

Wisconsin DNR: Planning to use a tree stand in your archery hunt? Stay safe with body harness & defy odds of falling

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MADISON — Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Hunter Safety Administrator Jon King is urging Wisconsin hunters to beat the 1 in 20 chances of falling from a tree stand by wearing body harnesses climbing up — and down— when the archery and crossbow deer season opens Saturday, September 16.

King says he understands hunters wanting to enhance their ability of seeing and bagging their deer during the archery season. “But, without a mind on safety, all enhancements may come with a risk of falling to an injury that will end your hunting season on impact,” he said.

The 2016 Wildlife Society research showed ‘the most avid hunters’ face a 1-in-20 risk of getting hurt in a fall from a treestand. “Hunters can beat these odds and enjoy safe, healthy hunts by wearing a body harness and reviewing treestand safety rules,” King said.

King offers these safety tips, and suggests people search the DNR website for keyword “treestand” for more tree stand safety tips:

-Always wear a full-body harness also known as a fall-arrest system. Connect to your tether line and keep your tether line short. The tether is designed to keep you

in the seat, not to catch you after you fall.

- Always have three points of contact while climbing into and out of the tree stand: This means two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand at all times.
- Always use a haul line to raise and lower your unloaded firearm or bow into and out of the stand. You can also use the haul for other things like a heavy backpack.
- Use a lifeline when climbing up and down, this keeps you connected from the time you leave the ground to the time you get back down.
- Be aware of suspension trauma. Suspension trauma can happen in less than 20 minutes and can be fatal. Attaching an additional foot strap to the body harness will take pressure off your upper legs.

Prefer a course instead? Consider this free online treestand safety course. A 15-minute investment of your time in taking an online safety course could save your life. The Treestand Manufacturers Association provides a free, interactive course that you can finish in minutes. [TreeStand Safety Course \(exit DNR\)](#).

King also urges hunters to always inspect their stands — especially the ones left up all year. “Inspect the tree, check straps to make sure animals haven’t chewed on them,” he said. “Another way to check your stand is to pull on the stand and move it around to see how much it moves, check the hardware and make sure nuts and bolts are tight and make any adjustments that need to be made.”

King also says now is the perfect time to review the four basic rules of firearm safety. “These apply to crossbow use and hunting in general.”

- Treat every crossbow as if it were loaded
- Always point the crossbow in a safe direction
- Be certain of your target and what’s beyond
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

For more information search the DNR website for keyword treestand and view the “Free” Tree Stand Safety Course.