

# Mail Call



## Re: “How Do You Fall From a Tree Stand?” (Fall 2002)

As an avid hunter and hunting-safety instructor, I hardly could wait to read this article; however, it proved to be a huge disappointment.

On the fourth page, bottom left paragraph, the author said, “I quickly (but safely) loaded my gun, located my flashlight, and hurried to catch my father.” That statement is the most blatant example of unsafe hunting practices I’ve ever seen. Walking in the dark to a stand with a loaded weapon unquestionably is one of the worst things a hunter can do—it’s unsafe, and, in most states, it’s illegal.

Later, the article mentioned the author climbing into his stand. However, it didn’t state whether he unloaded the weapon (that shouldn’t have been loaded in the first place) before raising it into the stand. And, of course, I’m only “assuming” he used a line to raise his gun into the stand, because the article never said.

On the fifth page was a picture of a hunter using a climbing tree stand. He had a fall-restraint and seemed to be using the stand correctly. The problem was with his blaze-camo vest; it didn’t have the 100 square inches of solid blaze orange required. His blaze cap, however, did meet the requirements.

It’s easy for me to see why the author had such an eventful hunt. If gun-safety and blaze-orange regulations weren’t important to him, tree-stand safety probably was the furthest thing from his mind.

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## Re: “Jackknifed” (Summer 2002)

At the end of this article, you say, “In most cases, though, tow chains will prevent swaying, provided they are hooked up correctly.” This advice, however, is incorrect.

Trailer chains are not designed to eliminate sway. They are designed to keep the tow and the tow vehicle connected in the event a hitch fails or the tow decouples. The correct way to connect the chains is to cross them below the tongue. You then should adjust their length so they don’t drag while driving on level ground. The reason for crossing the chains is to prevent their binding when turning corners and to create a basket for the trailer tongue to ride in if there is a failure.

Anti-sway devices are available on the market. Reese makes a single- and double-cam anti-sway device, and there are others. The Reese device is based on friction applied through the cam, in turn reducing sway.

One of the other possibilities is a weight-distributing system, which consists of a hitch and spring bars. The physics of this system causes weight to be transferred from the rear axle to the forward axle of the tow vehicle, and from the tongue to the rear-most axle on the trailer. Anti-sway systems can be added if needed.

As for U-Haul, they do not provide any of these devices for their trailers. I know because I’ve rented both the dual-axle enclosed and the auto-transport models within the last 12 months.

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