Policies and Procedures for Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports, revised Oct 2019

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Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Program Safety Practices and Policies, Updated October 2019

1. 4-H Shooting Sports 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 8 may participate in live-fire activities in any discipline.
1.2 4-H Members age 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
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:

- Firearms safety rules.
- Safe gun handling fundamentals.
- Basic range commands.

5. Mandatory protective equipment/gear
Firearms (including BB-gun & Pellet gun)

5.1. Eye protection must be worn at all times when on or near the firing line.

5.2 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.

Target Archery / 3D Archery

5.3 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
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
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
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.

Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program,
As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee Revised 1 01/2019

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.

   It is preferable and recommended that state level certification workshops provide fifteen (15) hours of instruction composed of twelve (12) hours of discipline instruction and three (3) hours of teaching positive 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

   B. Level II 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

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i. Continuing education credits 
ii. Updates to curriculum or state standards/requirements
iii. Refresher course on curriculum
iv. Attend a 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. Attend a Level 2 training
     ii. Attend 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. (effective 10/1/2018)

7. Only factory ammunition is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.

8. Regarding simulated combat sports including but not limited to, paintball guns, air-soft, laser guns, archery tag. Pointing any type of gun including paint ball guns, air-soft guns, laser guns, laser paint-ball, archery tag bows & arrows or sighting devices at any person or any humanoid shaped target is inappropriate in any 4-H program activity.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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(s). (adopted 4/2018)

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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, instructor and coaches must understand the goals and objectives of the program in order 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:

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.

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.

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, clogs, flip-flops, and bare feet.

Suggested BMPs – 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. 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. 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.