

2008
TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENTS
ANALYSIS



Federal Aid Project
W-104-S



For more information about hunting accidents
or the hunter education program in Texas, call (512) 389-8142

TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENT PROFILE

- Violated a cardinal rule of hunter safety
- Anglo male; 29 years of age (average)
- Hunted deer with rifle; hog with handgun/rifle; or dove/quail with shotgun
- Was **not** under the influence of alcohol
- Did not attend a hunter education (safety) course or program
- Did not wear any type of hunter orange clothing
- Was situated in or around vehicle
- Sustained a non-fatal injury
- If not self-inflicted – swung shotgun on game outside of safe zone of fire
- Had over 10 years of hunting experience
- If self-inflicted – handled firearm carelessly in a stand/vehicle; carried loaded firearm in/around vehicle
- Distance of muzzle to wound was within 50 yards, mostly within 10 yards
- Victim was in light to open cover with clear visibility (weather)
- Accident occurred towards dusk; fatigue a factor
- Accident occurred on weekend during September or November



2008 Significant Factors

- **Hunting and handling near/from vehicles and careless handling** (lack of muzzle control with loaded firearm) main causes of accidents.
- Rifle incidents down in 2008.
- Increased number middle age or older shooters involved in incidents; less 20-year olds.
- All incidents down; Fatalities up and the number of dove hunting incidents up.
- Less hunter education graduates in the incident data and no reported alcohol use.
- Self inflicted accidents slightly higher.
- Number of law violations at time of incidents down slightly.

TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENTS 1966-2008

CALENDAR YEAR	FATAL	NON-FATAL	TOTAL
1966	28	53	81
1967	23	70	93
1968	37	68	105
1969	24	68	92
1970	19	53	72
1971	24	68	92
1972	30	55	85
1973	22	58	80
1974	16	52	68
1975	11	66	77
1976	11	52	63
1977	17	64	81
1978	20	63	83
1979	10	43	53
1980	13	56	69
1981	19	53	72
1982	23	74	97
1983	17	63	80
1984	21	39	60
1985	15	57	72
1986	13	55	68
1987	12	69	81
MANDATORY HUNTER EDUCATION			
1988	12	58	70
1989	12	66	78
1990	8	45	53
1991	13	68	81
1992	6	56	62
1993	6	52	58
1994	5	46	51
1995	4	36	40
1996	2	29	31
1997	8	43	51
1998	3	37	40
1999	6	38	44
2000	8	44	52
2001	3	40	43
2002	3	32	35
2003	2	42	44
2004	4	25	29
2005	2	29	31
2006	4	28	32
2007	4	26	30
2008	6	20	26
TOTALS	546	2,159	2,705

TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENT TOTALS 2008

HUNTING ACCIDENT: An accident/incident resulting from a discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes the injury or death of any person(s).

ACCIDENTS	2006	2007	2008	VIOLATED GAME LAW	2006	2007	2008
Total Accidents	32	30	26		12 (38%)	9 (30%)	7 (27%)
Fatal	4	4	6				
Non-fatal	28	26	20				
ANIMAL HUNTED				EQUIPMENT TYPE			
Dove	6 (19%)	5 (17%)	7 (27%)	Rifles	11 (34%)	13 (43%)	9 (35%)
White-tailed Deer	6 (19%)	8 (27%)	5 (19%)	Shotguns	16 (50%)	13 (43%)	13 (50%)
Rabbit/Hare	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	Handguns	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	4 (15%)
Feral Hog	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	5 (19%)	Muzzleloader	0	0	0
Quail/Pheasant	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	3 (11%)	Bow	1 (3%)	1 (4%)	0
Turkey	0	1 (3%)	0	TOTAL	31(100%)	32(100%)	26(100%)
Ducks/Geese	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	1 (4%)	SHOOTER'S AGE			
Coyote	1 (3%)	0	2 (8%)	0-9	0	0	0
Squirrel	4 (12%)	1 (3%)	0	10-19	10 (32%)	6 (20%)	5 (19%)
Misc. (Bobcats)	3 (9%)	3 (10%)	2 (8%)	20-29	4 (13%)	8 (27%)	3 (12%)
TOTAL	32 (100%)	30 (100%)	26 (100%)	30-39	2 (6%)	4 (13%)	5 (19%)
HUNTER JUDGMENT				40-49	7 (22%)	4 (13%)	5 (19%)
Victim out of sight of shooter/moved into line of fire	3	2	3	50-59	3 (9%)	4 (13%)	2 (8%)
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	5	5	2	60 & over	3 (9%)	3 (10%)	4 (15%)
Victim mistaken for game	2	2	1	Unknown	3 (9%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
TOTAL	10	9	6	TOTAL	32 (100%)	30 (100%)	26 (100%)
SAFETY & LAW VIOLATION				MISCELLANEOUS/TREE STAND FACTOR			
Removing/placing firearm in vehicle	2	1	3	Failure to use haul line	0	1	0
Discharge of firearm in/on vehicle	1	8	6	Obstruction in Barrel	0	0	0
Improper Crossing of an obstacle; Walking with loaded firearm	1	2	1	Faulty Equipment	1	1	0
Firearm fell from insecure rest/Using firearm as a club	1	0	1	TOTAL	1	2	0
Alcohol, drugs or horseplay	0	1	1	SKILL AND APTITUDE			
TOTAL	6	12	12	Loading/unloading gun	0	2	0
SHOOTER HAD COMPLETED HUNTER ED.	13 (41%)	12 (40%)	7 (27%)	Careless handling	10	5	6
				Careless handling while climbing into/out of tree stand	0	0	0
				Dropped firearm	3	0	1
				Shooter stumbled and fell	2	0	1
				TOTAL	6	15	8
				SELF-INFLICTED	18 (56%)	12 (40%)	12 (46%)
				ALCOHOL/DRUGS A	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	0

