

Resource document:
**Winter
Hunting**

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Narrative:

Hunting with firearms sounds dangerous, but data from the National Shooting Sports Foundation tells a different story. Hunting is number three on the top-10 list of the safest sporting activities. Only camping and billiards are safer.

Deer hunting is the most popular type of hunting in the U.S. According to the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife- Associated Recreation, there were 10.1 million deer hunters that year, which is nearly four times greater than the second most hunted species: turkey.

For people over 16 years of age, approximately one in every 25 Americans and eight in 10 hunters hunted deer in 2006. Their total hunting-related trip and equipment expenditures while seeking deer totaled \$8.9 billion.

Deer/vehicle collisions occur much more frequently than do accidents while hunting with firearms. For example, Georgia officials report approximately 50,000 such collisions annually, 20,000 per year are reported in neighboring Alabama.

The chances of being injured in a deer/vehicle collision are much greater than firearms related hunting accidents.

Key Messages:

During the period 2007-2011, there were nine reported hunting-related injuries to Soldiers. Of those, two were Soldiers who were not hunting, but were accidentally shot (one fatally) by a hunter.

Simply because of the low number of Soldier hunting accidents is no reason to become complacent with the handling of firearms while hunting.

Collisions between vehicles and deer occur tens of thousands of times per year and cause many more injuries and fatalities than those which occur while hunting deer with

firearms.

Constant development means deer and human habitats overlap more often, and the time change will increase deer sightings because dusk will correspond with traffic at the end of the work day.

Talking points:

Risks of being involved in deer-car collisions increase during the breeding season and during the times of year when food supplies are lowest, such as late-winter and early spring.

Deer are active at dawn and dusk and often move in groups and because of competition for habitat and food, deer may now be found in urban settings.

Hunting is number three on the top-10 list of the safest sporting activities. Only camping and billiards are safer.

Treat a hunting rifle the same as you do a service rifle. Negligent discharges from a hunting rifle are as deadly as those from a service rifle.

Never swerve to miss hitting a deer. Once you swerve, you are at a much greater risk of hitting oncoming traffic, a tree, a guard rail, a light post, or running into a ditch. The damage from hitting a deer is often minimal in comparison to hitting one of those other objects. Injury is also a lot more likely when you swerve to miss a deer. The potential for losing control of your vehicle and crashing greatly outweighs the consequences of the deer strike. This advice was published in the Oct. 18, 2012, issue of the Army Flier at Fort Rucker, Ala., from Michael Murphy, base Staff Judge Advocate.

Tips:

Be aware that deer represent a legitimate hazard to all motorists, not just Soldiers.

Deer may now be found in urban areas, don't think you won't encounter them just because you're not in a rural area.

More injuries occur from deer/vehicle collisions than from hunting related accidents.

While hunting with firearms, treat a hunting rifle the same way you do a service rifle.

Historical Reference:

<https://safety.army.mil/>

<http://www.afhsc.mil/home>

<http://www.usariem.army.mil/>

Statistics:

Deer populations vary by state, ranging from an estimated at 900,000 in Georgia to four million in Texas, according to the Outdoor Channel website.

An insurance company (State Farm) estimated there was a total of 101,299 deer-vs.-car incidents in Pennsylvania in the second half of 2010 and the first half of 2011. No other state reached six digits.

For people over 16 years of age, approximately 1 in every 25 Americans and 8 in 10 hunters hunted deer in 2006.

The estimated total economic impact from deer hunting is approximately \$8.9 billion.

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Deer populations vary by state, ranging from an estimated at 900,000 in Georgia to four

million in Texas, according to the Outdoor Channel website.

“Deer-car collisions are a serious threat to motorists throughout the U.S. Based on information supplied by State Farm, Alabama’s motorists are involved in well over 20,000 deer vs. car collisions each year,” said Fred Harders, acting director, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources. “These collisions not only cause significant property damage, but also can result in serious injury or even death,”

Motorists should be particularly cautious at dawn and dusk, he added. Deer are most active at these times of day and visibility also can be impaired due to the rising or setting sun. Risks of being involved in deer-car collisions also increase during the breeding season and during the times of year when food supplies are lowest, such as late-winter and early spring.

Deer hunting is unquestionably the most popular type of hunting in the U.S. According to the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife- Associated Recreation, there were 10.1 million deer hunters in 2006, which is nearly four times greater than the second most hunted species: turkey. For people over 16 years of age, approximately 1 in every 25 Americans and 8 in 10 hunters hunted deer in 2006. Their total hunting-related trip and equipment expenditures while seeking deer totaled \$8.9 billion.

"Soldiers who go hunting need to treat their hunting weapons the same way they're trained to handle their service weapons," said Col. Kenneth Biland, deputy commander, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, Fort Rucker, Ala. "Those of us who enjoy hunting understand that negligent discharges with a hunting rifle can be just as deadly as one with a service rifle."

Data supplied by the National Shooting Sports Foundation indicates that hunters do recognize the importance of safely handling weapons while hunting. It's third on the top-10 list of the safest sports activity, only camping and billiards are safer.

For additional information, visit:

<https://safety.army.mil>

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Constant development means deer and human habitats overlap more often, and the time change will increase deer sightings because dusk will correspond with traffic at the end of the work day.

Georgia wildlife and public safety <<http://www.wtv.com/news/headlines/Georgia-Be-on-the-Lookout-For-Deer-174525601.html>> authorities want drivers to be on the lookout for deer now that fall is in full swing.

There are about 50,000 collisions each year involving cars <<http://www.wtv.com/news/headlines/Georgia-Be-on-the-Lookout-For-Deer-174525601.html>> and deer in Georgia.

Deer are most active at dawn and dusk. They often travel in groups.

State biologists said mating season recently began. Male deer are searching for females. Constant development means deer and human habitats overlap more often, and the time change will increase deer sightings because dusk will correspond with traffic at the end of the work day.

Data collected by the insurance company show the chances of a West Virginia driver will strike a deer are 1 in 53, the highest odds in the U.S. That is nearly 50% higher than the second-highest state, Iowa, where the odds were 1 in 77. South Dakota (1 in 81) and Pennsylvania (1 in 86) ranked third and fourth.

Pennsylvania, more populated than the states ahead of it in the per-capita rankings, led with the highest number of deer collisions. State Farm estimated a total of 101,299 deer-vs.-car incidents in Pennsylvania in the second half of 2010 and the first half of 2011, the time period examined in the most recent iteration of State Farm's annual study. No other state reached six digits.

Nearly 2% of West Virginia drivers collided with a deer in the past year, a level that is almost four times the national average, according to a study released by State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.

From Col. B—

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From:
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