



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

4905 5th Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363  
Comm. (334) 255-3770 Fax (334) 255-2266  
<https://safety.army.mil>

## Hunting: The adventure, and the risk

**ART POWELL**

Strategic Communication Directorate  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center  
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Hunters who bag a buck, a bird or nothing at all still agree it's great just to be outdoors.

While the woods and fields offer outdoor activities that appeal to many people, it's important to recognize the danger involved.

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.

Nationally, the rate of hunting accidents is low, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

"Many people have the misconception that hunting is unsafe, but the data tells a different story," said Jim Curcuruto, NSSF's director of industry research and analysis. "Comprehensive hunter education classes that emphasize the basic rules of firearm safety, plus a culture of hunters helping fellow hunters practice safe firearms handling in the field, are responsible for this good record."

Hunting with firearms has an injury rate of 0.05 percent, which equates to about one injury per 2,000 participants. Only camping and billiards are safer, according to NSSF. For comparison, golf has one injury per 622 participants, they report, while tackle football topped the list of activities with an injury rate of one per 19 participants.

Tips from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, <http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/education/huntingtips.com>, outline safe hunting practices.

These include keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times, treating every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun, and being sure of your target, including what's in front of it and beyond.

Additional tips include keeping your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot, wearing a blaze orange cap or vest, and using a small flashlight during dimlight conditions to identify yourself as human.

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.

For more information on hunting and privately owned weapons safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.