

# Police urge hunters to be careful

## On The Beat

with Community Constable  
Nicki Davies



WAIROA police are urging hunters to act responsibly during the roar and adhere to the cardinal rules of firearms safety.

Police say it's all about hunters looking after themselves and their companions, adding they want hunters to enjoy themselves and come home safely.

Police also want to ensure the hunting is legal and there will be operations run throughout the district during the roar, also around poaching.

Police remind hunters to follow the Arms Code and seven basic rules of safe firearms handling:

- Treat every firearm as loaded. Check every firearm yourself and only pass or accept an open or unloaded firearm.

- Always point firearms in a safe direction.

Whether the firearm is loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

- Load a firearm only when ready to fire. Only load the magazine after you reach your shooting area. Load the chamber only when ready to shoot and completely unload before leaving the shooting area.

- Identify your target beyond all doubt.

Movement, colour, sound and shape can all deceive you.

- Check your firing zone. Think about what might happen if you miss your target? What might you hit between you and the target or beyond?

- Store firearms and ammunition safely. When not in use, lock away the bolt, firearm and ammunition separately. Never leave firearms in a vehicle that is unattended.

- Avoid alcohol and drugs when handling firearms. Good judgement is the key to safe use of firearms.

If there is any doubt about the target, do not shoot. The Arms Code outlines the circumstances under which it is not safe to fire:

- Do not fire at movement only
- Do not fire at colour only
- Do not fire at sound only
- Do not fire at shape only

Police will also focus on poaching this year.

Poaching is illegal and penalties have increased. Last year there were a number of arrests made in relation to poaching. The maximum penalty for illegal hunting is two years imprisonment and a \$100,000 fine. Vehicles, dogs and all equipment can be confiscated and destroyed. Hunters need to ensure they obtain permission from the land owner or permits before they go hunting.