

Hunting Checklist for Families

Hunting is a rich tradition, often passed down from family members to the next generation. The time may come when it's your turn to introduce your children to this unique, exciting experience. Start by sharing stories about exploring the outdoors, outsmarting the game or even your first hunt; and please remember that safety should be part of every conversation about hunting and firearm use. The most important part of sharing this experience with your loved ones is ensuring they understand that proper precautions and responsible use of firearms can help make every hunting trip safe, fun and memorable.

Don't know where to start? Use the following checklist as your guide:

- My hunting companions and I share a commitment to responsible, lawful and ethical hunting.
- My family and friends know where I'm going and when I'll return from a hunting trip.
- I am adequately prepared and have previously:
 - Practiced my shooting skills
 - Reviewed the rules of firearm safety, paying special attention to:
 - ALWAYS keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction
 - ALWAYS keeping my finger off the trigger until ready to shoot
 - ALWAYS keeping the gun unloaded until ready to use
 - Maintained my firearms to keep them working properly and reliably
 - Obtained all necessary licenses and tags required by my state's hunting regulations
 - Become aware of the hunting property's borders so that I will not wander beyond them
- My group is wearing hunter orange clothing to ensure that neither I nor anyone in my group is mistaken for game.
- I am carrying appropriate safety equipment, including:
 - A first aid kit and emergency survival kit
 - Plenty of water and/or a means of water purification
 - A gun case or other mechanism to safely transport my firearm
 - Cell phone/radio/GPS/maps/compass (and extra batteries)
- I unload a gun when climbing, crossing a fence, jumping across a stream or getting into or out of a vehicle.
- When hunting from a tree stand, I:
 - Make sure it is securely fastened and stable before climbing
 - Always use a rope or tether in case I fall while climbing
 - Use a safety harness in the stand
 - Use a rope for hoisting and lowering an unloaded firearm
- I follow safety precautions before shooting by:
 - Inspecting the target's surroundings
 - Using proper caliber for the game
 - Being aware of where other hunters are standing
- After the hunt, I store firearms securely and safely out of the reach of children or other unauthorized individuals.
- I store ammunition separately from the gun when it's not being used.

