

Hiking during Hunting Season

Be safe on the trail when sharing it with hunters.

Autumn is a fantastic time to enjoy a nice hike on the trails. Cooler, drier weather, changing leaves and fewer insects make it one of many people's favorite hiking seasons. Autumn is a favorite season for other forms of outdoor recreation too, especially hunting. There are a few simple steps you can take to make sure you stay safe as you hike into this year's hunting season:

1. **Be aware.** Know when hunting seasons start and end and about particular regulations that affect hunting. Some states forbid hunting on Sundays; some forbid discharging firearms for one hour after dawn and before dusk. Read up on federal, state and local hunting regulations. Be especially careful during bow hunting season as they tend to start earlier. State Departments of Fish and Game or Natural Resources are good starting points.

2. **Be seen.** A blaze-orange hat fights the chill and increases your visibility. An inexpensive blaze orange pack cover keeps gear dry and makes you hard to mistake for a deer! Since many hunters are out at dusk and dawn, be sure your vest has reflective panels to be seen in dim light.

3. **Be smart.** Despite the best efforts of hunters, resource managers and hikers, some areas are not safe to hike in during hunting season. Talk to local hiking clubs to get the scoop on areas best avoided during hunting season.

4. **Be heard.** If you hear hunters in the area, or hear shots, speak up. A loud "Hikers on the trail!" will politely make everyone aware of your presence.

