



## Hunter Safety Tips

Crisp days beckon many to spend more time outdoors and fall marks the beginning of hunting season in many areas. Hunting requires preparation, alertness and precautions. Follow the following basic tips to keep safe.

- Take a [hunting education](#) course.
- Ensure that hunting equipment is properly maintained. Familiarize yourself with equipment operation before using it in the field.
- Check the weather forecast before going into the woods.
- Be prepared for the worst possible conditions by bringing along clothing/items to protect against [hypothermia](#).
- Tell someone where you will be hunting and when you are expected back.
- Avoid outings alone, but if you do go alone be extra careful and hunt in familiar areas.
- Carry a cellular phone.
- Beware of dangerous animals like bears and venomous snakes. Keep your distance.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid consuming alcoholic beverages or medications that can alter your ability to focus properly on the task at hand.
- Use repellents where ticks and mosquitoes are still active.
- Always wear enough blaze/solid orange (i.e., hat, vest or coat) that covers the chest and back to be highly visible to other hunters.
- Identify your target before putting your finger on

the trigger to shoot.

- Never wave to get another hunter's attention, speak loudly in a clear voice.
- Do not shoot or handle any animal that is acting strangely or appears sick, especially if you have any health condition that affects your immune system.
- Ask first to hunt on private property. Trespassing is against the law. It is your responsibility to obtain permission from the land owner before you hunt on private property.
- Never cross a fence, ride a 4-wheeler or climb a tree with a loaded rifle. Use a tow rope to pull your rifle up and down from secure tree stands.
- When using tree stands wear a safety harness.
- Be aware of the hazards of handling wild game including the many diseases they may encounter. For a list of some of those diseases, visit: [http://www.avma.org/public\\_health/zoonotic\\_risks/hunters\\_precautions.asp](http://www.avma.org/public_health/zoonotic_risks/hunters_precautions.asp).
- Wear latex or rubber gloves while handling or dressing game animals.
- Be careful when dragging out your game. Each year, hunters die from heart attacks as a result of overexertion. Get help if you can't handle the chore by yourself. Go slow and take your time.
- Be sure to observe all state regulations on tagging and testing of animals.
- Never carry a loaded rifle in your truck or car, and be sure to unload your rifle when you get back to camp or when you stop hunting for the day. Assume that every rifle in camp is loaded unless the action is open and you can see that it's safe to handle.
- Practice good hygiene and wash hands and equipment thoroughly after dressing game.
- Examine the carcass for marks or signs of illness before dressing. Dispose of animal according to state regulations.
- Be sure to cook meat thoroughly before eating it and follow any other state advised cooking precautions.

*Source: USDA Forest Service—Hunter Safety and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

