

2022 HUNTING-RELATED SHOOTING INCIDENT ANNUAL REPORT



Hunter Education and Outreach Division



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

HUNTER/TRAPPER EDUCATION

2001 ELMERTON AVENUE HARRISBURG, PA 17110-9797 | 717-787-7015

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2022 Hunting-Related Shooting Incident Summary

INTRODUCTION

A hunting-related shooting incident (HRSI) is defined as any occurrence when a person is injured as the result of the discharge of a firearm, crossbow, or bow during hunting or furtaking activities. Often these incidents result from failing to follow basic safety rules. While one incident is one too many, the marked decline of HRSIs in Pennsylvania can be attributed to the success of the hunter education program and mandatory use of fluorescent orange clothing.

Since 1915, the Pennsylvania Game Commission has kept records of these incidents across the state. For comparative purposes, the Game Commission monitors trends in HRSIs by measuring the accident rate per 100,000 participants. In Pennsylvania, HRSIs have declined by nearly 80% since hunter education training began in 1959.

Included in this report are a series of charts, graphs, and related data that summarize records for HRSIs that were investigated by Pennsylvania Game Commission State Game Wardens during 2022. Overall, according to our records, hunting is safe and getting safer.

2022 HUNTER EDUCATION SUMMARY

All first-time hunters and trappers, regardless of age, must successfully complete a hunter-trapper education course before purchasing a Pennsylvania hunting or furtaking license. In 2022, the Pennsylvania Game Commission certified a total of 31,699 students, of which 14,567 were through in-person courses and 13,041 were through online options. While almost half of Pennsylvania's hunter-trapper education graduates completed their certification online, the Pennsylvania Game Commission relies heavily on volunteers to offer in-person hunter-trapper education courses across the state. The decline in HRSIs in Pennsylvania are largely due to the dedication and hard work of our hunter-trapper education instructors.

2022 HRSI ANALYSIS

During 2022, a total of 14 HRSIs were recorded in Pennsylvania, of which none were fatal. This is the lowest number of HRSIs recorded in Pennsylvania since 1915. The incident rate (expressed as the number of HRSIs per 100,000 participants based on general license sales) was 1.65, which was a decrease from the 2021 incident rate of 2.11. Over three-quarters of HRSIs reported in 2022 were inflicted by others (78.6%).

An analysis of offenders' ages revealed that individuals ages 20 or younger, had the lowest incident rate with 3 HRSIs. The highest incident rate occurred among offender's ages 21-50 with



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7 HRSIs. In addition, over 50% of offenders had 10 or more years of hunting experience and were all in-person hunter trapper education graduates.

The majority of HRSIs occurred during daylight hours (78.6%). Weather reported shows 71% of HRSIs occurring during overcast or clear skies, with only 2 incidents occurring during inclement weather; including rainy, foggy, or snowy conditions. In addition, 50% of HRSIs occurred in woodlands, while 42.9% of HRSIs occurred in fields.

The primary cause of HRSIs in 2022 were “victim in line of fire” resulting in 50% of incidents. Other causes for HRSIs included unintentional discharge, shot for game, and hunters who slipped or fell. Approximately 42% of offenders were pursuing deer, most of which were using a rifle. Other HRSIs occurred by offenders in pursuit of pheasant (28.6%), dove, fox, and grouse.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, 2022 had the lowest number of HRSIs recorded in Pennsylvania since 1915 and was the tenth successive year with 30 or fewer HRSIs. This accomplishment can be attributed to the institution of mandatory hunter education and the safe practices being followed by hunters and trappers in Pennsylvania. Game Commission staff, volunteer hunter-trapper education instructors, hunters, and trappers can be proud for continuing to make hunting an enjoyable and safe activity in Penn’s woods.



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2022 HRSI STATEWIDE TOTALS

DESCRIPTION OF HRSI	FATAL	NON-FATAL	TOTAL
INJURY TYPE			
SELF-INFLICTED	0	3	3
INFLICTED BY OTHERS	0	11	11
VICTIM AGE			
UNDER 12 YEARS	0	0	0
12-15 YEARS	0	2	2
16-20 YEARS	0	3	3
21-50 YEARS	0	5	5
OVER 50 YEARS	0	4	4
VICTIM EXPERIENCE			
UNDER 2 YEARS	0	0	0
2-5 YEARS	0	1	1
6-10 YEARS	0	3	3
OVER 10 YEARS	0	4	4
NOT REPORTED	0	6	6
VICTIM POSITION			
STANDING	0	1	1
WALKING/RUNNING	0	6	6
SITTING	0	3	3
ENTER/EXIT VEHICLE	0	1	1
IN TREE STAND	0	0	0
IN BLIND	0	1	1
OTHER/UNKNOWN	0	2	2
VICTIM WAS			
HUNTING	0	14	14
OTHER	0	0	0
OFFENDER AGE			
UNDER 12 YEARS	0	0	0
12-15 YEARS	0	1	1
16-20 YEARS	0	2	2
21-50 YEARS	0	7	7
OVER 50 YEARS	0	4	4
OFFENDER WAS			
HUNTING	0	14	14
NOT REPORTED	0	0	0



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DESCRIPTION OF HRSI	FATAL	NON-FATAL	TOTAL
OFFENDER HUNTER EDUCATION			
IN-PERSON	0	14	14
ONLINE	0	0	0
NOT REPORTED	0	0	0
OFFENDER EXPERIENCE			
UNDER 2 YEARS	0	0	0
2-5 YEARS	0	2	2
6-10 YEARS	0	1	1
OVER 10 YEARS	0	8	8
NOT REPORTED	0	3	3
CAUSE OF INCIDENT			
UNINTENTIONAL DISCHARGE	0	5	5
SHOT FOR GAME	0	1	1
VICTIM IN LINE OF FIRE	0	7	7
HUNTER SLIPPED &/OR FELL	0	1	1
HUNTER DROPPED SPORT ARM	0	0	0
SPORT ARM DEFECTIVE	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0
PLACE OF INCIDENT			
FIELD	0	6	6
WOODLAND	0	7	7
MARSH/BOG	0	0	0
ROAD/HIGHWAY	0	1	1
OPENWATER	0	0	0
COVER			
DENSE	0	7	7
LIGHT	0	5	5
NONE	0	2	2
OVER 10 YEARS	0	8	8
LIGHT CONDITIONS			
DAWN	0	0	0
DAYLIGHT	0	11	11
DUSK	0	1	1
DARK	0	1	1
NOT REPORTED	0	1	1



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DESCRIPTION OF HRSI	FATAL	NON-FATAL	TOTAL
WEATHER CONDITIONS			
CLEAR	0	5	5
OVERCAST	0	5	5
FOG	0	0	0
RAIN	0	2	2
NOT REPORTED	0	2	2
SPECIES HUNTED			
DEER	0	6	6
BEAR	0	0	0
SMALL GAME	0	7	7
WATERFOWL	0	0	0
FURBEARER	0	1	1
SPORTING ARM USED			
SHOTGUN	0	7	7
RIFLE	0	6	6
HANDGUN	0	0	0
MUZZLELOADER	0	1	1
LONG BOW	0	0	0
COMPOUND BOW	0	0	0
CROSSBOW	0	0	0
CALIBER			
CENTERFIRE	0	6	6
BLACK POWDER	0	1	1
UNKNOWN	0	6	6
GAUGE			
12	0	4	4
16	0	1	1
20	0	2	2
SHOT SIZE			
4	0	1	4
7.5	0	3	1
UNKNOWN	0	3	2
TOTAL	0	14	14