

2014 South Dakota Hunting Incidents Report

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In 2014, 28 hunting and shooting sports related incidents were reported to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. One hunting incident resulted in a fatality from a health-related cause. Even though the total number of hunting and shooting sports related incidents slightly increased from 2013, the total number of incidents reported to GFP in 2014 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 2014:

- 21 incidents were related to pheasant hunting
- 2 incidents were related to Big Game (deer) hunting
- 2 incidents were related to Waterfowl hunting
- 3 incidents were related to hunting coyote, raccoons and rabbits
- 1 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
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
2010	35	0	26	2	7	1

In hunting incidents where a shooter was identified, 6 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, 14 people involved as shooters had received hunter education while 1 had not.

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/Upland Game Incidents

Type: A

County: Edmunds

Date of Incident: 10/18/2014

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter, Ricochet

Age of shooter: 26

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter was using a 12 caliber Winchester 1200 shotgun. Victim received a puncture wound in the right shin from a BB.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 10/18/2014

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

Age of shooter: 47

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Victim was walking in an unpicked cornfield with a group of hunters, when the hunter to the right shot at a bird. Victim could hear the BB's coming through the corn and felt them bounce off his safety glasses and teeth. A BB had struck his cheek on the left side of his nose and penetrated the skin.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 10/19/2014

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

Age of shooter: unknown shooter

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: The victim was acting as a blocker west of the food plot where the corn was tall enough to restrict the view of hunters. Low Bird was called, the victim was struck by multiple pellets with approximately 14 pellets penetrating and lodging under the skin. Injuries were minor however one pellet was removed from a knuckle on his right hand.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 10/19/2014

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/victim in line of fire

Age of shooter: unknown shooter

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: The victim was acting as a walker through brush when a bird got up and other hunters in the line fired on the bird. Victim was 5-10 yards ahead of the rest of the line and was struck with shot from an unknown shooter. Victim received pellets to the head, shoulder and face.

Type: A

County: Beadle

Date of Incident: 10/19/2014

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

Age of shooter: unknown shooter

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: No narrative provided

Type: A

County: Hand

Date of Incident: 10/19/2014

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

Age of shooter: unknown shooter

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: No narrative provided

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 10/21/2014

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/Victim in line of fire

Age of shooter: 68

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Shooter was unable to see victim because of the cover in the field. Low Bird was called and the victim was struck with three BB's one lodged in his scalp and two in his right cheek.

Type: A

County: Charles Mix

Date of Incident: 10/25/2014

Reason: Victim out of sight of shooter/ Failure to check beyond target

Age of shooter: Unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: Unknown

Brief Description: 7 hunters walking in or near a shelter belt containing cedar trees. Several birds flushed and multiple shots fired. The injury was sustained due to the fact the shooter/shooters perceived what was beyond the target to be safe.

Type: A

County: Charles Mix

Date of Incident: 10/26/2014

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game/Failure to check beyond target

Age of shooter: 61

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Victim and shooter were walking a field of milo. Near the end of the field a bird flushed. The shooter swung on the bird and fired striking the victim. The victim received shotgun pellets to the left shoulder, neck and temple.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 10/26/2014

Reason: Victim in line of fire

Age of shooter: unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: Victim was hunting with a group of 12 people. The group was finishing the field when a bird was dropped behind him. As the victim was bending over to retrieve the bird he was struck in the face. One pellet was lodged in his left cheek.

Type: A

County: Hand

Date of Incident: 10/26/2014

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: Victim was hunting in a party of 5 people. The victim was blocking in a low spot in the middle of the corn field and the other 4 hunters were walking towards him. A bird flushed, several shots fired at the bird. The victim was struck in the neck with 1 pellet.

Type: A

County: Hutchinson

Date of Incident: 10/26/2014

Reason: Place/remove firearm from vehicle; trigger caught on object

Age of shooter: 26

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: The victim was driving the vehicle, they saw a rooster along the road and they stopped the vehicle. Hunter 2 was in the back seat of the vehicle and after stopping the vehicle he jumped into the front of the parked vehicle. The gun was loaded with a round in the chamber, and safety was taken off before he removed gun from vehicle. The weapon fired when his hand and gun hit the open door. The X-ray showed a large number of lead BB's, approximately 50+ lodged in the foot of the victim.

Type: A

County: Sanborn

Date of Incident: 10/28/2014

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: 7 walkers were walking a corn strip. The victim who was one of the 2 blockers was standing beside his pickup. The unknown shooter swung on a bird and fired once. Pellets struck the victim and his vehicle.

Type: A

County: Bon Homme

Date of Incident: 10/30/2014

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

Age of shooter: unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: Hunting a rectangle piece of CRP with 9 hunters. The victim moved to be in line with pheasants, when he did he went over a small hill just out of sight of the hunters in line. A pheasant flew up and several shots fired and a couple of pellets hit the victim in the face.

