



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Resource document **Sports & Recreation** ***Hunting***

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Narrative:

While the rules and seasons for hunting vary from state to state, safety is one common factor that should always be consistent.

The number of hunting-related accidents occurring across the nation varies; according to a report from Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources, there were 28 hunting accidents reported during the 2012 season in the state. Of those accidents, four were fatal. In Washington State, between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012, there were no fatal hunting accidents reported and five nonfatal accidents reported.

In most states, hunters are required to wear blaze orange during hunting season. However, hunters aren't the only individuals that should heed this practice. Anyone that hikes, jogs, camps, horseback rides or participates in an outdoor activity near hunting grounds needs to be aware of hunters potentially sharing the same real estate. These individuals should consider wearing blaze orange so hunters can see them.

Another important consideration is the use of an All Terrain Vehicle while hunting. Numerous Soldiers have injured themselves while operating an ATV during a hunting trip or while loading one at the completion of their trip. Individuals should wear the proper personal protective equipment and get appropriate training to operate their ATV safely.

The International Hunter Education association is an awesome resource for all things hunting; their education courses cover hunting safety, firearms, bows, wildlife identification, regulations and more.

Key Messages:

- On and off duty, risk management saves lives. The key to effectively integrating risk management into our formation is through leadership.
- It's important that Soldiers don't let their guard down while hunting. Even the most mundane of tasks has the potential to become an accident if someone is complacent
- Anyone that hikes, jogs, camps, horseback rides or participates in an outdoor activity near hunting grounds needs to be aware of hunters potentially sharing the same real estate.

Talking points:

- As leaders give Soldiers the tools to incorporate risk management into their daily tasks, they set them up for success.
- Hunters novice and expert alike should take a hunter education course, even if a course isn't mandatory to hunt in a particular area.
- Safety is such a constant part of a Soldier's life they sometimes get complacent. Leaders need to engage their Soldiers and talk about the decisions they make and why they make them.

Tips:

National forests are a refuge for wild animals of all kinds, which makes recreational activities like hunting and wildlife viewing possible. Hunting is a seasonal activity. According to the U.S. Forest Service, state regulations for seasons, dates and licensing apply on national forest land. Hunters can pick up U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps at Forest Service offices to see national forest boundaries and avoid venturing onto privately owned land. (Excerpts from <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/outdoorsafety>) Here are some tips, from the U.S. Forest Service, to consider before heading outdoors:

Safety Tips for Hunters

- Check weather reports before visiting the forest.
- Tell someone where you will be hunting and when you will return.
- Be familiar with the area you want to hunt.
- Dress properly and be prepared for the worst possible conditions.
- During certain seasons, hunters must wear hunter orange viewable from all directions.
- If accompanied by a dog, the dog should also wear hunter orange or a very visible color on a vest, leash, coat or bandana.
- Check hunting equipment before and after each outing, and maintain it properly. Familiarize yourself with its operation before using it in the field.
- Carry a spare set of dry clothing. Use layering techniques to prevent moisture while retaining body warmth. Always bring rain gear.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Clearly identify your target before shooting. Prevent unfortunate accidents or fatalities.
- Put hunting plans in writing (dates, times, location and expected time of return). The Coast Guard recommends putting boating plans in writing; leaving one at home and one on your vehicle.
- Be alert when hunting near developed areas and trails. Other recreationists are in the forest as well.
- Avoid wearing white or tan during deer season. Wear hunter orange or another highly visible color.
- If using an ATV, wear the proper personal protective equipment and get appropriate training to operate the ATV safely.

Safety Tips for Non-hunters

- Wear bright clothing. Make yourself more visible. Choose colors that stand out, like red, orange or green, and avoid white, blacks, browns, earth-toned greens and animal-colored clothing. Orange vests and hats are advisable.
- Don't forget to protect fido. Get an orange vest for your dog if he/she accompanies you.
- Make noise. Whistle, sing or carry on a conversation as you walk to alert hunters to your presence. Sound carries well across mountain basins, and hunters should be listening for any sounds of animal movement.
- Be courteous. Once a hunter is aware of your presence, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb wildlife. Avoid confrontations.
- Make yourself known. If you do hear shooting, raise your voice and let hunters know that you are in the vicinity.
- Know when hunting seasons are. Continue to hike, but learn about where and when hunting is taking place.

Historical Reference:

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

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

<http://ihea-usa.org/index.php/hunting-and-shooting/hunter-education/types-of-courses>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/huntSafetyTips.html>

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/huntered/>

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5330495.pdf

Statistics:

In the Army, from fiscal year 2008 through 2013, there were 25 hunting-related accidents reported to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. Two of the accidents resulted in the deaths of two Soldiers.