FACTOR

Hunting Accident Report Non-Firearm Related 2008

*Accidents/incidents while hunting, not involving the discharge of a firearm or bow, which causes injury or death of any person(s).

Type	Total	Fatal?	Comments
Fall From Elevated Stand	1	Yes	Victim fell from an elevated tower stand while spraying for wasps. He impaled himself onto a "T" post approximately 8 to 10 feet from the stand.
Fall From Tree Stand	1	No	Victim fell while descending from tree stand about 20 ft. high, breaking his left femur and right wrist. He was not using a fall restraint device or climbing system.

Shooting Accidents Non-Hunting Related

*Other reported accidents/incidents resulting from the discharge of a firearm/bow, which causes the injury or death of any person(s), other than while hunting.

Type	Total	Fatal?	Comments
Home Firearm Accident	1	Yes	Shooter was showing victim how to use the victim's new, loaded, .45 cal. handgun. Victim grabbed for his gun and he and shooter carelessly discharged it into the victim's abdomen in the process.
Vehicle Accident/Scouting Trip	2	No	After returning from a scouting trip, 18-year old shooter carelessly discharged his shotgun while unloading it near the rear of his truck. Pellets struck both his father and his brother - the former in the hand and the latter in the side.; While packing up a vehicle, victim tucked loaded, holstered handgun under his arm. He dropped the .22 mag and it discharged -sending the bullet through his forearm.
Plinking/Shooting	1	No	15-year old victim was carelessly handling and twirling his cousin's .22 cal. handgun, brought on the trip to plink with. Shooter thought the gun was unloaded and twirled and "fired the gun like a cowboy." The muzzle was pointed towards his abdomen at the time of discharge. Victim was driven to an ambulance and care-flighted to a nearby hospital.

2008 FATAL ACCIDENTS

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-5	Chambers	46/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter placed loaded shotgun in the bed of his pickup alongside his retriever. As he approached the muzzle end of the gun, he and/or the dog caused it to discharge. The pellets struck him in the femoral artery.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; never walk in front of a muzzle; always unload firearm when not in use; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; complete hunter education.					
1-6	Somervell	19/M	Handgun	Rabbit	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged his .22 cal. pistol while sitting down on a rock. This incident was ruled an accidental discharge and not a suicide even though shooter was by himself and the bullet struck him point blank through the cheek and up through his brain.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; handle firearms carefully; use a holster, two-hand or another proper carry method while hunting or sitting down; always control muzzle if tripping or falling; leave safety mechanism on until firing the shot; unload firearm when not in use; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
2-6	Clay	81/M	Shotgun	Quail	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Apparently, shooter carelessly discharged his shotgun while exiting the woods. Pellets struck him in the brachial artery, and after walking an additional 40 feet, he bled to death. He was hunting alone and had not returned to camp to the concern of the ranch foreman.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; handle firearms carefully and use a two-hand or another proper carry method while hunting; always control muzzle if tripping or falling; leave the safety mechanism on until firing the shot; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
6-11	Lavaca	63/M	Rifle	Coyote	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter attempted to untangle his semi-automatic rifle from brush, when he carelessly discharged it towards his 14-year old grandson who was walking in front of him. Bullet struck victim in the spine in the center of his back.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; handle firearms carefully; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; communicate with fellow hunters; leave the safety mechanism on until firing the shot; complete hunter education.					
11-30	Trinity	48/M	Rifle	Deer	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter showed his loaded hunting rifle to another hunter, and then put it into a gun case in the back seat of his truck. He carelessly discharged it in the process. The bullet struck his wife standing on the other side of the vehicle. Bullet struck victim in her lower left abdomen.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; never walk in front of a muzzle; always unload firearm when not in use; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; complete hunter education.					
12-22	DeWitt	15/M	Rifle	Feral Hog	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was shooting at hogs escaping from a trap. When he whirled around to avoid hogs, he stumbled and fell, carelessly discharging the gun in the process. Bullet entered rear window of a vehicle parked nearby and struck victim in the head.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; handle firearms carefully and use a two-hand or another proper carry method while hunting; always control muzzle if tripping or falling; leave the safety mechanism on until firing the shot; apply what was learned in hunter education.					

