

Dept. of Natural Resources: Make safety your #1 target this hunting season

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds hunters to make safety their number one target as they head out into the field this gun deer season.

During the 2021 gun deer season, DNR conservation warden investigated six hunting incidents, including one fatality. Wardens discovered four of the incidents were the result of a self-inflicted accidental discharge of a firearm.

Hunters can do their part to reduce the number of hunting incidents by following the four basic rules of firearm safety:

- T – Treat every firearm as if it is loaded
- A – Always point the muzzle in a safe direction
- B – Be certain of your target, what's in front of it, and what's beyond it
- K – Keep your finger outside your trigger guard until you are safe to shoot

In addition, hunters must follow [all hunting regulations](#) and only take aim [during legal shooting hours](#).

Anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1973, must have a hunter education certification to purchase a hunting license unless hunting under the [Mentored Hunting Law](#). To learn more about safe hunting in Wisconsin and to register for a hunter education course, visit the [DNR's website](#).

Treestand Safety

Stand-related incidents are one of the leading causes of injury to hunters. Unfortunately, most hunters overestimate their ability to avoid accidents and do not take proper safety precautions.

- Always wear a safety harness when you hunt from any elevated stand, no matter what type of stand it is.
- Always unload your firearm before attaching it to your haul line. Your haul line is used to raise and lower your firearm or other gear.
- Always maintain three points of contact while climbing in and out of the treestand. This means two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand at all times.
- Use a lifeline so you're connected and safe at all times – while climbing up, while sitting and while climbing down.
- Check for worn or torn straps holding the stand to the tree.
- Take your time getting in and out of the stand. Think about each move you are making and be deliberate with your actions.

[To learn more about treestand safety, visit the DNR Treestand Safety webpage.](#)

Deer Drives

Deer drives can be an effective way to harvest deer while enjoying the fellowship of family and friends. With many people hunting or walking in the same area, it's essential that safety is everyone's top priority.

- Plan your hunt and hunt your plan. Make sure that everyone knows their role and sticks to it. No one deviates from the plan.
- Each hunter should have a safe zone of fire and only shoot at deer within their safe zone of fire.
- Reconfirm you have a safe backstop if you plan to shoot.
- Everyone involved with the drive should follow blaze orange clothing requirements.

DNR Violation Hotline

Anyone with information regarding natural resource violations may confidentially file a report by [visiting this website](#) or calling or texting 1-800-847-9367. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff will relay the information to conservation wardens for further investigation