



Hunting Safety: Information for Hunters and Non-Hunters

National forests are a refuge for wild animals of all kinds, which makes recreational activities like hunting and wildlife viewing possible. Hunting is a seasonal activity. State regulations for seasons, dates and licensing apply on national forest land. Hunters can pick up U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle maps at Forest Service offices to see national forest boundaries and avoid venturing onto privately owned land. (Excerpts from <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/outdoorsafety>)

Safety Tips for Hunters visiting the National Forests

- Check weather reports before visiting the forest.
- Tell someone where you will be hunting and when you will return.
- Be familiar with the area you want to hunt.
- Dress properly and be prepared for the worst possible conditions.
- During certain seasons, hunters must wear hunter orange viewable from all directions.
- If accompanied by a dog, the dog should also wear hunter orange or a very visible color on a vest, leash, coat or bandana.
- Check hunting equipment before and after each outing, and maintain it properly. Familiarize yourself with its operation before using it in the field.
- Carry a spare set of dry clothing. Use layering techniques to prevent moisture while retaining body warmth. Always bring rain gear.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Clearly identify your target before shooting. Prevent unfortunate accidents or fatalities.
- Put hunting plans in writing (dates, times, location and expected time of return). The Coast Guard recommends putting boating plans in writing; leaving one at home and one on your vehicle.
- Be alert when hunting near developed areas and trails. Other recreationists are in the forest as well.
- Avoid wearing white or tan during deer season. Wear hunter orange or another highly visible color.

Safety Tips for Non-hunters visiting the National Forests

- Wear bright clothing. Make yourself more visible. Choose colors that stand out, like red, orange or green, and avoid white, blacks, browns, earth-toned greens and animal-colored clothing. Orange vests and hats are advisable.
- Don't forget to protect fido. Get an orange vest for your dog if he/she accompanies you.
- Make noise. Whistle, sing or carry on a conversation as you walk to alert hunters to your presence. Sound carries well across mountain basins, and hunters should be listening for any sounds of animal movement.
- Be courteous. Once a hunter is aware of your presence, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb wildlife. Avoid confrontations.
- Make yourself known. If you do hear shooting, raise your voice and let hunters know that you are in the vicinity.
- Know when hunting seasons are. Continue to hike, but learn about where and when hunting is taking place.
- 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, or schedule your outings for Sundays.

