60 Field Card: After the Shot

The wait, the trail, the tag, the knife work and the cold, in order, on one sheet folded in with your tag.

Every wait on this card counts from the minute you fired, so the time of the shot is the first blank to fill. Your state's tag and report rules go in before opening day (Chapter 50).

01 / THE WAIT

CHAPTER 48

Time of the shot: _____

Wait ends at: _____

Where it stood: _____

Last seen: _____

Its line, by compass: _____

☐ Pin or photo from my seat, flag on my tree

- Right after firing: reloaded, eyes on it. Dropped but still moving: I fire again at once from my seat, if safe and legal.
- Heart or lungs: 30–60 minutes. Liver: at least 4 hours. Gut, or a hit I can't place: at least 6 hours; late in the day, the next morning.
- Unloaded, or arrows covered and the bolt off the crossbow, to climb down. Reloaded on the ground, safety on, only in legal hours where my state allows; otherwise unarmed. Unloaded at a fence or near anyone.
- Jumped it: mark it, back out, at least an hour or two more.
- Still breathing: I stay back and shoot again, heart and lungs, solid ground behind, if that shot is as legal as the first. If not, I call the warden.
- Walk-up from above and behind the head, safety on. Dead for sure: unloaded, then tagged.

02 / SIGN AT THE SPOT

CHAPTER 49

- Arrow first. Bright blood with tiny bubbles: lungs. Green or brown with bits of food: gut. Dark red: liver. I back out and wait longer. Signs disagree: the longer wait wins.
- Orange flag at every sign, never toilet paper. I walk beside the drops.
- Drops stop: back to the last flag, circle wider or grid it; downhill, trails and water first.

03 / TAG AND REPORT

CHAPTERS 50, 52 AND 64

State: _____

Tag no.: _____

Tag on: ☐ before I dress or move it

☐ at the vehicle

Tied to: _____

Report due within: _____

Report by: ☐ app or online

☐ in-person check

Confirmation no.: _____

☐ Copied onto the tag

- Report needs: tag no., county or unit, date, sex. Proof of sex stays on the meat where required.

Game warden or dispatch: _____

Landowner: _____

60 Field Card: After the Shot

CONTINUED

04 / THE KIT

CHAPTERS 49–53

- [ ] Sharp fixed-blade knife
- [ ] String or zip ties
- [ ] Paper towels and wet wipes
- [ ] Game bags
- [ ] Small saw (older deer)
- [ ] Cord, 10–15 ft rope
- [ ] Two pairs of nitrile gloves
- [ ] Two gallon-size zip-top bags
- [ ] Orange flagging
- [ ] A clean tarp
- [ ] Bottle of clean water
- [ ] Headlamp

05 / THE ORDER

CHAPTERS 50–53

1. Tag first where my state requires it. Far from a road, the gutless method (Ch. 52) replaces steps 2–6. Otherwise, rear a little downhill.
2. Belly opened between two fingers, edge up. Anus freed and tied off.
3. Diaphragm cut along the ribs, then windpipe and gullet far forward. Free hand behind the edge.
4. Organs rolled out whole; tied colon pulled through the pelvis.
5. Heart and liver bagged; a spotted or lumpy liver stays.
6. Stick across the ribs, drained, in the shade. Near the road: dragged whole, cavity tied shut (Ch. 53).

- Throughout: fresh gloves after a gland; in CWD country, brain and spinal cord left alone. CWD-area deer only: knife, saw and board scrubbed, then kept wet 10 minutes with 2 parts household bleach to 3 parts water (Ch. 56).

06 / COLD, THEN THE FREEZER

CHAPTERS 54 AND 59

- Every part at 40°F or colder within 24 hours of the shot; on a warm day, on ice within a few hours.
- Shade, off the ground, air on all sides. No hose, no plastic on warm meat. Night above freezing: skinned that day.
- On the drive: on boards in the truck bed, never on the hood or in a trunk.

Ice or walk-in cooler: _____

Processor: _____

- One-meal packages, about a pound, no air, labeled with species, cut, weight and date.
- Frozen at 0°F or colder, one layer until hard. Thawed in the fridge, cold water or microwave, never on the counter.

07 / BIRDS AND SMALL GAME

CHAPTERS 54, 57 AND 58

- Birds laid out in moving air, out of the sun, never piled in a vest or a bag. Crop out soon; each in its own bag on ice when warm.
- Ducks and geese keep a head or one fully feathered wing until home. Upland rule in my state: _____
- Squirrel and rabbit: gloves on, skin before guts. Rabbit liver with many white pinhead spots: discard the rabbit.