



Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program

As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee

Minimum Standards

The following minimum standards are not negotiable. A state level 4-H program with an active 4-H Shooting Sports component is advised to adopt and adhere to these standards at the state and county level. Should an injury occur in a state due to the disregard of any of these minimum standards, the potential negative legal / liability ramifications for a land-grant university system could be significant.

1. The National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum is the established adult teaching curriculum for training adults to teach youth the shooting sports within the 4-H program.
2. All instructors accept and abide by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics.
3. State, County, and Club level 4-H Shooting Sports Programs will have written risk management plans which includes items such as emergency response and preparedness, insurance, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, state-level reloading policies, etc.
4. All certified 4-H shooting sports instructors are a minimum of 21 years of age and have completed a state level 4-H shooting sports workshop in the specific discipline they will be teaching.
5. State level 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor certification workshops provide a minimum of twelve (12) hours of instruction, including a minimum of nine (9) hours instruction in each specific discipline and a minimum of three (3) hours instruction in teaching youth development, life skills, and risk management.
6. To maintain certification as a 4-H shooting sports Level I or Level II instructor, one must teach or assist in instruction within the discipline certified at least once every three (3) years.
 - A. Level 1 Instructors – Must be re-certified a minimum of every 7 years.
 - Re-certification could include any of the following, as determined by the State Coordinator
 - i. Continuing education credits
 - ii. Updates to curriculum or state standards/requirements
 - iii. Refresher course on curriculum
 - iv. Attending Level 1 training.
 - v. Other options
 - B. Level 2 Instructors – Must be re-certified after a major revision of the curriculum, as determined by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, or at the determination of the State Coordinator.
 - Re-certification could include.
 - i. Attending Level 2 training.
 - ii. Attending an update training hosted by a Level 3 Instructor or a Level 2 Instructor certified using the revised curriculum.
 - C. Level 3 Instructors – Must be re-appointed annually by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.

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7. Only factory ammunition is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.
8. **Regarding simulated combat sports (physical or virtual) including but not limited to, paintball guns, air-soft, laser guns, archery tag, eSports.** Pointing any type of gun including paintball guns, air-soft guns, laser guns, archery tag bows & arrows or sighting devices at any person or any humanoid shaped target is prohibited in any 4-H program activity.
9. Any firearm built or modified to give the impression of a modern military style firearm such as an AR or AK is not allowed in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Front pistol grips, heat shield/shroud, suppressors, and magazines extending more than 2 inches below the receiver are prohibited. Below are visual examples of firearms that would not be permitted.



10. **Reactive Targets** - Targets which make use of or are composed of (1) live ammunition, (2) explosives, chemicals, or flammable substances, or (3) pressurized containers are never to be used at any 4-H event or activity.
11. Cloverbud age youth are not allowed to participate in any shooting sports activity that includes the handling or live fire of any air guns, firearms, or archery equipment.
12. All 4-H Shooting Sports functions (events, meetings, club practices, etc.) which include the handling or use of firearms or archery equipment requires the physical presence and constant supervision of at least one adult 4-H Shooting Sports instructor who is currently certified in that respective discipline.

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National 4-H Shooting Sports Objectives of 4-H the Shooting Sports Program

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program strives to enable people, their parents, and adult volunteers to become responsible, self-directed, and productive members of society. Agents, leaders, instructors, and coaches must understand the goals and objectives of the program to manage or present it properly.

The program transfers knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop human capital, using the subject matter and resources of the land-grant universities.

4-H Shooting Sport Program Goal

4-H Shooting Sports provides the high-quality program necessary for Positive Youth Development by engaging youth in the safe, responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, in a variety of settings, through comprehensive education, life-long recreation, and healthy competition.

The objectives of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program are to enable youth to:

1. Find and explore passions and interests.
2. Engage in an effective 4-H program setting.
3. Develop positive relationships with adults, youth, and peers.
4. Explore a vast array of 4-H educational, recreational, and competitive activities.
5. Thrive in multiple settings.
6. Enhance developmental and long-term outcomes.
7. Practice safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, enhancing existing shooting, conservation, and hunter education programs.
8. Explore the three national 4-H Mission Mandates (STEM, Healthy Living, Civic Engagement).
9. Model safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior.
10. Strengthen knowledge and life skills.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES National 4-H Shooting Sports

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, recognizing the diversity of the 4-H shooting sports programs within each state recommends the following Best Practices in the implementation of a state level 4-H Shooting Sports program:

1. **Eye Protection:** Adequate eye protection (shooting glasses, safety glasses or safety goggles, or hardened prescription glasses) is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements.
2. **Ear Protection:** Adequate ear protection carrying an *OSHA Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of at least 25 dB* is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. *Noise Canceling devices without an OSHA NRR rating are not adequate as they are designed to make listening more enjoyable, not reducing the dB of sound entering the ear.* Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements. In all disciplines, devices placed over, on, or into the ear are not allowed to receive wireless, communication, background noise or similar broadcasts that could interfere with range commands.
3. **Footwear** – Participants in any shooting event or activity, while on the shooting line, are required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet, including soles. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but are not limited to: sandals, clogs, flip-flops, slippers, house shoes, and bare feet.

