

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Program

General Information, Definitions and Policies

Revised October 24, 2023

General Information:

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports is a science, technology, and natural resources 4-H program, delivered through a 4-H leader directed group setting, conducted and taught by **specially trained, certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors**. A 4-H member **may not enroll in 700 level shooting sports projects without the direct supervision of a certified instructor in that project/discipline area**. Project record books are available for 4-H members to establish goals and objectives while keeping necessary records. Ohio 4-H shooting disciplines include: (750) **Rifle**, (751) **Archery**, (752) **Shotgun**, (753) **Pistol**, (754) **Hunting & Wildlife**, (755) **Muzzleloading**, (756) **Living History**, (757) **Crossbow**, and (758) **Western Heritage**. Most disciplines offer an advanced training level, which can be taught on the club level, IF the club advisors have been certified (at a State training workshop) to teach that advanced discipline. *Reloading is an advanced area of study within (750) Rifle, (752) Shotgun and (753) Pistol disciplines.*

Ohio 4-H membership is based on a child's age and grade as of January 1 of the current project year. To enroll in a 4-H Shooting Sports project a 4-H member must be at least age 8 and in the 3rd grade. Any youth age 9 or above is eligible for project membership regardless of grade level. Membership eligibility ends December 31 the year the member turns 19. Participation in a shooting sport project ALSO requires the 4-H member to have the physical size to handle the shooting equipment needed for that discipline. The member must also demonstrate the attention span and maturity level to follow directions and abide by all safety protocols. Shooting Sports group projects may not be recommended for some younger youth. For those youth and others, Ohio 4-H offers individual 4-H projects: (630) **Basic Gun Safety**, and (631) **Basic Archery**. These projects are member directed and NOT designed to be used in a group setting. They should still be supervised by the 4-H member's parent/guardian or an approved adult project helper. First year members and younger members are encouraged to begin their shooting sports experience with one of these entry level projects. This will allow for a firm understanding of safety practices, equipment and basic knowledge. Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports clubs/programs may require this in their club by-laws.

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, 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



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Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Policy Statement:

*The goal of the Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to provide a safe and educational experience to 4-H members. Two of the most important components of safety, are instruction and supervision. The certification of 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors at state sponsored workshops conveys the standards for instruction and supervision of the statewide program. These workshops train volunteers in shooting sports policy and youth development. To achieve our goals, the following Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports policies have been established. These policies follow the Minimum Standards and Best Management Practices established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. **County 4-H Shooting Sports programs are required to adopt and adhere to these policies.** Disregard for any of these policies can leave a county program/4-H club at risk for negative legal/liability ramifications.*

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors

- All applicants attending a State 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training Workshop must be approved by the county 4-H professional to be a 4-H Volunteer before attending the training.
- All Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training courses in Archery, Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun, Muzzleloading, Hunting & Wildlife, Living History, Western Heritage, and advanced levels of these disciplines including Reloading, will have at least one State Level 2 Instructor/Trainer in that discipline on the workshop teaching team.
- All 4-H Shooting Sports activities will be directly supervised by an Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructor certified in the discipline(s) being offered. If a program divides the members into groups for concurrent shooting sessions, groups will remain under the on-site supervision of the Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructor in that discipline.
- Adult volunteers who are responsible for a concurrent session which involves the use of firearms and/or archery equipment will be Level 1 or higher Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructors in the discipline which is being taught.
- Assistant County Instructors and all other volunteers, including Junior Leaders, will be under the on-site, in person supervision of the Level 1 or higher Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructor while engaged in activities involving the use of firearms and/or archery equipment.
- All Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructors will be certified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports state training teams and the State Shooting Sports Coordinator before being permitted to use the 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum materials.
- All adults and youth engaged in the use of firearms and/or archery equipment will be advised of the basic range safety rules before every shooting activity.
- All Shooting Sports Instructors are required to accept and abide by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics. <https://ohio4h.org/statewide-programs/ohio-4-h-shooting-sports/volunteer-resources>

Required Safety Wear

- All participants, instructors and observers on or near the shooting line will wear tempered eyeglasses, safety glasses or shooting glasses that meet ANSI-z87.1 eyewear standards. Adequate ear protection such as ear plugs or muffs are required for all shooting disciplines excluding Archery. If electronic hearing protection is used, it may not include radio or similar broadcasts as background noise, which can interfere with range commands. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements. Footwear must completely cover their feet. *Examples of non-acceptable footwear include but are not limited to sandals, clogs, crocks, and flip-flops.*



4-H Shooting Sports Equipment – Storage & Transportation

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 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.
3. Only factory or factory remanufactured ammunition is to be used at 4-H Shooting Sports competitive events. Only reloaded (hand-loaded) ammunition that has been reloaded under the direct supervision of an Ohio 4-H Certified Reloading Instructor, will be used in the Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports program.
4. Reloaded ammunition will ONLY be used by the 4-H member who reloaded it.



