

NATIONAL BOWHUNTER EDUCATION FOUNDATION
PROJECT STAND
STOP TREE STAND ACCIDENTS 'N DEATHS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TREE STAND SAFETY ALERT

FORT SMITH, Arkansas – April 30, 2008 - The National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) has issued a tree stand safety alert. The alert identifies tree stands as a major source of hunting injuries and deaths in this country. The alert also reports that tree stand related fatalities and accidents out number firearm related hunter fatalities.

The alert is part of the NBEF's Project STAND (Stop Tree Stand Accidents 'n Deaths) a massive communications effort designed to reduce tree stand accidents. According to the NBEF, tree stand mishaps are occurring on an all too regular basis. Studies report the accident rate being as high as 1 in 3 with the probability of a near miss (incident) being much higher. Hunters are being seriously injured or killed, families are devastated and the image of hunting is tarnished.

Marilyn Bentz, Executive Director of the NBEF reports "It's impossible to find a hunter who hasn't heard of a fellow hunter who has fallen while using a tree stand. Thousands of accidents occur each year with many resulting in serious injury and even death. Hunters need to start taking tree stand safety as seriously as they take firearms safety. A tree stand hung 20 feet in the air should be treated like a loaded gun because it is every bit as dangerous. When hunters start treating their tree stand set-ups with the same caution they do a loaded firearm these accidents and deaths will start to go away. We can't make progress with hunters believing "it can't happen to me".

The growth and popularity of hunting from elevated stands has increased tremendously. Millions are purchased each year. No longer a couple of 2 x 4's nailed up in a tree, or a rickety metal platform, most modern tree stands are virtual feats of engineering prowess. They are made of space age materials and loaded with features and benefits. They are designed with safety in mind and now come with a safety harness, printed safety instructions, and safety DVDs. Millions are purchased each year with most hunters using multiple stands.



Why the high accident and death rate? According to the NBEF, "Every hunter in America knows that they should wear a fall restraint device yet only about 50% do. Fewer use them when climbing (when accidents are most likely to occur) and getting in and out of their stands. Unfortunately, many hunters believe it will always be the other guy who falls and it will never happen to them. Fact is, if this is how they approach tree stand safety it WILL happen to them. Most accidents could be prevented if hunters would just use the safety gear and instructions provided with the tree stand product.

Hunting from elevated stands is universally practiced by hunters and is typically viewed as the most effective method of harvesting big game like white-tailed deer. The NBEF pioneered tree stand safety education and is credited for popularizing elevated stand hunting by exposing millions of hunters to safe tree stand hunting practices. Project STAND will refocus hunters on proper tree stand hunting practices and increase hunter participation with their "HUNT SMART---HUNT SAFE" educational outreach program which will launch nationally in 2008.

Project STAND is being led by the National Bowhunter Education Foundation with support from the hunting industry, state, and federal wildlife agencies, medical organizations and first responders.

For more information on how you can contribute to the Project STAND campaign or to order a Safe Treestand Hunting Strategies DVD, contact Marilyn Bentz, NBEF Executive Director at mbentz@nbef.org or 479-649-9036.

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