



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## NEWS RELEASE

### LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Law Enforcement *Off The Pavement*



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## Wearing a Harness Critical when Tree Stand Hunting

**SOCIAL CIRCLE** – Going hunting? What’s on your checklist of items to take? If you plan on hunting from a tree stand, a full-body fall arrest harness should be your number one priority.

Between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, there were 33 hunting incidents reported in Georgia, which caused four fatalities. Thirty-one of those incidents were tree stand falls with three fatalities. According to the International Hunter Education Association, about 10% of hunters who use tree stands are injured annually and more than 75% of tree stand injuries occur during the use of fixed positions or climbing stands.

The good news is that nearly all tree stand-related incidents are preventable if hunters will simply take a few safety precautions.

The Tree Stand Manufacturers Association, a non-profit group that includes most of the top stand manufacturers in the nation, offers a very informative and thorough on-line video on [tree stand safety](#) that even an experienced hunter may find helpful.

Here are a few added safety reminders from the TMA website:

- Never climb while carrying weapons or gear; draw them up with a rope after you're securely seated in the stand.
- Let other hunters know where you are, and take along a cellphone or two-way radio so you can contact them.
- Never use a stand that has worn, missing or loose parts.
- Always wear a full-body fall arrest harness. Keep the tether as short as possible and clear of neck and shoulders.
- If you feel yourself becoming drowsy or sick, get out of the tree; many falls occur as a result of falling asleep, or from sudden illness.
- Practice using the harness, including suspending yourself by the tether, before you go hunting. Always have a helper standing by for practice runs.
- If you ever fall, first contact a hunting partner and let them know you are attempting self-recovery. Ask them to keep tabs on you with return calls every five minutes.
- If you can't recover and are hung suspended by the tether, call for help. Keep your legs moving to pump blood out of them; otherwise, blood pooling in the legs could cause you to pass out.
- Manufacturers say the safest recovery via a harness is to climb back into the stand. Only as a last resort should you cut the tether or release the harness buckles.

Additional hunting safety tips:

- Always wear the fluorescent orange.
- Practice firearm safety.
- Always be respectful of other hunters and property owners where you hunt.
- Stay on established roads – do not operate any vehicle, including ATVs, within stream beds.
- Pack it in, pack it out – take your litter with you.

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- Always be sure of your target and the area beyond the target.
- Secure landowner permission before hunting on private property.

## 10 Commandments of Hunting Safety

1. Control the direction of the firearm's muzzle. Keep the safety on and fingers off the trigger at all times until ready to shoot.
2. Identify the target and what is beyond it before shooting. Know the identifying features of the game hunted and be absolutely certain that what you are aiming at is that game.
3. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
4. Be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions and that only the proper size ammunition is used in the firearm.
5. Always unload a firearm when it is not in use, leave the actions open, and carry empty firearms in a case to and from shooting areas.
6. Never aim a firearm at anything that you do not intend to shoot. Avoid all horseplay with a firearm.
7. Never climb a tree or fence, or jump a ditch or log, with a loaded firearm. Never pull a firearm towards you by the muzzle.
8. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or at water. Make sure backstops are adequate during target practice.
9. Store firearms and ammunition separately and beyond the reach of children and careless adults.
10. Avoid all alcoholic beverages and drugs before and during shooting.

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