

Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program

As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee

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 is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. Where electronic hearing protection is used, it may not include radio or similar broadcasts as background noise, since that could interfere with range commands. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements.**
- 3. Footwear - Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting in any outdoor shooting event is required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but not limited to: sandals, clogs, crocks, flip-flops, and bare feet.**

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. Only approved, current instructors 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. 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.
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 separate 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 age 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 are determined by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and may be different than 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.

Purchasing Firearms

Firearm ownership is determined on a county-by-county basis based on federal rules and regulations. Work with your County Extension Director to determine best management practice. A County Attorney or County Manager may be a resource for this.