

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Practice firearm safety during Spring turkey hunting season

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds turkey hunters and outdoor enthusiasts to practice firearm safety during the [2022 spring turkey season April 20, 2022 – May 31, 2022](#).

Hunters and public land users may be sharing fields and forests during the season and need to be aware and alert of others in their area. Hunters should follow safety rules, and non-hunters enjoying public lands should consider wearing blaze orange.

Hunter camouflage is an important part of hunting turkey, but it may also present a problem. The better camouflaged and concealed you are, the less likely another hunter will be able to see you, and the more likely you could be mistaken for a turkey.

Wearing the wrong color could put turkey hunters at risk. It's especially important to avoid wearing red, white or blue. If a fellow hunter sees a flash of those colors through the brush, you could be mistaken for a turkey.

To dress for success and safety, follow these tips from the National Wild Turkey Federation:

- Be sure that accessories you carry that are red, white, or blue (decoys, diaphragm calls, box call chalk, candy wrappers, apples, cigarette packs, etc.) are not visible to other hunters.
- Camouflage your gun. Cover white diamonds or other red or white markings.
- Always keep your hands and head camouflaged when calling.

- If you see another hunter, call out to them to make them aware you are there. It is better to briefly disrupt a hunt than risk an incident.
- Wear dark-colored socks and long pants to keep your bare skin from being exposed.
- Do not “over-camouflage” by sitting in vegetation so thick that it obscures your vision.
- If you use a human-made blind or camouflage netting, maintain a clear field of view.

## **Hunter Safety Reminders**

In addition to watching your wardrobe, the DNR reminds hunters to practice the four rules of Firearm Safety (TAB-K) while afield. Any hunting incident can be attributed to a violation of one or more of these rules. They are:

- 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 before and what’s beyond it
- K – Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

Not knowing your target is the most frequently broken rule.

Over the last 10 years, there have been several reports of people being injured because they were mistaken for a turkey with only three incidents of self-inflicted injuries.

Hunters also are encouraged to practice these additional safety tips:

- Put a blaze orange band around the tree they sit next to.
- Place a blaze orange sign in your vehicle window which reads: “Camouflaged Hunter in Area – Be Careful.”
- Wear blaze orange while moving from one spot to another

Some turkey hunters use a fanned turkey tail to conceal themselves, often referred to as “fanning.” A technique gaining popularity is reaping, where the hunter hides behind a fan as they move toward the turkey, often prompting the bird to challenge them.

Although this technique is legal in Wisconsin, it presents potential safety

risks. Hunters should take the following safety measures if they choose to give reaping a try:

- Always cover your decoys completely whenever you are carrying them.
- Do not try to reap a turkey on public land. There may be other hunters or general public in the area that you are unaware of.
- Do not reap a turkey in the woods or near a field edge on any property, whether on public or private land.

## **Public Land Users**

If you are out enjoying public lands, please be mindful of what you're wearing before heading out to state fields, trails or forests during spring turkey season.

Avoid a hunting incident by wearing blaze orange clothing and avoiding wearing red, white and blue.

[The regular turkey hunting season ends May 31. More information on the 2022 spring turkey season, including safety tips, is available on the DNR's website.](#)