Type: B

County: Edmunds

Date of Incident: 10/13/2014

Reason: hunter suffered a fatal heart attack

Age of shooter: n/a

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: After rescuing his dog in cold water, the hunter suffered from extreme exhaustion resulting in a fatal heart attack.

Type: A

County: Tripp

Date of Incident: 11/01/2014

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game/Failure to check beyond target

Age of shooter: unknown

Hunter Ed. cert: unknown

Brief Description: The victim was blocking at the end of the field, a pheasant flew up out the side of the field away from him. Four members of the party shot at the bird, and the victim felt one pellet enter his right eye.

Type: A

County: Hanson

Date of Incident: 11/05/2014

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 37

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: 5 walkers were walking a corn strip and the victim was guiding the walkers. The shooter was out in front of the walkers. A bird flushed, the shooter turned back toward the walkers who were in tall corn, swung on the bird and fired once and 5 pellets struck the victim.

Type: A
County: McPherson
Date of Incident: 11/15/14
Reason: Hunter had a stroke
Age of shooter: 54
Hunter Ed. cert: Yes
Brief Description: Hunter had a stroke

Type: A
County: Spink
Date of Incident: 11/17/14
Reason: Careless or reckless handling of firearm
Age of shooter: 35
Hunter Ed. cert: unknown
Brief Description: Shooter shot himself point blank above the left foot. The shot hit slightly above his boot line.

Type: A
County: Stanley
Date of Incident: 11/20/14
Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game/ Victim in line of fire
Age of shooter: unknown
Hunter Ed. cert: unknown
Brief Description: Shooter shot in the direction of the blocker. One pellet wound to the right cheek (face).

Type: A
County: Codington
Date of Incident: 11/28/14
Reason: Failure to check beyond target/ Careless or reckless handling of firearm
Age of shooter: 45
Hunter Ed. cert: Yes
Brief Description: Victim was hit with 3 pellets in the face. One pellet hit the forehead, one pellet in the left cheek and one pellet in the chin.

Waterfowl

Type: A
County: Edmunds
Date of Incident: 10/17/2014
Reason: Other
Age of shooter: 34
Hunter Ed. cert: Yes
Brief Description: Shooter was in a duck blind, and was grabbing firearm when it went off striking his left foot.

Type: A

County: Hughes

Date of Incident: 11/11/14

Reason: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game

Age of shooter: 46

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: The victim was the person on the right, witness in the middle and the shooter on the left. Duck decoys were set up in front of and to the right of the victim and goose decoys were set up in front of and to the left of the shooter. At some point they noticed ducks near the duck decoys, the shooter and the victim took a step or two forward out of cover to take a shot at the duck. The duck took flight and flew to the extreme right of the hunters. The shooter swung on the duck and continued to swing to the right just pass the victim and fired. When the shooter fired he hit the victim on the right side of the face and on top of the right hand and thumb area as the victim was also swinging to the right to shoot at the duck. The shooter shot the victim over his right shoulder.

Cottontail Rabbit

Type: A

County: Grant

Date of Incident: 03/15/2014

Reason: Drop Firearm/Careless or Reckless handling of firearm

Age of shooter: 12 (Self-Inflicted)

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Victim/shooter was hunting rabbits; the gun slipped out of shooters hand, and went off striking the shooter in the foot. The victim/shooter was using a lever action .22 rifle half cock.

Big Game- Deer

Type: B

County: Minnehaha

Date of Incident: 09/29/14

Reason: Not wearing safety harness

Age of shooter: none-self inflicted

Hunter Ed. cert: No

Brief Description: Victim attempted to trim some limbs from his tree stand. He was not wearing a safety harness and the limb below him broke sending him to the ground. Victim suffered fractures to neck, rib cage, shattered pelvis, shattered lower spine and collapsed lung. Has permanent nerve damage.

Type: A

County: Pennington

Date of Incident: 11/22/14

Reason: Unloading Firearm & Place/remove firearm from vehicle

Age of shooter: 56

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: When the victim got into the pickup, her gun went off. The victim didn't know she was shot until she took her boot off. The bullet only hit skin on one of her toes.

Coyote

Type: B

County: Codrington

Date of Incident: 12/03/14

Reason: Careless or reckless handling of firearm

Age of shooter: 24

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: When removing the gun from the vehicle the gun went off. He suspected that the firearm caught his clothing and went off. The firearm was loaded with a round in the chamber when he was removing from the vehicle.

Raccoon

Type: A

County: Butte

Date of Incident: 12/06/2014

Reason: Shooter stumbled and fell/ Run with loaded firearm

Age of shooter: 15

Hunter Ed. cert: Yes

Brief Description: Began spotlighting raccoons. They had located a raccoon in the tree from a vehicle. Victim and shooter got out of the vehicle and went down into the creek bottom to shoot the treed raccoon. In the process of running down there the shooter stumbled on a log falling forward and his 22 rifle discharged.