NEW MEXICO 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Adapted from the National 4-H
Shooting Sports Minimum Standards

I. Situation Statement

The New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports (SS) Program encompasses the initiative goals of volunteer leadership of New Mexico Extension. The program in New Mexico is administered by a nationally certified state committee consisting of Extension staff and volunteers. The program is designed to: 1) give youth thorough safe instruction and training in the use of firearms and conservation; 2) enhance self-confidence, personal development, responsibility, and sportsmanship; 3) create an appreciation and understanding of natural resources; and 4) provide volunteer instructors safe and proper instructional techniques and information on how to plan and manage shooting and conservation clubs. The program relies on state 4-H certified & trained instructors to conduct classes in the various disciplines (archery, rifle, pistol, shotgun, muzzleloading, and hunting skills).

The program requires 4-H certified & trained instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program.

The 4-H SS Program is a youth development education program which uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and conservation to assist young people and their leaders in attaining knowledge and developing essential life skills. The program can enhance family communications and quality time together. It creates an environment for a caring relationship between a young person and a significant adult, whether this is a family member, other adult, or teen volunteer. These activities provide the opportunity for immediate gratification to the youth and satisfaction and self-worth to the adult/teen leader who acts as a teacher and role model for younger 4-H/youth members.

II. New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports – 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

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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. New Mexico State level 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor certification workshops provide a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of instruction.

- (15) total hours of instruction; including a minimum of twelve (12) 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 New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports Level I or Level II instructor, one must teach or assist in instruction within the discipline certified at least twice 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.

Re-certification could include:

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.

C. Level 3 Instructors – Must be re-appointed annually by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.

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, eSports.** 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. Any firearm built or modified to give the distinct 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, and magazines extending more than 2 inches below the receiver are prohibited. Examples of unacceptable firearm components are muzzle brakes, recoil compensators, and suppressors. Ported barrels are permitted on shotguns & pistols. 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(s).

III. Program Objectives

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 in order to manage or present it properly. These goals and objectives are consistent with the goals and objectives of the 4-H program. The program transfers knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop human capital, using the subject matter and resources of the land-grant universities.

The specific goals and objectives of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program include but are not limited to those listed below.

A. To enhance development of self-concept, character and personal growth through safe, educational and socially acceptable involvement in a shooting related activity.

B. To encourage participation in natural resources and related natural science programs by exposing participants to the content through in shooting activity.

C. To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment including sound decision-making, self-discipline and concentration.

D. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior.

E. To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.

F. To strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities.

G. To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety, shooting and hunter education programs using experiential educational methods and progressive development of skills and abilities.

IV. Philosophy

A. All instructors in the program will be certified by a member of the New Mexico State 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team to teach specific course(s). All instructors (Level 1 & 2) will participate in an update when new curriculum material or new instructional methods are available.

B. The shooting sports program can be an individual or group 4-H project activity. (each county Extension office will determine how the 4-H shooting sports program is delivered in their county).

C. Enrollment in the program has the potential of reaching new youth audiences as well as new volunteer leaders.

D. The program is open to all youth provided they are under the direct supervision of a certified 4-H Shooting Sports instructor.

E. A 4-H Shooting Sports instructor of a discipline has the right to limit participation of any participant from a 4-H Shooting Sports activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the group. In such an instance, the County 4-H Agent & State 4-H Agent responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports must be notified and will assess the situation regarding future participation of the member(s) or volunteer(s) involved.

F. A county will not sponsor or schedule any shooting sport activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H Shooting Sports trained & certified instructor of the appropriate discipline in active status.

G. Inter-agency cooperation, collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.

H. It is recommended that a county does have a SS coordinator to assist in administering and promoting the SS program in the county.

I. Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.

V. Program Administration

The program is administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee and the New Mexico State 4-H Office. The State 4-H Office and 4-H Advisory Committee will:

A. Administer the program.
B. Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
C. Conduct instructor training and certification programs.
D. Develop informational materials to be used in publicizing the program.
E. Provide orientation to county staff of the shooting sports program.
F. Initiate resource development in partial support of programming.
G. Maintain files of 4-H instructor certification status.
H. Cooperate with county staff to assist in program operations and administration.

