

Safety Rules for Quail Hunters – Dale Rollins (10-15)

1. Obey all the common rules of gun safety while afield, e.g., always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
2. Be mindful of where your hunting colleagues are at **all** times. Always wear hunter orange, at least a cap, and preferably a cap and vest.
3. Maintain a straight line when walking. Sounds simple enough, right? You'd be surprised how many times you have to remind your hunters to "straighten up."
4. Scan the ground in front of you for obstacles that may trip you (e.g., a hole or piece of wire). If you sense an impending fall, hold your shotgun "out and up" and hit the ground on your elbows. If you do fall, open your shotgun's action and check to ensure the muzzle did not get plugged with mud.
5. Know your assigned "safe zones of fire" and respect them. If there are more than two in your hunting party, do not shoot at birds that flush behind you. Never shoot at a bird that causes you to shoot across or over your partner(s).
6. When approaching a point, move quickly but safely into position. Walk past the dogs without slowing down. Don't stop or begin to "stalk" the dogs on point.
7. Always approach a pointed bird dog with your gun in the "port" position (muzzle pointed up) with the safety "on."
8. Do not shoot at low-flying birds or at any bird if the guide yells "no bird, no bird."
9. If you knock a bird down, mark its location well, but don't proceed towards the downed bird until all shooting has ceased.
10. Locate and pick up your spent shotgun hulls. Never leave any trash in the field.
11. Always unload your shotgun (safely and completely) before getting into the vehicle; leave the action open for easy inspection. When unloading, make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction at all times (generally upwards and outward).
12. Be especially careful when crossing fences or going under or through dense brush.

Quail hunting is a great sport but remember, there is no quail out there that is worth endangering yourself, your comrades, your guide, or my dogs!