

# Michigan State 4-H Shooting Sports Program

## Safety Practices and Policies

### 1. 4-H Age policy

- 1.1. Michigan 4-H Youth Development Programs are open to young people aged 5 through 19. The "4-H age" will be determined by a young person's age as of January 1 of the 4-H program year (which runs from September 1 through August 31). However, no youth under the age of 7 may participate in live-fire activities in any discipline.
- 1.2. 4-H Cloverbud members ages 7-8 may **participate** (not compete) in BB gun and basic archery training. Participation is at the discretion of the Certified Instructor and the participant must be under direct adult supervision (one on one). Any volunteer or parent approved by the certified instructor may provide this supervision.

### 2. Adult Supervision Policy

- 2.1. There must be two or more adults present when working with 4-H youth at all times regardless of the activity. It is **required** that at least one instructor with **current** MI 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor certification in the discipline for which they are providing leadership be **present** during any shooting activity. If, during a club meeting or any 4-H shooting sports activity, youth are divided into groups to go to separate areas/ranges, at least one adult with current MI 4-H Shooting Sports certification in the appropriate discipline must go with EACH group to their respective range along with the appropriate number of additional adults to meet the required supervision ratio.
- 2.2. When working with youth ages 9-19, the youth to adult ratio should be no more than five youth to one adult on the firing line. Only one adult is required to be certified, however, it is preferred that other adults providing supervision on the firing line have experience in the discipline being supervised. Non-certified adults must receive guidance from the instructor on how to properly supervise the youth on the firing line.
- 2.3. Youth not on the firing line must be supervised per MI 4-H general adult supervision policy.
- 2.4. Factors such as the experience level of the youth, experience of the instructor, equipment limitations, and the physical characteristics of the facility must all be considered. Safety must be the overriding factor in determining the proper youth to adult ratio.

### 3. Classroom Safety Policy

- 3.1. **"NO LIVE AMMUNITION WILL BE ALLOWED IN A CLASSROOM WHEN FIREARMS ARE PRESENT"**. All students must be made aware of this policy and abide by it. Possession of live ammunition in the classroom is grounds for removal of the student from the program.
- 3.2. Dummy ammo, snap caps and safety trainers may be used for demonstration and gun handling exercises. These should be clearly identified as training aids and easily distinguished from live ammunition.
- 3.3. All Firearms used in the classroom must be checked by the instructor and the student each time they are handled to ensure that the firearm is un-loaded in both the barrel and magazine.
- 3.4. The actions of all firearms should remain open, safeties on and magazines out when not being handled.
- 3.5. Safe gun handling rules must be observed at all times.
- 3.6. No horseplay or disruptive behavior will be tolerated.

#### **4. Live Fire Safety Policy**

- 4.1. All youth must demonstrate proficiency as determined by the MI 4-H certified shooting sports instructor in the following areas prior to participating in any live fire exercise:
- 4.2. Firearms safety rules.
- 4.3. Safe gun handling fundamentals.
- 4.4. Basic range commands.

#### **5. Mandatory protective equipment/gear**

- 4.1. Firearms (including BB-gun & Pellet gun)
- 4.2. Eye protection must be worn at all times when on or near the firing line.
- 4.3. Hearing protection must be worn at all times when on or near the firing line while .22 caliber rifles, muzzle loading rifles or shotguns are being used.
- 4.4. Target Archery / 3D Archery
- 4.5. Arm guards and hip quivers must be used as designed. Arm guards must be worn on the contestant's bow arm (forearm) below the elbow.

#### **6. Non-Military Training Policy**

The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe and responsible use of "Firearms" and "Archery equipment or tackle". We teach "marksmanship, sportsmanship, stewardship and safety". We do not train youth in the "offensive or defensive" use of this equipment. Therefore it is the policy of the Michigan State 4-H Shooting Sports Program Committee, that:

- 6.1. The word "**WEAPON**" will not be used in association with this equipment or activity.
- 6.2. The use of humanoid or tombstone targets will not be allowed during 4-H Shooting Sports meetings, activities, or events.
- 6.3. The use of tactical equipment and/or apparel or "look-alikes" is not appropriate for 4-H shooting sports activities.

#### **7. Paintball, Lasertag, Airsoft Gun Policy**

- 7.1. We teach that pointing ANY type of firearm including air guns, paintball guns, laser guns, laser sighting devices, at any person is inappropriate and dangerous. Paintball, airsoft, laser tag, or any other activity which involves participants shooting at each other, is inconsistent with the goals and teaching of the 4-H Shooting Sports program. **Therefore, under no circumstances shall paintball, laser tag, airsoft or similar games/activities and associated equipment be presented as a Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports activity.**

#### **8. Risk Management Plan**

- 8.1. Each MI 4-H Shooting Sports club will develop and operate in accordance with a risk management plan, which will include abiding by all MI 4-H and MI 4-H Shooting Sports policies and incorporate the contents of this document as well as locally relevant policies (emergency procedures, equipment maintenance, facility use agreements, county specific 4-H policies, etc).

#### **9. MSU and MSUE 4-H Youth Development Position Statement on Gun Raffles**

- 9.1. As a youth development program, the goal of a 4-H group is to involve youth in the planning and implementation of fundraisers which support 4-H programming. Because youth under the age of 18 cannot be involved in selling or purchasing raffle tickets, we do not encourage counties to do raffles as a fundraiser. There are many other ways to raise dollars to support 4-H activities locally. The liability issues that come into play for 4-H and MSU as a whole do not support 4-H involvement in the raffling of any kind of gun. **Therefore, the Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Program, Board of Directors, and/or any Michigan 4-H Club will not operate gun raffles.**