VI. Instructor Certification Requirements

The program requires that members of the New Mexico State 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team, who are nationally certified, conduct classes in the various disciplines: archery, hunting skills, shotgun, muzzleloading, pistol (air, .22), rifle (pellet, small bore). No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

A. **Instructor:** must be 21 years of age.

B. **Assistant instructor:** must be at least 18 years old, a 4-H member in a shooting sports discipline for a minimum of one year and have attended a state training. They can only instruct youth under the direct supervision of a certified instructor and only if the instructor is present during the instruction. An assistant instructor is not to be in charge of a live fire range.

C. **Teen Leader:** Must be at least 14 years old, has leader approval, and has attended a state instructor training. Teen leaders only function under the direct supervision of, and request of, a certified instructor who is present during instruction. A teen leader is not to be in charge of a live fire range.

D. **Volunteer/Parents:** May be allowed to assist on the firing line with individual approval from both the county Extension Agent and with approval of and under the direct supervision of a certified instructor in charge of the firing line at the time of instruction. Must be signed up as a current adult 4-H leader in New Mexico.

E. Attend and successfully complete an instructor training program administered by members of the New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team and demonstrate competency to instruct as determined by the instructor.

F. All volunteers must have gone through a leader screening and be a current approved leader in the New Mexico 4-H Program.

G. Only one certification per discipline may be achieved at a single state 4-H sponsored training workshop. A participant must attend all of the training sessions at a state-sponsored workshop to become a certified instructor. The lead instructor in each discipline reserves the right not to certify a person if he/she feels the candidate will not be a competent instructor. In such a scenario, the State 4-H Agent will make a final determination regarding the certification in question.

H. Training will consist of a minimum of 15 hours of instruction in the use of National 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum, discipline instruction (rifle, shotgun, pistol, muzzleloader/black powder, archery, outdoor skills, and coordinator), safety, risk management, teaching methods, and 4-H program management.

4-H Shooting Sports certification, achieved only by successful participation in a 4-H Shooting Sports leader certification workshop, is an absolute requirement for an instructor in the shooting sports disciplines. No other certifications or qualifications are accepted as a substitute. Just because you are an expert marksman, does not mean you know how to work with youth. And just because you are a firearm instructor certified by another organization, does not mean you know about 4-H philosophy and procedure. Each 4-H instructor workshop includes youth development principles and concepts, risk management practices, and program management in addition to shooting discipline training.

VII. Instructor Renewals & Recertification

A. To maintain certification as a 4-H shooting sports Level I or Level II instructor, one must be active two out of three consecutive years. If inactive for two consecutive years, re-certification is required. Level 1 Instructors must be re-certified a minimum of every 7 years however the County Agent may require re-certification sooner as he/she sees fit. Level 2 Instructors must be recertified 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.

B. Renewal will be required of all instructors when new teaching materials become available or when a major program change is initiated by the New Mexico State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee which requires an update.

VIII. Duties of Certified Instructors

A. To provide basic instruction to youth.

B. To communicate to the County Extension Office about their club program.

C. It is strongly suggested that all certified instructors and youth secure additional accident insurance.

IX. Instructor Code of Ethics

A. All certified instructors will adhere to the 4-H philosophy, policies, and goals.

B. Instructors should demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.

C. Failure to adhere to the code of ethics will lead to dismissal of being a volunteer 4-H shooting sports instructor.

New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics

A complete 4-H shooting sports program must convey life skills development and be presented in such a way that is safe, technically competent, and helps to instill 4-H values in participants through teaching and example. Certified shooting sports instructors and volunteers must be cognizant of their role as a moral and ethical mentor, as well as teacher, to youth and adults in their state and community.

As a 4-H shooting sports instructor or volunteer:

- I will respect the participants, volunteers and property associated with the 4-H shooting sports program.
- I will set a good example as a mentor and role model for 4-H shooting sports youth and volunteer leaders.
- I will conduct myself and my 4-H shooting sports program in a professional and ethical manner.

- I will strive to be knowledgeable of the life skills embodied in the 4-H shooting sports program and aid positively in the development of youth through adherence to those principles.
- I will strive to be technically competent in the subject matter I teach and adhere to the state and national 4-H shooting sports guidelines and curriculum.
- I will respect the dignity of each participant in the 4-H shooting sports program regardless of gender, origin, ability, achievement or conviction.

X. Paintball Policy

The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe and responsible use of archery equipment and firearms. Pointing any type of firearm including air guns, laser guns or laser sighting devises at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore, the New Mexico 4-H Shooting Sports Program is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H program.