2008 NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-1	Borden	54/M	Rifle	Deer	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter placed a loaded .338 rifle into a case that also contained a .30/30 lever action. He carelessly discharged the .338 in the process, sending the bullet and shrapnel through the back seat of the cab of his truck and into the victim's back. Shooter did not have a hunting license.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; never walk in front of a muzzle; always unload firearm when not in use; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; always obey hunting laws; complete hunter education.					
1-19	Milam	15/M	Rifle	Deer	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was hunting illegally in a deer blind on 75 acres, without hunter education and without a licensed adult present. He shot his .222 illegally across his neighbor's property and the bullet went through the windshield of a truck being driven by the landowner at the time of the incident. The bullet grazed the landowner's shoulder.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; be sure of your target and what is in front of beyond the target; choose a safe background and backstop, especially when locating stationary blinds or stands; place stands and blinds well within property lines; know the effective and maximum ranges that bullets/pellets can travel; always obey hunting laws; complete hunter education.					
2-1	San Jacinto	67/M	Shotgun	Feral Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter spotted a hog while riding an ATV with his wife. While exiting the ATV, he carelessly discharged his loaded shotgun, and the blast of 7 1/2 pellets entered his wife's leg near the knee.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; never walk in front of a muzzle; always unload firearm when not in use; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; be sure of your target and what is in front of beyond the target; complete hunter education.					
4-12	Cochran	28/M	Rifle	Feral Hog	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	While loading his .22 cal. pump rifle in the back seat of his vehicle, shooter carelessly discharged it while simultaneously covering the muzzle with his hand. Bullets went through his index finger and thumb and exited the rear window.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; handle firearms carefully, especially while loading and unloading; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
9-1	Wise	39/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter loaded his shotgun and placed it in his lap with the muzzle pointed towards his hunting companion. He carelessly discharged it sending the pellet blast into his friend's arms and hands.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; handle firearms carefully; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; complete hunter education.					
9-5	Kerr	40/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged his loaded shotgun towards his while walking in a dove field.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; handle firearms carefully; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; complete hunter education.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted	Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)
9-7	Coleman	26/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	While hunting dove near a stock tank; shooter thought it would be funny to shoot the water in front of the ATV his friend was riding towards the dam on the tank. A pellet ricocheted and struck the victim in the eye and on grazed him in the ear.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; horseplay and firearms do not mix; handle firearms carefully; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; never shoot at hard flat surfaces, especially with others nearby; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
9-20	McMullen	62/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim had walked up behind shooter to get more shells. Pellets struck victim in arm, side and head.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; complete hunter education.					
9-20	Wharton	42/F	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire. Shooter was firing at a dove that was flying low and starting to land in a tree.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
10-5	Hill	36/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged his shotgun while the muzzle was resting on his toe.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; handle firearms carefully; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; never set a muzzle of a gun on a toe complete hunter education.					
10-19	Dimmit	UNK	Shotgun	Quail	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	On a youth hunting weekend, young victim was out of sight of and covered by shooters swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim was about 100 yards away from a hunting party in a neighboring field. One pellet broke the skin in his arm.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; be aware of other hunters within the maximum range of the firearms being used; know where others are positioned at all times.					
10-25	Bastrop	36/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged a loaded shotgun while riding in his vehicle on private land. Pellet blast went through both toes.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; unload when no longer hunting; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; treat every firearm as if it is loaded; never hunt from a vehicle; complete hunter education.					
10-26	Guadalupe	19/M	Shotgun	Feral Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was illegally hunting with neither a license, nor hunter education certification. While placing his loaded shotgun into the basket of an ATV, his finger inside the trigger guard, he carelessly discharged his towards the legs of his brother standing on the passenger side.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; never walk in front of a muzzle; always unload firearm when not in use; for transport, store unloaded firearm in a secure case separate from ammunition; always obey hunting laws; complete hunter education.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted	Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)
11-22	Fisher	UNK	Shotgun	Quail	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim had walked into cover, out of sight of his group of quail hunters. They swung on game outside of their safe zone of fire, and the victim was struck by five pellets to his head, neck and arm. Several of the hunters in the group fired towards the 37-year old victim, none with hunter education experience.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; be aware of other hunters within the maximum range of the firearms being used; know where others are positioned at all times; complete hunter education.					
11-25	Zavala	56/M	Handgun	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was riding in an ATV on private land with a loaded, holstered .22 cal. handgun. They hit a bump in the road causing the handgun to fall and discharge, sending the bullet through the victim's right bicep.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; unload when no longer hunting; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; carry holstered handguns with an empty chamber while hunting and unloaded while in a vehicle; never hunt from a vehicle; always obey hunting laws; complete hunter education.					
11-26	Coleman	17/M	Rifle	Non game	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was illegally hunting with neither a license, nor hunter education certification. Victim leaned .22 cal. rifle against tree. As he went to grab the rifle, he carelessly discharged it into his left hand fingers that had grabbed the muzzle end.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if is loaded; always unload firearm when not in use; never lean a firearm against an insecure rest; always obey hunting laws; complete hunter education.					
12-3	Howard	34/M	Rifle	Coyote	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was illegally hunting from inside a vehicle on a public road and without a hunting license. He had seen a coyote and his friend was positioning the vehicle for a shot, which the shooter was unable to get. Shooter then pulled the loaded rifle back into the car and placed the muzzle on his boot. He carelessly discharged it as they started the vehicle up again.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; unload when no longer hunting; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; never hunt from a vehicle; always obey hunting laws; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
12-21	Bandera	38/M	Handgun	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter had just returned from hunting and while attempting to unload his handgun and place it in his vehicle he carelessly dropped it. The handgun hit the vehicle and discharged, sending the bullet at an upward angle through his right thigh and left hip.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; unload when no longer hunting; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; carry holstered handguns with an empty chamber while hunting; never hunt from a vehicle; complete hunter education.					
12-25	Coleman	22/M	Handgun	Feral Hog	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter, who had a "hunter education deferral", was a passenger riding in a jeep going to check a hog trap. He had a loaded, holstered .45 cal. handgun. They hit a bump in the road causing the handgun to fall out of the holster and discharge. The bullet ricocheted off the top of the jeep and into the victim's right arm.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; unload when no longer hunting; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; carry holstered handguns with an empty chamber while hunting and unloaded while in a vehicle;					

