

FIREARM SAFETY TIPS

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Recently there have been so many accidental shootings in our region I feel I would be remiss to not write an educational piece, emphasizing firearm safety.

Safe Firearm Handling:

- #1 Treat all firearms as if they are loaded.**
- #2 Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Never point a firearm at anyone or anything that you don't intend to shoot.**
- #3 Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until you are ready to fire.**
- #4 Never totally rely on any safety device. A safety is not a substitute for common sense.**
- #5 Keep the action open and the gun unloaded until you are ready to use it.**
- #6 Never engage in horseplay or joke around while handling a firearm.**
- #7 If you see unsafe behavior when firearms are being handled, speak up and take action to correct the unsafe behavior, if appropriate.**
- #8 Never:**
 - Climb a tree or a hunting stand with a loaded firearm**
 - Cross a fence with a loaded firearm**
 - Jump a ditch or ford a stream with a loaded firearm**
 - Scale or descend a steep incline or hill with a loaded firearm**
 - Prop or lean a loaded firearm against a tree or other surface**
 - Transport a loaded firearm, even if it is in a case**
- #9 Always carry your firearm in a way that you have control where the muzzle is pointing at all times, should you stumble/fall.**

Safety Rules Related to the Shooter:

- #1 Make sure your firearm is in good mechanical condition before firing it. Never try to fire a gun with a plugged or partially obstructed barrel. If you question the safety of your firearm have it checked out by an expert.**
- #3 Know your gun. Refer to any instruction manuals that came with your gun.**
- #4 Use proper ammunition. Use reloaded ammunition judiciously. Carry only one caliber of ammunition when shooting.**
- #5 Firearms and drinking do not mix.**
- #6 Wear eye and ear protection.**
- #7 Always wear a thousand square inches or more of blaze orange while in the field during hunting season.**
- #8 Be sure of your target. Never shoot at anything you have not positively identified. Once you pull the trigger you cannot take back the shot you just fired.**
- #9 Always know what is behind your target.**
- #10 Never shoot at a hard surface, or at water.**

- #11 Never shoot a rifle or handgun directly upwards, or at a high angle of elevation. Even**

a rimfire .22 bullet fired at an angle into the air can have enough energy a mile and a half away to kill someone.

#12 Never shoot across a highway or other roadway.

#13 Never use a scope mounted on a firearm as a general purpose spotting scope. While observing the area you may end up accidentally aiming and firing at fellow hunters or other non-targets.

#14 Blackpowder firearms require additional safety precautions not discussed in this article. Please get qualified instruction before attempting to load or fire such firearms.

Safe Gun Storage:

#1 Don't sleep with a loaded firearm in your bedroom.

#2 Hiding a firearm does not secure it from discovery and possible misuse by curious children or intruders.

#3 Metal gun cabinets or safes are generally preferable to open racks or glass-front cabinets.

#4 Never leave a loaded gun in a non-locked place, if there is a child in the house, or a cognitively impaired adult. Even if your child is too short to reach a firearm, child ingenuity can help them reach it. A firearm is always an attraction to little children. Properly train your child in firearm safety. Allow your child controlled and closely supervised access to firearms to reduce your child's natural unsatisfied curiosity about firearms, when they are at an appropriate age.

Information for this article was obtained from the Joe St. Sauver at the University of Oregon, website: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~joe/firearms-safety.html>.