

# Big Game Recovery Cheat Card

## Lesson 17

**Objective:** By the end of this lesson students will be able to describe the basic practices for successful big game recovery.

**Ask:** When does big game recovery begin?

**Steps to take immediately after a shot:**

- Identify **WHERE** the animal was standing during the shot.
- Observe the animal's reaction (kick up, stumble, stand still etc.)
- Observe the path the animal takes, and the last place you see it.
- Mark your tree/hunting location.

**Explain the reasons to wait before trailing game.**

- Allows animal to perish.
- Avoids “bumping” an animal that didn't go far (often unrecovered).
- Wait 30 minutes if using a firearm, 60 minutes with archery equipment.

**\*At this point walk the students to the start of the game recovery trail/activity.**

<p><b><u>Station 1- Arrow</u></b> Does the color of the blood tell you anything? Does the smell of the arrow tell you anything? How could you use the arrow to mark where the deer was when you shot? How might the sign vary due to your hunting implement (i.e. bow/arrow vs. gun)?</p> <p><b><i>Smell of bile (liver shot)</i></b>  <b><i>Blood trail on two sides (bow)</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Station 2- Leaves</u></b> What could you glean from looking at the leaves? What could the pattern of the blood tell you? What does the volume of the blood tell you?</p> <p><b><i>Clean pass through, heart shot, muscle shot, Lung shot.</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Station 3 - Vegetation</u></b> How could blood get on the leaves of a plant? While you are tracking the deer, how might you be able to ensure you remember where you have already tracked the deer? How might this help you predict where the deer has run?</p> <p><b><i>Have orange tape to demonstrate</i></b></p>
<p><b><u>Station 4 - Trees</u></b> Is blood the only sign that can tell you where the deer has travelled? What other signs should you be on the lookout for?</p> <p><b><i>Listen for breaking brush, moans, rolling rocks.</i></b>  <b><i>Dew lines, branches, hair, tracks, directional paths through grasses.</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Station 5 – Bed</u></b> What could it tell you if you found a pool of blood on matted vegetation? What should you do while tracking if you find matted vegetation with pooled blood?</p> <p><b><i>The animal isn't dead yet, may have been pushed, consider falling back and letting the animal die.</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Station 6 - Deer</u></b> How should you approach a deer once you find it? What is the first thing you should do after you've found it? What should you do if it's still alive? How and when? If you're certain it is dead, what is the first thing you should do?</p> <p><b><i>Tag it!</i></b></p>

**If you lose signs while tracking:**

- **Return to the last point of sign.**
- **Search outwardly in arcs/circles.**
- **Look for downhill trails.**
- **Look for paths of “least resistance” towards water.**

**Explain to the students how to dispatch an animal that is still alive when found:**

- **Well placed lethal shot.**
- **Ensure the shot is still legal/safe/ethical:**
  - **Greater than 500’ of an occupied dwelling.**
  - **Greater than 150’ from a road.**
  - **During legal hunting hours.**
  - **On property you have permission to be on.**
- **If it is no longer legal/safe, contact an EPO for guidance.**

**Explain that there are legal requirements that must now be met and the best ways to meet them:**

- **Tag the animal. (*fill out the tag with a pencil*)**
- **Where to put the tag. (*through the ear with a safety pin*)**
- **How to keep tag dry. (*zip loc baggy/license holder, and safety pin*)**
- **Which animals in MA require a field tag. (*deer, bear and turkey*)**

**QUESTIONS?**