never hunt from a vehicle; complete hunter education.

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted	Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)
12-31	Maverick	46/M	Rifle	Bobcat	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was sitting in a tripod, elevated stand, hunting deer, waving at the shooter who was driving on a <i>sendera</i> about 200 yards away. Shooter mistook the waving hand for a bobcat moving its tail and fired his .25-06 towards the movement. The victim was struck in the upper left shoulder. (STORY AND PHOTO BELOW)					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; properly identify the target prior to raising a firearm towards it; always carry and use binoculars to identify targets; when transporting a firearm, always make sure it is unloaded and in a case, separate from the ammunition; never hunt from a vehicle; complete hunter education.					

VICTIM'S ACCOUNT - LAST DAY OF 2008

"Some of you may already know that I was involved in a hunting accident on New Year's Eve but wanted you to hear about it from me so that you have the story first-hand and know that I am going to be okay.

I was sitting in a tripod stand on my lease in South Texas at dusk when one of my hunters drove down an adjoining road. He stopped his jeep in my *sendera*, and I waved my hat and whistled so that he would see me and leave. I watched him get out of his jeep and the next thing I know I hear and feel the shot at the same instant. I was able to stand up and yell to him that he shot me and he drove to me as I climbed out of the stand. The 25-06 bullet went in the front of the top of my left shoulder where it joins the neck and exited out the back. He rushed me to the Eagle Pass emergency room which is only minutes from the ranch.

I was flown home to Houston the next afternoon and have been having the wound treated at home by a doctor friend until I get in to see a general surgeon tomorrow. I have a very nasty exit wound that will require several weeks to heal and then plastic surgery to finish off. I was very, very fortunate in that the bullet missed all bones and vitals. I have attached a picture of the wound (don't open if you are squeamish). You will see how lucky I (and the shooter) am to be able to sit and write this today. I will tell you that it hurts, a lot!

As to the question of how this could happen I don't have an answer. He is an experienced and normally very safe hunter and he can't explain his total lapse in judgment at shooting at something he could not positively identify, in very low light and at a 200 yard distance. He broke the number 1 rule in gun safety. His recovery time will be much longer than mine but he is not getting any sympathy from me at this time.

The soreness gets a little better (easier to take) every day, and I expect to be working at least part time tomorrow and picking it up a little more every day.

I'm thankful for all the support I have gotten in the last few days. I expect to have a great new year!"