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4. Lead Contamination – The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee recognizes the potential dangers of lead contamination and includes ways to mitigate lead contamination into all 4-H Shooting Sports Training and Curriculum. The 4-H National Committee also suggests that states include ways to mitigate lead exposure into your specific State Plan including:

- **Wash up:** Wash your hands, face, forearms, etc. with cold water after shooting, handling spent ammunition, cleaning guns, or reloading. Use an effective lead removal product, as standard soap and water may not be enough.
- **Change clothes and shoes:** Change your clothes and shoes before leaving the range. Wash your range clothes separately from your other clothes.
- **Clean up properly:** Use the right methods to clean the range, such as wet mopping or using a HEPA vacuum. Don't dry sweep, as this stirs up lead dust.
- **Don't eat, drink, or smoke:** Never eat, drink, or smoke inside a firing range.
- **Shower:** Shower at the end of the day after handling lead objects.

Lead can enter the body through inhalation or ingestion and can damage organs and cause health problems. Symptoms of lead poisoning include high blood pressure, joint and muscle pain, headaches, and abdominal pain. Seek medical attention if you suspect lead poisoning.

Suggested Best Management Practices – 4-H Shooting Sports Equipment – Storage & Transportation

In many states, the storage of Shooting Sports equipment has not been consistent nor have any standards been set forth to assist states in developing policies related to equipment storage and transportation. This is a list of suggested guidelines for states to consider.

Inventory Control

1. Inventory list of equipment should be maintained by one individual in charge of equipment for the local group/county program/state program. A sign-out process will be used to record who/when/what/when returned.
2. Approved, current instructors, only, may sign out program equipment from inventory.
3. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment, the inventory list, and sign-out records.
4. Equipment inventory should be audited at least annually (or more often if requested) by local and/or state Extension personnel responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports program. *The state Extension staff person responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports program has the ultimate authority to remove 4-H Shooting Sports program equipment from any 4-H Shooting Sports club or instructor based on lack of safety practices, inadequate storage and transportation safeguards, concerns about inventory control, inadequate emphasis on positive youth development, or other reasons based on professional judgment.*

Storage of Firearms & Muzzleloading Equipment

1. All Firearms will be stored unloaded in a commercial firearm safe with an open bolt or open bore indicator when not in use.
2. All gun safes should be secured in a locked storage area, following local statutory requirements, if applicable. If no local laws apply, suitable locations include local law enforcement department firearm storage, storage closet or room with limited access, etc.

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3. Keys and combinations should be available only to certified instructors, county coordinators, and state coordinators. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

Storage of Air Guns

1. Air guns will be stored in gun cases that can be locked and stored in a storage room accessible only to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator.
2. Keys to the storage area should only be available to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

Storage of Archery Equipment

1. Archery equipment will be stored in a locked closet or room accessible only to instructors, county coordinator or state coordinator.
2. Doors should be double locked, and a key should only be available to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

Ammunition

1. All ammunition, shotgun shells, rifle shells, pistol shells, powder, caps, BB's, and pellets will be stored separately from the guns which use them. Access to the ammunition should have access limited: the instructors, county coordinator or state coordinator. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.
2. Ammunition should be stored in a closet or room where there are at least two separate locks on the door.

Transportation of Equipment

1. All applicable local, state, and federal laws are to be followed when transporting firearms, ammunition and other 4-H Shooting Sports program equipment and supplies. Only licensed individuals aged 18 or older are permitted to drive vehicles transporting 4-H Shooting Sports equipment.
2. When transporting firearms, air guns, ammunition and muzzleloading guns, the transporter should have the guns in locked hard cases with gun locks on each gun (either a trigger style gun lock or a cable style gun lock).
3. Equipment should be transported in such a way that the equipment cannot be seen from outside the vehicle. Some examples of concealment include transporting in the vehicle's trunk, in a locked trailer, beneath a pick-up truck bed topper, etc. The vehicle should not be left unattended when equipment is being transported.

Youth & Adult Participation

1. A 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor has the right to refuse any participant from the shooting sports activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the program.
2. Instructors are encouraged to identify strategies to accommodate youth / adults with disabilities.
3. 4-H Shooting Sports Programs are open to all youth 8 years of age or older (as of Jan. 1 of the current year) without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age, or national origin. Each state Land Grant University determines 4-H maximum age eligibility. Note that age eligibility for National 4-H Shooting Sports Events is determined by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and may be different than

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that of states. 4-H Clovers (age 5-7) are not eligible for any aspect of 4-H shooting sports programs as these are not age-appropriate activities.

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