

2004  
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; 27 years of age (average)
- Hunted deer with rifle or dove with shotgun
- Was typically **not** under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- 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 or stand
- 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 and/or carried loaded firearm in or 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



### 2004 Significant Factors

- Many violations for “failure to take hunter education course” in 2004
- The wearing of blaze orange would reduce many accidents in Texas
- Swinging on game outside of a safe zone of fire is still the primary accident type (dove hunting)
- Higher aged shooters involved in 2004 hunting incidents
- Violations of law common among accident scenarios
- Careless handling is a big problem in Texas
- No turkey, coyote, squirrel or rabbit incidents in 2004.

**HUNTING ACCIDENT DATA (1966-2004)  
ACCIDENT VERSUS LICENSES SOLD IN TEXAS**

CALENDAR YEAR	HUNTER ACCIDENTS	HUNTING LICENSES SOLD	ACCIDENTS PER 100,000 LICENSES	STUDENTS CERTIFIED
1966	81	644,653	12.6	-
1967	93	797,846	11.7	-
1968	105	854,693	12.3	-
1969	92	895,593	10.3	-
1970	72	935,793	7.7	-
1971	92	978,285	9.4	-
1972	85	966,332	8.8	2,119
1973	80	1,011,963	7.9	4,314
1974	68	1,037,925	6.6	6,094
1975	77	1,051,834	7.3	8,531
1976	63	1,050,349	6.0	10,043
1977	81	1,080,530	7.5	11,298
1978	83	1,091,794	7.6	10,890
1979	53	1,093,716	4.8	10,775
1980	69	1,160,375	5.9	12,166
1981	72	1,174,023	6.1	13,187
1982	97	1,216,032	8.0	13,323
1983	80	1,325,474	6.0	14,131
1984	60	1,140,174	5.3	13,052
1985	72	1,100,991	6.5	11,284
1986	68	1,162,785	5.8	11,195
1987	81	1,189,566	6.8	8,611
1988	70	1,189,000	5.9	18,043
1989	78	1,193,000	6.5	36,708
1990	53	1,132,917	4.7	24,590
1991	81	1,103,903	7.3	28,682
1992	62	1,053,063	5.9	25,453
1993	58	1,077,055	5.4	26,942
1994	51	1,083,227	4.7	34,972
1995	40	1,060,000	3.8	31,215
1996	31	990,000	3.1	24,998
1997	51	960,000	5.3	30,625
1998	40	1,011,500	3.9	31,052
1999	44	1,010,455	4.3	37,775
2000	52	1,145,000	4.5	39,049
2001	43	1,076,159	4.0	28,062
2002	35	1,024,495	3.4	37,847
2003	44	1,082,225	4.1	34,727
2004	29	1,091,178	2.7	31,184
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,586</b>	<b>41,243,903</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>682,937</b>

- First ten-year average of hunter education program (CY 1966 - CY 1975) - One hunting accident/**10,858** hunting licenses sold.
- Second ten-year average of hunter education program (CY 1976 - CY 1985) - One hunting accident/**15,662** hunting licenses sold.
- Third ten-year average of hunter education program (CY 1986 - CY 1995) - One hunting accident/**17,515** hunting licenses sold.
- Thirty-nine year average (CY 1966 - CY 2004) - One hunting accident/**15,949** hunting licenses sold.

## TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENTS 1966-2004

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
<b>MANDATORY HUNTER EDUCATION</b>			
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
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>2,056</b>	<b>2,586</b>

## TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENT TOTALS 2004

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	2002	2003	2004	VIOLATED GAME LAW	2002	2003	2004
Total Accidents	35	44	29		8 (22%)	13 (30%)	10 (34%)
Fatal	3	2	4				
Non-fatal	32	42	25				
<b>ANIMAL HUNTED</b>				<b>EQUIPMENT TYPE</b>			
Dove	11 (31%)	11 (25%)	11 (38%)	Rifles	13 (37%)	17 (39%)	9 (31%)
White-tailed Deer	8 (22%)	6 (13%)	6 (20%)	Shotguns	19 (54%)	24 (54%)	19 (65%)
Rabbit/Hare	2 (06%)	3 (7%)	0	Handguns	3 (09%)	2 (5%)	1 (4%)
Feral Hog/Javelina	2 (06%)	7 (16%)	5 (17%)	Muzzleloader	0	0	0
Quail/Pheasant	3 (09%)	8 (18%)	5 (17%)	Bow	0	1 (2%)	0
Turkey	4 (11%)	1 (2%)	0	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35(100%)</b>	<b>44(100%)</b>	<b>29(100%)</b>
Ducks/Geese	1 (03%)	0	1 (4%)	<b>SHOOTER'S AGE</b>			
Coyote	0	2 (5%)	0	0-9	1 (03%)	0	1 (4%)
Squirrel	1 (03%)	2 (5%)	0	10-19	8 (22%)	12 (27%)	2 (7%)
Miscellaneous (Snake)	3 (09%)	4 (9%)	1 (4%)	20-29	8 (22%)	6 (13%)	7 (24%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35(100%)</b>	<b>44(100%)</b>	<b>29 (100%)</b>	30-39	1 (03%)	2 (5%)	5 (17%)
<b>HUNTER JUDGMENT</b>				40-49	10 (29%)	11 (25%)	4 (14%)
Victim out of sight of shooter/moved into line of fire	5	6	3	50-59	2 (06%)	7 (16%)	2 (7%)
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	11	11	9	60 & over	2 (06%)	3 (7%)	6 (20%)
Victim mistaken for game	3	4	2	Unknown	3 (09%)	3 (7%)	2 (7%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35(100%)</b>	<b>44(100%)</b>	<b>29 (100%)</b>
<b>SAFETY &amp; LAW VIOLATION</b>				<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>			
Removing/placing firearm in vehicle or stand	2	0	1	Obstruction in Barrel	1	0	0
Discharge of firearm in/on vehicle	3	3	3	Ricochet	1	4	0
Improper Crossing of an obstacle	0	1	0	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Firearm fell from insecure rest/Using firearm as a club	1	1	1	<b>SKILL AND APTITUDE</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	Trigger caught on object	1	0	0
<b>SHOOTERS HAD HUNTER ED.</b>	12 (34%)	9 (20%)	3 (10%)	Loading/unload firearm	0	3	0
				Careless handling	6	8	9
				Dropped firearm	0	2	0
				Shooter stumbled and fell	1	1	1
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>
				<b>SELF-INFLECTED</b>	11 (31%)	11 (25%)	10 (34%)
				<b>ALCOHOL A FACTOR</b>	1 (03%)	1 (02%) plus	1 (4%) plus 1 Victim

## Hunting Accident Report Non-Firearm Related 2004

\*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
Drowning (Travis; 1-12-04)	1	Yes	68-Year old male was waterfowl hunting; went into the water to save his dog who became disoriented after retrieving a duck
Exposure to Cyanide (DeWitt; 2-22-04)	1	No	While hunting hog with dogs, two hunters picked up a cyanide bait that their dogs had retrieved, exposing themselves to the poison; admitted themselves to hospital
Ladder/Tree Stand Fall (Newton; 10-01-04) (Grayson; 10-02-04)	2	No	* Bow hunter ascended stand, felt dizzy and fell, prior to strapping himself into a harness. He called for assistance using his cell phone. * Bow hunter fell after the strap on his stand broke (strap was 3 years old). He was not wearing a safety harness.)

## 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
Plinking (Clay; 4-19-04)	1	Yes	Careless handling of firearms ; Shooter pointed muzzle of firearm in the direction of companion and carelessly pulled the trigger
Handgun accident while in camp (Stephens; 11-20-04)	1	No	Careless handling; improper holstering of handgun; horseplay; Shot went thru victim's calf

