

“THE INCIDENT SCENE WILL SPEAK TO YOU, YOU MUST LISTEN FOR THE SAKE OF PREVENTION” – THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER HUNTING INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

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Abstract: As hunting receives increased scrutiny, the safe use of firearms becomes more of an issue. Annually there are 5.4 hunting incidents per 100,000 hunters reported to the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) in the United States. The IHEA defines a hunting incident as an occurrence or an event that results in the physical injury or death of a person or persons, which involves the discharge, or use of a hunting implement while engaged in hunting activity. Knowing how hunting related firearm incidents occur is vital to helping prevent them. A proper investigation consists of a fact-finding mission of collecting data, recording information, and drawing a conclusion based on facts. The concluding information detailing all incidents should be placed in reports and funneled into the hands of hunter education instructors for curriculum in hunter education programs focused on creating hunter awareness for responsible firearm safety. Additionally the information gathered can also be used to support considerations for legislative change. Because accurate investigations are critical to incident prevention, administrators of firearm safety or hunting safety programs must budget and commit appropriate resources and qualified staff to hunting incident investigation.