

Enjoy a safe hunting season

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Safety always come first on the job ... but it should also come first during leisure times, especially if you are hunting this season.

Firearm accidents used to be the number one cause of hunting injuries and deaths ... but not anymore. Fortunately, most of today's hunters learned and memorized the four rules of using firearms before ever picking up a gun:

1. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded;
2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction;
3. Be certain of your target and what's beyond it; and
4. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.

Additionally, more hunters are now completing hunter education courses and wearing blaze orange. All of these reasons have contributed to the reduction of firearm accidents during hunting season.

Today, the leading cause of injuries and deaths while hunting is falling from heights. OSHA states that in general industry, fall protection is needed at 4 feet and in construction, it is needed at 6 feet and higher. But the tree stands used for hunting average between 15 and 18 feet. That roughly four times higher than what the standard says we need for fall protection.

How many hunters do you know use fall protection when hunting in their tree stands?



All those who hunt in a tree stand should consider “what happens if I fall?” or “if I nod off up here, will I fall and be seriously injured?”

Using fall protection in a tree stand is Deer Hunting 101. One of the Water Operators in MEUW's Regional Training Program reported that the tree stand he uses to hunt is roughly 20 feet off the ground. Thankfully he went on to say that he wears his fall protection vest anytime he goes into his tree stand. He also uses a 4-foot lanyard and anchors off to a point just over his head (roughly 7 feet above the platform of his stand), a point tight enough that — once he's hooked in — he can't bend down and touch his toes.

After doing the math, he learned that, if he falls, he will still be suspended about 12 feet up in the air, dangling by the side of the tree. From there, he can easily grab the ladder and get back up to his stand.

Remember, when in a tree stand, make sure you are wearing the right fall protection and that you are using it correctly. Tree stands come in all different heights, so make sure when you are anchoring off ... and do the math of your fall. Don't give yourself too much slack, which could cause your fall protection to become inadequate.

There's no reason you can't use what you're learning at work in your personal (*i.e.*, hunting) lives.

After all, safety doesn't punch a clock! ●