

Hunting Season Safety - Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee

Hunting season begins Saturday, September 12th in Readington Township and it is important for hunters as well as the general public to be smart and safe while in the woods. Readington has over 8,900 acres of preserved open space and farmland that should be utilized and enjoyed especially during the fall season. Readington also has an overabundant deer population in excess of 103 deer per square mile which is significantly above the 5-11 deer per square mile that our forests and woodlands can adequately sustain. Because of the higher deer densities, impacts to forest vegetation regrowth, increased motor vehicle accidents, and other property damage have increased over the years within the Township.

Since 2019, Readington has instituted a more robust deer management program to help reduce the deer populations which has included over 1,800 acres of Township open space as part of the program. While the hunters in the management program have been vetted and fully briefed about safety and expectations of interacting with other members of the community, it is also expected that the general public also acts in a safe manner during hunting season for all of us to fully enjoy some of the beautiful natural landscapes that Readington has to offer. The Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee would like for you to remember the following tips while out in the woods this fall and winter.



Hunting Season Safety Tips

- 1) Wear bright colors and/or blaze orange while hiking on Township trails.
- 2) As per Township ordinances, **please keep all dogs leashed while hiking** and bright colored collars and vests for your pets are highly encouraged.
- 3) Stay on designated hiking trails. Trail systems are designed to improve safety and also to protect sensitive habitats.
- 4) If you encounter a hunter, be respectful. They are also expected to do the same. We are all members of this community.
- 5) Plan hikes for times of the day when hunting is prohibited, or hunting activities are less likely. Deer activity and hunting usually occur at sunrise and sunset. Also, no hunting is allowed per state law on Township-owned property on Sundays.
- 6) Know your own comfort level. If hunting makes you uneasy, choose a hike location when or where hunting is not allowed:
 - a. Hunting is not allowed on Sundays on Township properties.
 - b. All firearms hunting is prohibited between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. except as follows (Bow hunting is still allowed):
 - i. Saturdays
 - ii. Six (6)-day firearm season (see below)
 - iii. Properties without posted Township trails.

- 7) Make yourself known. If you hear shooting, raise your voice and let hunters know you are in the vicinity.
- 8) Plan your hike and hike your plan. Always let someone know where you are planning to hike in the event of an emergency.
- 9) Know when hunting season is occurring. Please reference the below table of deer hunting season dates.
- 10) Any questions regarding hunting and safety issues can be sent to the Township Administrator and the Wildlife Advisory Subcommittee.

2026/2027 Deer Hunting Seasons	
Zones 8, 10, 12	
<u>Archery Seasons</u>	<u>Date Range</u>
Fall Bow	9/12/2026 - 10/30/2026
Permit Bow	10/31/2026 - 12/31/2026
Winter Bow	1/1/2027 - 2/20/2027
<u>Firearms Seasons</u>	<u>Date Range</u>
Permit Muzzleloader	Antlerless Only: 11/23-25, 11/27, & 12/7 - 12/12/26
	Either Sex: 11/30, 12/1, 12/14 – 12/24, 12/26 - 31, 1/1 - 2/20/2027
Permit Shotgun	Antlerless Only: 11/23-25, 11/27, 12/7 - 12/12/2026
	Either Sex: 12/14 - 18; 1/1 - 2/20/2027
Six Day Firearm	12/7 - 12/12/2026
No Hunting (Archery/Firearms)	Sundays & 12/25/2026 (Christmas Day)