XI. Footwear Policy

Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting course in any outdoor 4-H shooting sports event; including club programs, training programs and competitions, will be required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but are not limited to: sandals, clogs, crocks, flip flops and bare feet. Shoes that have holes, perforations, open tops, open backs, or open sides are not acceptable footwear while participating on the shooting line or shooting course with any firearm, pellet rifle or archery equipment.

XII. Risk Management

Required Management Procedures for County Programs:

A. State 4-H volunteer leader procedures and policies are to be followed - Leader enrollment forms completed, signed, approved and on file in the Extension Office along with completion of the annual Working With Minors training. for all certified SS leaders. All instruction must be done under the supervision of a New Mexico 4-H certified SS leader. Work closely with the 4-H Youth Development Program staff person in each county to meet state guidelines for volunteer leaders.

B. Code of Conduct/Release Form - All 4-H members enrolled in the Shooting Sports projects are to have parent or guardian read and sign the Shooting Sports Code of Conduct/Release Form before beginning project meetings. The certified

instructor or club leader must ascertain that all members are enrolled in the project and have the required forms completed before participation. Forms are to be completed on-line and/or turned into and kept in a permanent file in the Extension Office.

C. Accident Insurance - Each county program should take out special accident insurance coverage on SS members. The "year" plan offered by American Income Life Insurance Companies is suggested. Many are available at $1 per member per year. All shooting sports leaders should know the policy number and procedures required. A copy of the policy should be kept with the certified leader and the original on file in the Extension office.

D. Emergency Plan - An emergency plan of action will be written, approved and followed for each training site and/or activity. This plan should consider:

- Potential risks analyzed and procedures planned
- Minor incidents/first-aid - who treats or determines procedure (first aid kit)
- Access to emergency medical treatment (telephone on site, phone numbers to call, transportation, etc.)
- Two-deep leadership (at least two adults on hand) know the plan and procedures
- Natural catastrophe procedure (fire, tornado, lightning, etc.)
- The county extension agent should be immediately notified in case of any accident or situation.

County/Club Risk management Outline:

I. Staff/ Supervision
   - A. Training
   - B. Certification
   - C. Age Requirements / Experience
   - D. Adult / Youth Ratio
   - E. Specific Requirements (i.e. background check)

II. Insurance Issues
   - A. Waivers
   - B. Health History / Parental Permission
   - C. Health Insurance
   - D. Liability / Vehicle Insurance
   - E. Equipment Insurance
   - F. Facility Insurance
   - G. Leases

III. Emergency
Procedures
A. Transportation / Emergency Vehicle
B. Communication / P.R.
C. First Aid
D. Parental Notification

III. Emergency (continued)
Separate Plan for Each Situation
* Range Accident
* Lost Child
* Misfire
* Rabid Animal
* Flood / Fire / Tornado
* Car Accident
* Etc.

IV. Equipment
A. Safety Check Procedures
B. Handling
C. Proper Storage
D. Transportation

V. Facility
A. Safety Inspection
B. Safety Procedures (signage, etc.)
C. Insurance
D. Leases

XIII. National Invitational

Attendance at National Invitational
Only senior 4-H members in good standing participating in the state qualifying match are eligible to attend the 4-H National Invitational Shoot. They also must have passed their 14th birthday, and may not have reached his/her 19th birthday, as of January 1 of the year in which the National 4-H Competitive Event is held. State team members for each discipline will be determined at the state competition. Each team will be made up of the 1st place county team as determined during the state shooting event for the current year.

***An individual may participate only once at the National Level in any one discipline.**

The Director of 4-H Youth Development or designee must certify all state teams, individuals, or groups attending regional or national 4-H events.

NATIONAL CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

Counties that win a state contest are eligible to attend their respective national contest. If for some reason a team member cannot attend the national contest a replacement may be made by the county 4-H Agent. One team member may be replaced on a team. These team members must have gone through a county elimination and have participated in the state qualifying event. Under no circumstances may two members be replaced as that would not be considered the same team that won the state event. Each team member must be enrolled in the county they are representing in the National contest. National contest eligibility is determined by the rules of the specific contest. For example if a team member has participated in a national contest and the rules state that a member can only participate in the national contest once then the member will be ineligible to participate in that national contest again. If the national contest allows a team member to return to that national competition, the member must be a member of the state winning team.