## 2004 FATAL ACCIDENTS

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)
<b>1-31</b>	Maverick	38/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter heard hog, went towards a canal bank, and then saw the hogs coming towards him. The hogs scattered; and then he thought a hog returned and fired a shot from his .30-30, mistaking the victim for a hog. Shot struck victim at 126 yards. Victim was from Mexico.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Be absolutely sure of your target before raising your rifle; use binoculars to fully identify game; wear blaze orange to be seen; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>10-30</b>	San Augustine	40/M	Shotgun	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim carelessly shot himself while sitting on a stump waiting for deer. The blast struck victim in the chest. He had the muzzle apparently resting against himself.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; when stationary, be sure firearm is unloaded or is under your control at all times; hunt with a companion; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-25</b>	Smith	20/M	Shotgun	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Inexperienced hunter was left alone and apparently was trying to climb a tree with his loaded shotgun. The blast was through his hand and head so it looks like was grabbing the muzzle as he fell to the ground.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; control the muzzle of the firearm, even if you fall; never try to climb a tree or stand with a loaded firearm; hunt with companion; obey the laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>12-04</b>	Webb	34/M	Rifle	Deer	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter and victim were climbing a tower stand/blind with a loaded .270 rifle. Shooter carelessly discharged firearm as the muzzle was pointed towards his companion above him at the time. Shooter was in violation of the hunter education law at the time of the incident.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; never climb a tree or stand with a loaded firearm; attend a hunter education course. <b>**PENDING FURTHER INVESTIGATION**</b>					

## 2004 NON-FATAL ACCIDENTS

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted	Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)
<b>1-2</b>	Live Oak	17/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter and victim were riding/ driving in a vehicle with a loaded firearm. Shooter carelessly discharged the firearm while unloading it on a bumpy road. The muzzle was pointed towards the victim's thigh at the time of discharge. Shooter and victim were in violation of the hunter education law at the time of the incident.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload and safely store a firearm while in a vehicle; carefully load and unload a firearm; obey the laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>1-10</b>	Hunt	60/M	Shotgun	Quail	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim, who was the guide, was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; discourage having more than two hunters hunting at one time; wear blaze orange to be seen; attend a hunter education course.					

<b>Date</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shooter's Age/Gender</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Animal Hunted</b>	<b>Self-Inflicted?</b>	<b>Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)</b>
<b>5-17</b>	Lavaca	68/M	Handgun	Snake	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was attempting to shoot an unknown snake while on his back porch. He carelessly discharged it into his foot as he was passing the gun from his right to his left hand.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; control the muzzle of handgun at all times when loaded and ready to fire; shoot only while in the field and hunting legal game species during legal seasons; obey the laws; avoid alcohol; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>8-21</b>	Grayson	22/M	Rifle	Hog	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Two shooters were shooting at running hogs with .22 rifles. Non-hunting companion stepped into the line of fire as shooters carelessly swung on game outside of a safe zone of fire. Bullet struck victim in buttock from about 3 feet away.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; never move into the a hunter's line of fire; always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; never fire rifles at moving targets.					
<b>9-1</b>	Dickens	69/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged his shotgun as he got up to move to another location. His finger was in the trigger guard and safety off as he rose from his seat. The blast went through his left foot.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded at all times; control the muzzle and use a proper carry at all times; unload before changing locations; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-1</b>	Milam	25/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was sitting in a sunflower field 30-40 yards from shooter who fired and sprayed victim with pellets. About 20 pellets lodged into victim's skin in arm, head and neck. Shooter was in violation of the hunter education law.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; never move into a hunter's zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear orange into/out of a field so others know where you are located; obey laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-1</b>	Haskell	UNK	Shotgun	Dove	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was struck in the back of the head by five pellets fired from a group of dove hunters that were hunting in an adjacent field. Victim went to hospital; didn't know whom the hunter was.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; never move into a hunter's zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear orange into and out of a field so others know where you are located; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-2</b>	Throckmorton	38/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was struck in the eye by one pellets fired the shooter who was approximately 75 yards away. Shooter was firing at a low-flying dove.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; never move into a hunter's zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear orange into and out of a field so others know where you are located.					
<b>9-3</b>	Throckmorton	39/F	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly pointing a loaded 20-gauge shotgun towards the victim as he pulled the trigger. The blast struck the victim who was standing about 20 yards away.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; keep fingers out of the trigger guard and on safe at all times until you are taking a shot; stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear orange into and out of a field so others know where you are located; attend a hunter education course.					



