



Illinois firearm deer season opens Nov. 16-18

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SPRINGFIELD – Deer hunters are reminded to focus on safety as the 2018 Illinois Firearm Deer Season opens this week. The seven-day firearm season begins this Friday, Nov. 16 through Sunday, Nov. 18. A second round of firearm deer hunting will be held from Nov. 29-Dec. 2.

“Our firearm deer weekends are Illinois’ most popular hunting season, and amid all the excitement of the season, we want to remind hunters that safe hunting is the best hunting,” said Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Wayne Rosenthal. “Illinois’ hunting safety record is a good one, but even one hunting incident involving injuries or fatalities is one too many.”

The IDNR Office of Law Enforcement, which administers the Illinois Hunter Safety Education Program, reports there were 19 hunting incidents last year during all seasons, three of which involved fatalities. Ten of those incidents involved hunters falling from elevated tree stands or falling while climbing into or out of tree stands.

IDNR safety educators remind hunters using tree stands to use a Fall Arrest System (FAS) safety harness. Nationally, more than 80 percent of reported tree stand incidents involve hunters who were not using a fall restraint system. As additional precautions, hunters should check the harness, straps, ladder and other equipment to make sure they are in good working order. Hunters should also be aware of weather conditions that could make stands and steps slippery, and to have a mobile phone within reach to call for help, if needed.

Hunters can review tree stand safety online at <http://www.huntercourse.com/treestandssafety/>

Safety educators and IDNR Conservation Police also remind everyone hunting with a firearm to:

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded, and never assume a firearm is unloaded;
- Always point a firearm in a safe direction;
- Be sure of the target, and make sure there are no other hunters, homes, buildings, vehicles or other animals beyond the target;
- Keep their finger out of the trigger guard and off the trigger until they are ready to shoot.

Legal hunting hours for the firearm deer season are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Hunters who take a deer during the firearm season in most Illinois counties must register the deer they harvest online, or through the toll-free phone check-in system. To register their harvest by phone, hunters can call 1-866-IL-CHECK (1-866-452-4325). A link to the online deer registration system is available here: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/HarvestReporting.aspx>

Hunters registering deer through the online or phone systems must do so by 10:00 p.m. on the day they take the deer.

In many northern Illinois counties where chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been detected in deer, hunters are required to register all deer harvested during firearm season by taking them to a check station between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Biologists will be present to take CWD samples for testing at the time of registration. Testing is voluntary, but all hunters with adult deer are encouraged to participate. Information on the counties where hunters are required to check in their deer at check stations is available on the IDNR website at:

<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Documents/2018%20CWD%20Counties%20Deer%20Hunting%20Information%20Sheet.pdf>

Hunters participating in CWD sampling can check the status of their deer (listed by phone number) through the IDNR website. Hunters who provide samples from deer that test positive will be notified by the IDNR. For more information on CWD in Illinois, check the website at:

www.dnr.illinois.gov/programs/CWD.

In addition to the seven-day Illinois Firearm Deer Season on Nov. 16-18 and Nov. 29-Dec. 2, other deer hunting seasons in the state include the three-day Muzzleloader-only Deer Season on Dec. 7-9, and the seven-day Late-Winter Firearm Antlerless-only Deer Season and Special CWD Deer Season (in select counties) on Dec. 27-30, 2018 and Jan. 18-20, 2019. The Illinois Archery Deer Season, which opened on Oct. 1, is open through Jan. 20, 2019 (except closed in counties open to Firearm Deer Season on Nov. 16-18 and Nov. 29-Dec. 2).

For more information on Illinois deer hunting regulations, check the *Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations 2018-2019* at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/documents/HuntTrapDigest.pdf>