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. If possible, 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.

Targets

1. Reactive Targets which make use of, or are composed of, live ammunition, explosives, chemicals, flammable substances or pressurized containers are never to be used at any 4-H event or activity.
2. No humanoid targets. This includes silhouettes, pictures, clip art, drawings etc.

Equipment

1. Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports programs shall only use 4-H owned equipment, equipment loaned by industry or a support organization, or equipment inspected and approved by a qualified person.
2. National 4-H Shooting Sports which gives guidance to state shooting sports programs across the country, as well as conducts the National 4-H Shooting Sports Competition has implemented a new firearms policy that does not allow firearm built or modified to give the distinct impression of a modern military style firearm to be used at the National 4-H Shooting Sports Competition. Some examples of unacceptable firearm components include: any type of muzzle devices (muzzle brake, recoil compensator, suppressors, porting), front pistol grips, heat shield/shroud, and magazines extending more than 1 inch below the receiver. They do allow ported barrels on shotguns & pistols. Ohio Shooting Sports has not adopted this policy but will be forming a committee to review how this policy will affect our 4-H Shooting Sports program. For 2024, 4-H Shooting Sports clubs and programs are encouraged to inventory any equipment which might fall into this category and consider how they might replace that equipment in the future if deemed necessary. Furthermore 4-H Clubs and Programs should avoid purchasing equipment that might fall under these guidelines. This is a national policy that continues to be defined in scope and intent. It is shared here as a notification that firearm which falls into the military style category is permitted at National 4-H Shooting Sports Competitions.

Simulated combat sports

1. Simulated combat sports, including but not limited to, paintball, air soft, laser tag, archery tag or pointing any type of gun, arrow or sighting devices at any person or humanoid shaped target is not permitted in any 4-H program activity. The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe, responsible and ethical use of Archery and Firearm equipment. Therefore, the National 4-H Shooting Sport and Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports is opposed to such use in a 4-H program.

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 Cloverbuds are not eligible for any national 4-H shooting sports programs. Cloverbuds are not eligible to take any 4-H projects in Ohio.



Risk Management Plans

1. 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 coverage, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, etc.

Instructor Discipline Prerequisites for Training

- Archery Advanced – Must have previously completed the 4-H Basic Archery project.
- Muzzleloading – Must have previously completed one of the following – 4-H Basic Pistol, Rifle or Shotgun disciplines.
- Hunting & Wildlife – If archery and/or a firearm use is being taught, then the instructor and the member must have completed the level or levels of 4-H Shooting Sports disciplines being implemented. If no shooting disciplines being taught. Hunting & Wildlife is an allowable discipline without a previous prerequisites.
- Pistol Advanced – Must have previously completed the 4-H Basic Pistol project.
- Rifle Marksmanship (Rifle Advanced) - Must have previously completed the 4-H Basic Rifle project.
- Shotgun Advanced - Must have previously completed the 4-H Basic Shotgun project.
- Living History - If archery and/or a firearm use is being taught, then the instructor and the member must have completed the level or levels of 4-H Shooting Sports disciplines being implemented.
- Western Heritage - If a firearm use is being taught, then the instructor and the member must have completed the level or levels of 4-H Shooting Sports disciplines being implemented.
- Reloading – Metallic, Shotgun – Must have previously completed one of the following 4-H Basic disciplines: Pistol, Rifle or Shotgun.

Membership

1. Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports is open to all members according to the Ohio 4-H project membership age. Eligibility for participation in 4-H projects and competitive events begins when a child is age 8 and in the 3rd grade. Any youth age 9 or above is eligible for project membership, regardless of grade level. Membership requires enrollment in an authorized Ohio 4-H club or group under the direction of an OSU Extension professional or an approved adult volunteer. A youth's 4-H eligibility ends December 31 the year he or she turns 19.
2. Ohio Shooting Sports clubs meet at least six times during the 4-H year. This is a minimum and it is recommended they meet more often. A club attendance policy should be established in the club/program bylaws.
3. Cloverbud age youth may not participate in any shooting sports projects that includes the handling or live-fire of any air-guns, firearms or archery equipment. Cloverbuds may participate in sampler archery events (such as camp or fair) that have modified safety features that are age appropriate, such as blunt tip arrows, appropriate size equipment which safely fit the child's needs.

4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum

1. The 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum is provided solely to certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors who have successfully completed a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training Workshop and are recognized by the state where they are enrolled as an approved 4-H volunteer.
2. Persons possessing 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum without appropriate training are not authorized to conduct a Shooting Sports training for 4-H or other organizations, nor are they authorized to lead any 4-H Shooting Sports projects.
3. Only the State 4-H Shooting Sport Program Coordinator may authorize the sharing/distribution of training curriculum. Any other individuals (i.e.: Level 2 or 1 instructors) must have the express permission of the State Coordinator to do so.