<b>Date</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shooter's Age/Gender</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Animal Hunted</b>	<b>Self-Inflicted</b>	<b>Hunter Ed. Graduate? (Shooter)</b>
<b>9-4</b>	Hardeman	48/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; obey hunting laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-4</b>	Maverick	65/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Five victims were standing around a truck and were struck by pellets from when the shooter swung on flying birds outside of his safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; obey hunting laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-5</b>	Kent	20/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged shotgun as he pointed it towards his foot. He was just about to raise the shotgun to take a shot at a dove. Shooter was in violation of the hunter education law.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; use proper carry methods; obey the laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-11</b>	Johnson	7/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Father allowed young son to carry loaded shotgun while they were leaving the field. Son carelessly discharged it while the muzzle was pointed towards a 14 year-old victim. Pellets struck victim in his right foot. The 7 and 14-year-olds did not have hunting licenses and were accompanying their fathers during the hunt.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; use proper carry methods; always unload after you are finished hunting; never give a loaded firearm to a person not aware of and skilled in firearm safety rules; obey the laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>9-28</b>	Zavala	56/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire. The victim was struck by 47 pellets to the face, shoulder and arms.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>10-4</b>	Tom Green	UNK	Shotgun	Dove	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	Non-hunting victim was struck in the back of the head by a pellet fired from a group of dove hunters that were hunting about 100 yards away in an adjacent field. Pellet caused inflammation, but not penetration.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; never move into a hunter's zone of fire; communicate with hunters who are hunting nearby.					
<b>10-15</b>	Llano	24/M	Rifle	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Poacher was illegally hunting deer out of season by illegal method (.22 cal rifle), and he was in violation of the hunter education law. He just missed a deer and was attempting to re-sight in his rifle. He allowed the rifle to fall from an insecure rest. The bullet struck him in the elbow.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; control the muzzle of the firearm, never lean a loaded firearm against an insecure rest; obey the laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-5</b>	San Saba	62/M	Shotgun	Quail	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear blaze orange to be seen; attend a hunter education course.					

**Hunter Ed.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shooter's Age/Gender</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Animal Hunted</b>	<b>Self-Inflicted</b>	<b>Graduate? (Shooter)</b>
<b>11-6</b>	Bee	63/M	Shotgun	Quail	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged shotgun as he pointed it towards his foot. Shooter said his reflexes were not as good, and as he took the safety off, he shot the firearm.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; use proper carry methods; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-6</b>	Llano	36/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was standing on bumper of jeep firing at a hog with his rifle steadied on the top of the jeep. Victim was struck from bullet that ricocheted off the roll bar. Victim was sitting in front of jeep, in the line of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; never shoot from within or on a vehicle; never sit, stand, or walk within the line of fire; make sure barrel is clear of obstructions between muzzle and target; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-7</b>	Willacy	24/M	Shotgun	Quail	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire. Shooter was in violation of the hunter education law.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear blaze orange to be seen; obey all laws; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-7</b>	Houston	16/M	Rifle	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly discharged rifle while sitting in a stand. He said he thought the safety was on and admitted that he had his left hand over the muzzle.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearm in a safe direction; keep finger out of trigger guard and safety on until firing a shot; handle firearm carefully when readjusting body position; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>11-18</b>	Erath	59/M	Shotgun	Quail	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was covered by shooter swinging on game outside of his safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always stay within a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>12-04</b>	Uvalde	47/F	Rifle	Deer	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carelessly pulled the trigger of her loaded lever action .30 caliber rifle while retrieving camera in the back of her vehicle.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; treat every firearm as if it is loaded at all times; always unload and store firearms in case when transporting; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>12-14</b>	Zapata	42/M	Rifle	Peccary (Javelina)	No	No (UT)
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter mistook his son for a javelina and shot his .22 cal. rifle. They were in a spot where they had seen javelina earlier in the day; son was wearing dark camouflage clothing; hunters were from Utah.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the firearm in a safe direction; be absolutely sure of your target before raising the firearm to it; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; wear blaze orange to be seen; attend a hunter education course.					
<b>12-28</b>	Wood	21/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter carried loaded firearm in a boat with 3 hunters and a dog. Firearm discharged as dog walked on it. The bullet struck the victim in buttock.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point firearms in a safe direction; always unload and store firearms in case when transporting; control dogs around firearms and in blinds; never overload a boat.					