



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Resource Document Sports and Recreation Safety *Hunting*

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Narrative:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service **National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation** found that approximately 12.5 million Americans over the age of 16 hunt in the United States.

No matter the game hunted, if firearms are involved, there is danger of an accident. Proper weapons handling training and field practices are necessary to reduce the chance of accidents.

From fiscal 2009 through the third quarter of fiscal 2012, two Soldiers died in hunting accidents. One was killed when a hunting dog reportedly jumped and struck the Soldier, who was preparing to fire, causing the round to strike him instead of the intended target. Three other Soldiers in the hunting party were uninjured. The second Soldier was running on an authorized trail when he was fatally shot by a hunter.

Leadership skills that Soldiers use on duty serve as a foundation for safe hunting habits. Taking care of a hunting buddy is similar to taking care of a battle buddy.

Key Messages:

- Always practice safe weapons handling procedures with your weapons.. Following some simple rules for the handling and storage of firearms will allow you to enjoy activities associated with your weapon.
- Hunting is hazardous and can produce injury and fatalities to hunters and those near them.

- When you're handling any weapon - privately owned or issued - make sure you know that weapons safety features and capabilities. Read the owner's manual and sign up for a class.
- Everyone needs to know, follow and enforce weapons safety standards. If you see someone mishandling a weapon, say something. You may just save a life.
- Take the time to research local policy requirements for owning, transporting and registering a privately owned weapon. Policies are different everywhere you go.

Talking points:

- Remember ,never point a weapon at anything or anyone you don't intend to shoot – this applies even if you know a weapon is unloaded. Many Soldiers have lost their lives to what they believed were unloaded weapons.
- Bullets and booze are dangerous. Never handle your weapon when under the influence of alcohol or other substances that may affect your perception and influence coordination.
- Proper firearms handling training and attention to safety makes a safer hunt.

Tips:

According to the USFWS, at <http://www.fws.gov/hunting/>, each state has primary responsibility and authority over the hunting of wildlife that resides within state boundaries. State wildlife agencies that sell hunting licenses are the best source of information regarding hunting seasons and areas opened/closed to hunting.

Tips from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/education/huntingtips.com>, outline safe hunting practices.

These tips include:

- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
- Treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun.
- Be sure of your target and what is in front of it and beyond it.
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.
- Wear a blaze orange cap or vest.
- Plan your hunting trip by understanding the terrain, weather and unique challenges you'll face. Select your gear accordingly.
- Let someone know where you'll be and when you expect to return.
- If you're allergic to insect bites, take along a self-injector loaded with medicine to treat anaphylactic shock. Remember: People die from anaphylactic shock.
- Carry survival tools such as a whistle, first-aid kit, compass, map, high calorie food, water and a water filter.
- Take matches or some type of fire-starting 'flint,' plus a knife, flashlight and cellphone. Survival/first aid kits are available from sporting goods stores.
- If using a tree stand, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always wear a fall restraint device anytime you are climbing, sitting, or descending from an elevated position.
- If you become injured, use the first-aid supplies you have with you.
- Determine the extent of your injury and determine if there is a need to call for help.
- Know who to contact to request assistance. A spouse in a distant town may not know how to contact someone in the area where you're hunting to ask for assistance. Know local emergency telephone numbers.
- If you decide to return to your vehicle, let someone know you are on the move. Hunter GPS devices are available for purchase from sporting goods stores.
- If you decide to remain in place while help comes to you, assist them by blowing your whistle at regular intervals. Depending on the terrain, searchers could be close but not see you if there is dense vegetation or rough terrain. Use the whistle.

Remember to always **THINK Weapons Safety:**

Treat every weapon as if it's loaded.

Handle every weapon with care.

Identify the target before you fire.

Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.

Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

Historical Reference:

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

<http://www.fws.gov/hunting/>

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/education/huntingtips.cfm>

<https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety/AKOLogin/tabid/2364/Default.aspx?returnurl=%2frangeweaponssafety%2fHome%2ftabid%2f1435%2fDefault.aspx> (AKO login required)

Statistics:

- From fiscal 2009 through the third quarter of fiscal 2012, two Soldiers died in hunting accidents. One was killed when a hunting dog reportedly jumped and struck the Soldier, who was preparing to fire, causing the round to strike him instead of the intended target. Three other Soldiers in the hunting party were uninjured. The second Soldier was running on an authorized trail when he was fatally shot by a hunter.

According to the USFWS:

- 12.5 million people 16 years and older hunted 220 million days and took 185 million trips in 2006. Hunting expenditures totaled \$22.9 billion.
- They hunted small game on 52 million days and spent \$2.4 billion on small game hunting trips and equipment.
- Common causes of hunting incidents include: Falling from tree stands, failure to identify your target and self-inflicted incidents.

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