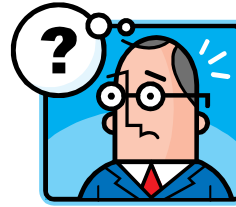


Outdoors Safety: Tips for avoiding Hunting Season Hazards for Field Workers



SAFETY TALK

DNR employees and scientists with outdoors or field work assignments are exposed to a variety of hazards including insects, toxic plants, wild animals, heat and cold stress, treacherous terrain and weather conditions to name a few on a daily basis. Moreover, with the arrival of Autumn, Minnesota parks, trails, and forests experience an increase in recreational activities, including hunters, who are out in public land, pursuing their favorite sports or games of choice, additional hazards of working in active hunting areas would require attention to details and taking specific precautions. Use this Safety Talk to improve your safety during the season.

Plan Ahead

If you work, hike or use the outdoors, for other reason, plan ahead. Knowing the following will improve your safety!



Hunting Seasons Dates.

Knowing the seasons dates will keep you informed on the type of hunting activities and associated hazards you may encounter. Bear season begins in August, followed by grouse, deer and several other species in September. October is the high point of hunting season. Check the [“Hunting and Trapping Seasons—MNDNR”](#) internet site to find out.

Active Hunting Areas

Determine if the areas you are assigned to use, work or conduct field research is an active hunting area during the season or not, and plan your work accordingly. Check the [“MNDNR Hunting Land Locator”](#)

Avoid High Use Times

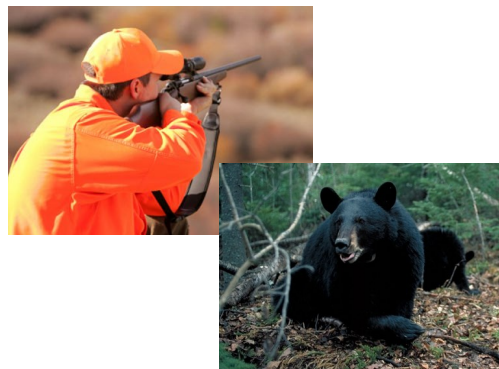
Opening days, weekends, early morning and evening hours are typically high use times that should be avoided. Supervisors should plan field work activities during mid-week, preferably middle hours of the day to minimize employee risk, and the hazard of exposure to the largest number of hunters.

Check-In and Check-Out.

Use pre-identified procedures in your plan to let others know where you are going and when you plan to return. This is always a good protocol, but even more important during hunting season.

Plan and Prepare For Health & Safety Emergencies

- **Have a First Aid Kit Available.**
- **Access to a Phone or a Two-Way Radio** to communicate your location in case of a problem
- **Personal Medication** (allergies, diabetes, etc.)
- **Emergency Calling List** to summon help.



Dedicated to your Health and Safety

On-Site Safety Precautions

The following tips are critical to staying safe when hiking, working or conducting field research activities in active hunting areas during hunting season.

- **Wear Bright Blazing-Color Clothing.** Make yourself more visible. Choose blazing colors that stand out, like red, hunting orange or green, and avoid whites, blacks, browns, or earth-toned greens and animal-colored clothing. Your bright green safety vest and orange hat may work!
- **Make Noise.** Whistle, sing or carry on a conversation as you walk to alert hunters to your presence. Hunters are usually listening for sounds of animal movements.
- **Make Yourself Known.** If you hear shooting close by, raise your voice and let the hunters know that you are in the vicinity.
- **Know Your Own Comfort Level.** If hunting makes you uneasy, choose a hike in a location where hunting is not allowed, such as a national park or a state park.
- **Be Courteous.** Once a hunter is aware of your presence, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb their hunt
- **Avoid Confrontation.** Never confront or argue with anyone who has a gun.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** for fieldwork activities (safety glasses/goggles, gloves, hard hat, work boots, etc.)
- **Work in Pairs (Buddy System).** The purpose of which, is to provide rapid assistance in the event of an emergency.

