Deer Hunting Safety

According to the DNR regulations, Michigan hunters are required to “wear a hat, cap, vest, and jacket or rain gear of highly visible color, commonly referred to as "Hunter Orange." During the November firearm deer season, this law applies to all deer hunters, including those hunting with a bow and arrow. The garment, featuring Hunter Orange, must be the outermost garment and must be visible from all sides. Camouflage orange garments, with 50 percent or more of the surface in Hunter Orange, are legal.”

This “Hunter Orange” is designed to help you be visible to other hunters, not deer. Deer cannot distinguish red from green or orange from red, so you don’t have to worry about them seeing you like humans do. Please remember this when you are picking out your hunting apparel; the more you stand out as a hunter, the better.

Deer hunting safety isn’t limited to what we wear – don’t assume another hunter is as safe as you are. “In low light conditions, turn your light on as you enter and leave the woods; never assume you’re the only one hunting,” stated Dan Lowery, Health Educator and avid outdoorsman.

Always positively identify game before you shoot. Lowery also mentioned that you should never use your firearm’s scope to identify objects or animals. “Binoculars are essential to any hunt and you can view that dark shape moving through brush without ever pointing your weapon at it.”

Using a tree stand or blind presents several safety issues. Ladders or steps can become snow/ice covered, so use caution when climbing. Always use a rope to haul your unloaded
weapon up to the blind instead of trying to climb with it. Most falling accidents occur when a person is stepping onto or off of the tree stand. Used properly, safety belts/harnesses will provide the hunter with about two feet of slack, which is plenty of space to move around while still preventing the hunter from a possible fall.

Make sure someone, a hunting companion, family member, friend or neighbor, knows the location or area where you will be hunting. Accidents or medical emergencies can happen and it is wise to take your cell phone with you, even if the signal isn’t very good at your hunting spot.

A Hunter’s Safety Course is required in Michigan for individuals planning to hunt that have been born after January 1, 1960. For information on classes or to see the hunting guide for 2007, please visit the DNR’s website at www.michigan.gov/dnr. Make your hunting season safe and enjoyable.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.