



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Hunting season safety tips for pets

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Fall means hunting season throughout much of the United States. Many animal lovers also love the outdoors.

Whether you let your cats out by the woods, go hiking with your dogs, go out hunting with dogs, or live by a hunting area, autumn is a great time to remember how to safely share the woods while protecting pets.

“I experience this conundrum every year,” said Dr. Brian Collins, head of the Community Service Practice at Cornell University’s Hospital for Animals. “I love to hike but I worry about safety in the woods during hunting season. For people whose animals go into the woods or live close to hunting areas, there are several things that can help minimize the risks the season brings.”



Collins offers the following tips:



Outfit your dogs with bright clothing

Many sporting goods stores have blaze orange reflective vests for dogs. In a pinch, tie brightly colored fabric such as bandanas around your dog’s neck

Do not let dogs off-leash

In areas where hunting or trapping occurs. Shooting mistakes can happen, and some states allow body-gripping traps.

Do not let dogs chase deer

Regardless of the season. If your dog has this inclination, leashing at all times or reliable voice control is necessary.

Wear a vest or bright clothing yourself

Avoid earth-tones. It is best for both of you to be very visible.

Make sounds when in the woods

Whistle or sing as you walk. If you hear shots, shout to make sure hunters know you're there.

Consider avoiding hunting areas altogether

Take this opportunity to check out urban parks or take walks through the village and sharpen your dog's heeling skills.

If your property borders hunting areas

Do not let your dog off-leash in your yard unless they are under close supervision.

Do not let pets eat carcasses

Dogs allowed to roam in hunting areas often find remains of deer carcasses and can become ill from ingesting them.

Consider pets' fears

Some pets become very anxious from the sound of guns. It's best to keep such pets away from areas where they'll hear gunshots. If this occurs near your home your veterinarian may prescribe medication to help keep your friend calm.