

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks

Hunt SAFE in the Schools



Hunt SAFE in the Schools - Lesson 1

Topic(s): Introduction; Expectations; 10 Commandments of Firearm Safety

Student handbook (*Today's Hunter*) reference: Chapter 1

Supplies needed

Student Handbooks (1 per student)
Hunt SAFE or other pens (1 per student)
DVD 'The Last Shot'
DVD player/laptop
Projector/screen
Whiteboard

Procedure:

This first class session should be used to establish the expectations of the class, along with beginning the conversation about safe firearm handling. Every instructor will have different expectations for their classes, but general suggestions include

- Students will pay attention & respect all instructors
- Students will take subject matter seriously
- Students are encouraged to ask questions
- These will generally parallel expected student behavior at school

Next, explain to the students why they're taking this course. While some students may desire the certification card in order to go hunting, the larger goal is to provide education on safe, responsible handling of firearms, regardless of whether they ever choose to hunt. The theme and examples may tie directly to hunting, but the lessons are universal.

Example: when asked, approximately two-thirds of a class of junior high students indicated that they had come across a firearm unexpectedly (i.e. not hunting or target shooting).

Next, discuss The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety (inside front cover of *Today's Hunter*).

Methods to start the discussion could include

- Students take turns reading a Commandment
- Instructor asks class to give an example, without previously going over this page
- Instructor reads Commandments to the class

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The Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety are

1. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
2. Treat every firearm as if it's loaded.
3. Be sure of the target, what's in front of it, and what's behind it.
4. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you're ready to shoot.
5. Make sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.
6. Unload firearms when not in use.
7. Only point a firearm at something you intend to shoot.
8. Unload a firearm before crossing a fence or other obstacle.
9. Store firearms and ammunition separately and safely.
10. Avoid alcoholic beverages before and during shooting.

Activity: Split Attention

Hand out pens to every student. Tell the class that they'll be watching a short video. While watching the video, they need to treat the pen as if it were a firearm (remind of the Ten Commandments, if necessary). Using the pen to take notes doesn't count. Also instruct them to watch for both good and bad examples of firearm usage shown in the video.

Watch the first 7+ minutes of *The Last Shot* video. **Instructor note:** this video is a dramatization of a true story in which a pair of teenage boys take a .22 caliber rifle into the woods for some fun target practice. Numerous examples of irresponsible firearm use are shown, along with some examples of proper use. In this true story, one of the boys dies from an accidental discharge of the rifle. If you stop the video at the time indicated (just as the rifle goes off), no blood or injuries are shown. You can watch the entire video (approximately 12 minutes) if you choose.

While the students are watching the video, observe how they handle the pens they were given. Watch for both good and bad examples of "pen safety" and the students treating them as firearms as they watch the video.

After watching the video, ask the students to identify both good & bad firearm handling examples they saw. Write these on the board as the students say them. Some examples include

Good

- Wearing bright orange clothing
- Passing off the rifle when crossing the fence
- Making sure the rifle is unloaded before crossing the fence

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Bad

- Going without permission (or supervision)
- Trespassing
- Not telling anyone where they're going
- Not checking the weather forecast and/or not wearing proper clothing
- Walking in front of muzzle
- Shooting at a target too close or in front of the other person
- Handing the rifle to the other muzzle first

After this discussion, identify the good & bad "pen safety" behaviors that you observed while the students were watching the video. You might observe

Good

- Keeping the point (muzzle) pointed in a safe direction, such as at the ceiling or away from other people in the room
- Disassembling the pen (unloading and/or breaking it down)

Bad

- Pointing the point (muzzle) at others in the room
- Looking down the barrel of the pen
- Chewing on the pen
- Scratching their head with the pen
- Losing their pen

You can write these examples on the board if you choose or simply discuss them. Mention the individual behaviors that you saw (without saying who did what). Explain that in a hunting situation, the hunter's attention must be on their handling of the firearm in addition to watching the game and surroundings. A hunter must split their attention between safety and the potential for taking their game.

Homework: Students should read Chapter 1 from *Today's Hunter*. Then, they should write down a question from their reading and bring to class the following day (Session 2). *Alternate:* read through the SD Hunting Handbook and write down a question in advance of the Conservation Officer's visit.