

In 2015, 15 hunting and shooting sports related incidents were reported to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. Two hunting incidents resulted in fatalities; one from health-related cause, the other was self-inflicted. The total number of hunting and shooting sports related incidents decreased from 2014, the total number of incidents reported to GFP in 2015 was still below the 10 year average of 36 incidents.

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks HuntSAFE Program compiles hunter safety statistics each year using the definitions outlined by the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA). The IHEA determines the criteria of how hunting incidents, public shooting range incidents and treestand incidents are reported. These criteria are:

Type A. Injury or death of a person resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow during hunting.

Type B. Injury or death of any person while hunting, which did not involve the discharge of a firearm or bow.

Type C. Injury or death of any person, other than while hunting, resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow.

This report includes the incidents that were reported to SDGFP within all three of the above criteria. Other incidents may have occurred, but they were not reported to the department.

A short summary of each incident is described on a case-by-case basis below.

In 2015:

- 9 incidents were related to pheasant hunting
- 1 incident were related to waterfowl hunting
- 1 incident were related to coyote hunting
- 1 incident were related to prairie Dog hunting
- 1 incident were related to grouse hunting
- 1 incident were related to shooting range
- 1 incident were related to natural causes
- 2 fatality (Type B)

South Dakota Hunting Incidents Summary Table 2010-2014

South Dakota Hunting Incident Data

Year	Total	Big Game	Upland Game	Waterfowl	*Other Fatal	
2015	15	1	10	1	3	2
2014	28	2	21	2	3	1
2013	23	3	17	2	1	2
2012	21	3	18	0	0	3
2011	55	3	38	2	12	1

In hunting incidents where a shooter was identified, 5 shooters were non-residents, 9 were residents and the remaining incidents were either self-inflicted or a shooter was not identified.

Where hunter education completion could be determined, 9 people involved as shooters had received hunter education.

Each individual hunter shoulders the responsibility for their own safety and the safety of those around them. The four basic rules of firearm safety are:

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- Be sure of your target and what is in front of and beyond your target
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

Pheasant Hunting Incidents

Type: A

County: Faulk

Date of Incident: 10/17/2015

Reason: Blocking for hunting party

Age of shooter: Unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: Victim was blocking while 12 other hunters walked towards him. The victim heard multiple shots and then felt a pain to his face.

Type: A

County: Potter

Date of Incident: 11/1/2015

Reason: Shooting low flying bird

Age of shooter: 87

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: Shooter could have avoided shooting at a low flying bird. Shooter knew victim was there but lost track of him while swinging on a bird.

Type: A

County: Jones

Date of Incident: 12/5/2015

Reason: Shooter didn't look behind target

Age of shooter: 39

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: Shooter needed to look beyond his target. Hunting group needed to keep in the line and not get ahead of each other.

Type: A

County: Haakon

Date of Incident: 10/17/2015

Reason: Hunting party swinging on game

Age of shooter: Unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Pheasant hunting in a group, and that he was on the very end of a line of walkers.

He was out of sight of shooter when shot.

Type: A

County: Faulk

Date of Incident: 11/9/2015

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 54

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: Was blocker and an unknown individual in the group shot and struck the victim in the face.

Type: A

County: Clark

Date of Incident: 11/13/2015

Reason: Firearm fell, insecure rest

Age of shooter: 58

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Firearm fell, insecure rest. Firearm misfire, better muzzle control of the firearm.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 11/03/2015

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: Unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: Shooter should check what is beyond the target before firing. Shooter should only fire with in the safe zone of fire. Shooter should not fire unless there is blue sky below the bird.

Type: A

County: Edmunds

Date of Incident: 10/18/2015

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 39

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter should not have shot at pheasant that was in line with other hunters. Shooter should have never fired in that direction. Witnesses thought it was a pure accident. Shooter and victim were walking a standing corn field.

Type: A

County: Grant

Date of Incident: 9/1/2015

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 34

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter should have looked beyond target prior to shooting. Shooter and victim could have worn fluorescent orange articles of clothing.

Waterfowl Hunting Incident

Type: A

County: Kingsbury

Date of Incident: 10/15/2015

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 23

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Victim and shooter positioned in a straight line. Victim was ahead in front of and to the left persons shoulder in front of. Muzzle pointed straight forward not pointed in angled direction of victim.

Grouse Hunting Incident

Type: A

County:Haakon

Date of Incident: 9/19/2015

Reason: Swinging on game

Age of shooter: 40

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter could have waited to swing on the game or let the game go to prevent this incident.

Coyote Hunting Incident

Type: A

County: Hand

Date of Incident: 3/6/2015

Reason: Self-inflicted

Age of shooter: 64

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: The victim was out hunting Coyotes at night, the gunshot was self-inflicted. It was unknown if the gunshot wound was intentional or unintentional.

Prairie Dog Hunting Incident

Type: A

County: Perkins

Date of Incident: 5/1/2015

Reason: Shooter rested muzzle against top of the knee. Self-inflicted

Age of shooter: 18

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter unknowingly pulled barrel back and rested muzzle against top of knee. When the shooter pulled the trigger the .22 bullet struck about the left knee and traveled under the left knee cap. Bullet lodged under the skin below left knee cap.

Natural Causes

Type: A

County: Aurora

Date of Incident: 11/21/2015

Reason: Victim died of natural causes on GPA

Age of shooter:

Hunter Ed. cert:

Brief Description: Victim died of natural causes on GPA

Shooting Range Incident

Type: C

County: Codington

Date of Incident: 3/7/2015

Reason: Exiting Vehicle

Age of shooter: 37

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Victim exited the vehicle with the pistol in his hand and the finger on the trigger. The safety was turned off. Victim slipped upon exiting the vehicle and pulled the trigger.

