildlife propagation purposes by limiting their liability toward persons entering thereon and toward persons who may be injured or otherwise damaged by the acts or omissions of persons entering thereon.

W. Va. Code s 19-25-2 (1994)

s 19-25-2. Limiting duty of landowner generally

Subject to the provisions of section four [s 19-25-4] of this article, an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes, or to give any warning of a dangerous or hazardous condition, use, structure or activity on such premises to persons entering for such purposes.

Subject to the provisions of section four of this article, an owner of land who either directly or indirectly invites or permits without charge any person to use such property for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes does not thereby (a) extend any assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose, or (b) confer upon such persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed, or (c) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of such persons.

W. Va. Code s 19-25-3 (1994)

s 19-25-3. Limiting duty of landowner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to federal, state, county or municipal government or any agency thereof

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, an owner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to the federal government or any agency thereof, or the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency thereof, for military training or recreational or wildlife propagation purposes owes no duty of care to keep that land safe for entry or use by others or to give warning to persons entering or going upon the land of any dangerous or hazardous conditions, uses, structures or activities thereon. An owner who grants a lease, easement or license of land to the federal government or any agency thereof, or the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency

thereof, for military training or recreational or wildlife propagation purposes does not by giving a lease, easement or license: (a) Extend any assurance to any person using the land that the premises are safe for any purpose; or (b) confer upon those persons the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or (c) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property caused by an act or omission of a person who enters upon the leased land. The provisions of this section apply whether the person entering upon the leased land is an invitee, licensee, trespasser or otherwise.

W.Va. Codes 19-25-4(1994)

s 19-25-4. Application of article

Nothing herein limits in any way any liability which otherwise exists: (a) For willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against a dangerous or hazardous condition, use, structure or activity; or (b) for injury suffered in any case where the owner of land charges the person or persons who enter or go on the land other than the amount, if any, paid to the owner of the land by the federal government or any agency thereof, the state or any agency thereof, or any county or municipality or agency thereof.

Nothing herein creates a duty of care or ground of liability for injury to person or property.

Nothing herein limits in any way the obligation of a person entering upon or using the land of another for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes to exercise due care in his or her use of such land and in his or her activities thereon.

W. Va. Code s 19-25-5 (1994)

s 19-25-5. Definitions

Unless the context used clearly requires a different meaning, as used in this article:

(1) "Charge" means:

(A) For purposes of limiting liability for recreational or wildlife propagation purposes set forth in section two of this article, the amount of money asked in return for an invitation to enter or go upon the land, including a one-time fee for a particular event, amusement, occurrence, adventure, incident, experience or occasion which may not exceed fifty dollars a year per recreational participant;

(B) For purposes of limiting liability for military training set forth in section six of this article, the amount of money asked in return for an invitation to enter or go upon the land;

(2) "Land" includes, but shall not be limited to, roads, water, watercourses, private ways and buildings, structures and machinery or equipment thereon when attached to the realty;

(3) "Noncommercial recreational activity" shall not include any activity for which there is any charge which exceeds fifty dollars per year, per participant;

(4) "Owner" includes, but shall not be limited to, tenant, lessee, occupant or person in control of the premises;

(5) "Recreational purposes" includes, but shall not be limited to , any one or any combination of the following noncommercial recreational activities: Hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle riding, bicycling, horseback riding, nature study, water skiing, winter sports and visiting, viewing or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic or scientific sites or otherwise using land for purposes of the user;

(6) "Wildlife propagation purposes" applies to and includes all ponds, sediment control structures, permanent water impoundments or any other similar or like structure created or constructed as a result of or in connection with surface-mining activities, as governed by article three [s 22-3-1], chapter twenty-two of this code, or from the use of surface in the conduct of underground coal mining as governed by said article, and rules promulgated thereunder, which ponds, structures or impoundments are hereafter designated and certified in writing by the director of the division of environmental protection and the owner to be necessary and vital to the growth and propagation of wildlife, animals, birds and fish or other forms of aquatic life, and finds and determines that the premises has the potential of being actually used by the wildlife for those purposes and that the premises are no longer used or necessary for mining reclamation purposes. The certification shall be in form satisfactory to the director and shall provide that the designated ponds, structures or impoundments shall not be removed without the joint consent of the director and the owner; and

(7) "Military training" includes, but it not limited to, training, encampments, instruction, overflight by military aircraft, parachute drops of personnel or equipment or other use of land by a member of the army national guard or air national guard, a member of a reserve unit of the armed forces of the United States or a person on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, acting in that capacity.