Definitions:

Ohio 4-H State Shooting Sports Instructor/Trainer (Level 2 State Trainer) - is an adult age 21 or older, who has successfully completed a course of training conducted by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and gives leadership to the training of volunteers in their state (Ohio).

Ohio 4-H State Shooting Sports Assistant Trainer (Level 1 State Instructor) - is an adult age 21 or older, who is an Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Instructor and who assists with the training course at a state workshop in the discipline(s) for which s/he has been certified and has documented training experience. These individuals will be considered for Level 2 National Training opportunities.

Ohio 4-H County Certified Shooting Sports Instructor - (Level 1) – is an adult age 21 or older, who has successfully completed a training workshop for a specific discipline, conducted by the Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports State training team and may teach youth 4-H members in that discipline at the county level.

Ohio 4-H Certified Shooting Sports Club/County Coordinator - is an adult age 21 or older, who has successfully completed a training workshop for the Coordinator discipline conducted by the Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports State training team. A 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator is considered a middle manager that leads people, manages meetings/events, provides communications and holds a multi-disciplinary shooting sports team together. The Coordinator serves as the primary liaison between the State Shooting Sports Coordinator, 4-H Professionals, Extension staff, Club volunteers, Shooting Sports Instructors, 4-H members and their families. Coordinators do NOT have to hold other Shooting Sports discipline certifications, but it is helpful.

Ohio 4-H County Shooting Sports Assistant Instructor - is an adult who has aged out of 4-H but is not yet 21 years of age. Assistant Instructors have attended a State Shooting Sports Instructor Workshop for each discipline they help teach. They have not received an Instructor Certification but have received a certificate of completion. Upon reaching the age of 21 the Assistant Instructor may apply for certification as a Certified Instructor in the discipline(s) they have been trained. Instructor applications must include a letter of recommendation from a Shooting Sports Certified Instructor who has worked with them for at least 12 months and has watched them teach in the discipline they are requesting certification. They must also be a 4-H volunteer in good standing in the county they wish to serve. Final approval will be made by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator. Certification credit can only be given for workshops they completed as an Assistant Instructor. Credits will not be given for workshops completed as a Junior Leader.

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Junior Leader – is a current teen 4-H member age 14-18, in good standing with their 4-H club. They have been recommended by their Shooting Sports Advisors, attended and successfully completed a 4-H Training Workshop. Junior Leaders will not receive Shooting Sports Instructor Certification for workshop trainings. They will be given opportunities to become Assistant Instructors when they age out of 4-H as well as priority consideration for camp counselors' positions at Shooting Sports camps.

Job descriptions can be found at: <https://ohio4h.org/statewide-programs/ohio-4-h-shooting-sports/volunteer-resources>



Instructor certification requirements:

1. Must be 21 years of age or older for all disciplines.
2. Successfully completed the State Instructor Training program conducted by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Workshop training team.
3. Have no felony convictions or any convictions for hunting or fishing law violations within the past ten years.
4. Must be an approved 4-H Volunteers, in good standing with their county 4-H program or a State Shooting Sports approved volunteer.
5. Must accept and abide by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics.

Instructor renewals and recertification:

1. To maintain certification as a 4-H shooting sports Level I or Level II instructor, one must teach or assist in instruction within the certified discipline at least once every 3 years.
2. Level 1 Instructors – Must be re-certified at a minimum of every 7 years.
 - i. Ohio Instructor certifications remain current with continual teaching up to 7 years. After 7 years, Instructors will need to update their certifications through the state re-certification process. This will begin in 2025.
3. Re-certification could include any of the following, as determined by the State Coordinator:
 - i. If the instructor has completed an Ohio Shooting Sports Instructor workshop within the last 3 years, all certifications can be updated by obtaining the most recent curriculum, policies and procedures from the State Shooting Sports Coordinator. This will be effective beginning in 2025.
 - ii. If the instructor has not attended a state training workshop within 7 years, a refresher course on curriculum will be required. This will be effective beginning in 2025.
 - iii. If the instructor has not attended a state training workshop in 8 or more years, they will need to attend a Level 1 training in the discipline of their choosing to recertify their certifications. This will be effective beginning in 2025.
4. 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.
 - I. Re-certification for Level 2 Instructors could include:
 - I. Attend a Level 2 training
 - II. Attend an update training hosted by a Level 3 Instructor or Level 2 Instructor certified using the revised curriculum.
5. Renewal of certifications will be required of ALL instructors if/when a National/State Shooting Sports program change necessitates an update.

