

OKLAHOMA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS GUIDELINES

2024
Original 1994

I. SITUATION STATEMENT

The Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Program started in 1982. During that time, it developed into a 4-H Shotgun Sports Program with 17 counties in Oklahoma having a program. The program was revised in 1994 to include the following disciplines: air pistol, air rifle, archery, black powder/muzzle loading, hunting, living history, shotgun and coordinator. The shooting sports program in 2015 was revised to include the Western Heritage discipline.

The program revision in 1994 was modeled after the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and is administered by a nationally certified state committee consisting of Extension staff and volunteers. Since 1994 leader training/certification meetings have been offered at least annually. A database of those persons who have successfully completed the training is maintained by the State Shooting Sports Coordinator in the State 4-H Office.

As of 2023, the Shooting Sports program has grown to be one of the largest 4-H projects in the state with over 700 adults having attended one or more discipline training workshops and over youth enrolled in the Shooting Sports Project. As a result of the significant growth a review of the guidelines and rules for the various contests was in order. These following guidelines emerged from that review.

The program is designed to:

- Give youth thorough, safe instruction and training in the use of firearms and conservation.
- Enhance self-confidence, personal discipline, sense of responsibility, and sportsmanship.
- Provide volunteer instructors safe and proper instructional techniques and methods to teach youth.

The program relies on state 4-H certified/trained instructors to conduct classes in the various disciplines. Shooting Sports has the potential of being a high liability activity. Therefore, the program requires 4-H certified/trained instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program to decrease the liability of such an educational experience.

The 4-H program is a youth development education program which uses a prevention education model that emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and hunter education to assist young people and their leaders in attaining knowledge and developing essential life skills. 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 teacher and role model for younger 4-H youth members.

II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

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

III. PHILOSOPHY

1. The program is open to all 4-H members. Youth must be actively enrolled in Oklahoma 4-H and have completed the Health Form prior to their participation in any shooting sports practice sessions or contests. Shooting Sports program participation starts upon enrolling on the youth's 9th birthday, or at any time thereafter. Beyond your first year of membership, age will be determined based upon the youth's age BEFORE August 1 of the current 4-H Program Year. For example, if a youth turns 12 on August 1st, he/she would still be considered to be 11 for that entire 4-H Program Year (even if this is their first year of membership). Youth can participate in contests beyond county level 30 days after enrollment AND after successfully completing the appropriate discipline training to be a certified participant. Participant's age and age division will be based upon the youth's age BEFORE August 1st for the entire 4-H Year based on the Oklahoma 4-H Membership Guidelines. National 4-H Shooting Sports Championship age rules will be followed to determine participation in the national contest.

The following minimum ages for participation will apply. 4-H members may participate in Air Rifle and Archery disciplines upon turning 9 years of age. All other shooting disciplines minimum age requirements will be based on the member's age BEFORE August 1st of the 4-H Program Year.

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Age Requirement</u>
Air rifle	9 years
Archery	9 years
Hunting & Wildlife	10 years
Living History	9 years
Shotgun	10 years
Air pistol	12 years
.22 rifle*	12 years
Western Heritage & Cowboy Action***	12 years
.22 pistol**	14 years
Black powder/Muzzle Loading	14 years

* Youth must have successfully completed the Air Rifle project training **prior** to participation in .22 rifle.

** Youth must have successfully completed the Air Pistol project training **prior** to participation in .22 pistol.

*** Western Heritage and Cowboy Action: Youth certified in this discipline are not certified in .22 Pistol, .22 Rifle or Shotgun upon being certified in Western Heritage and Cowboy Action.

2. Certification of a 4-H member to be eligible to participate in a discipline contest will be determined by the appropriate discipline certified instructor(s) following established state and county shooting sports guidelines. The appropriate discipline certified instructor(s) may approve a certified participant for competition upon completion of the following:

- In accordance with established guidelines, the participant consistently exhibits and follows all established safety procedures.
- The participant demonstrates they have met the standards established by discipline instructor(s) either announced, implied or printed in the form of guidelines that have been reviewed and approved by the county Extension office.
- The participant has met all deadlines announced or printed established by certified discipline instructors with approval by the county Extension office prior to entering the contest and paid appropriate registration fees by the established due dates.
- The participant, on the county level, has experienced the shooting discipline events in which they will compete. This may be accomplished through explicit instructions of the contest taught during practice held

prior to attending the contest. This includes, but is not limited to regular county practice sessions and may also include having shot at a private or commercial shooting facility under the supervision of a discipline certified instructor.

3. Each participant has a reasonable expectation to enjoy a positive program experience. Therefore, the misbehavior of one participant, or a group of participants, will not be permitted to impact negatively on the program experience of others.
4. If the 4-Her is found in violation of the Code of Conduct, appropriate action(s) will be taken as described in the *Oklahoma 4-H Code of Conduct* guidelines.
5. When conducting educational events at 4-H camps or other 4-H functions 4-H shooting sports trained/certified instructors; or employees of agencies where firearm training is required, should be used. (For example, demonstrations by Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife, law enforcement or other related agencies are appropriate when done in a safe and secured environment.) 4-H members will be allowed to shoot firearms under the guidance and supervision of a 4-H shooting sports trained/certified instructor(s) at the educational events at 4-H camps and other 4-H functions.
6. 4-H shooting sports trained/certified instructors may conduct a demonstration for a group of youth that are not 4-H members. As part of the demonstration to youth, participants are not allowed to touch, load or fire a firearm or bow. A 4-H shooting sports trained/certified instructor allowing participants to touch, load or fire a firearm or bow will be conducting activities outside their scope of authority and duties. Under these circumstances, 4-H health and accident insurance would not be in effect and the 4-H shooting sports trained/certified instructor would not be covered by the Oklahoma Tort Claims Act. The 4-H trained/certified shooting sports instructor(s) would be personally liable for any injury to a participant. A 4-H member that is a certified participant in a shooting discipline may assist a 4-H trained/certified instructor to conduct a demonstration for a group of youth that are not 4-H members. This certified 4-H member is not allowed to let non-4-H members to touch, load or fire a firearm or bow.
7. The primary goal of the Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports program is to teach young people how to safely and appropriately handle firearms and archery equipment. While it is understood that many parents choose to involve their children in this activity as a “prelude” to hunting activities, the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program under **no circumstances** provides authority to volunteers to arrange or conduct live animal harvests with (or for) 4-H members or using the 4-H name and emblem.

IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Program is administered through the state 4-H office with the assistance of district and county Extension Staff. The State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator, with oversight from the State 4-H Program Leader, has ultimate responsibility for program management and administration.

The Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Program utilizes the 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Board to **recommend** guidelines and procedures for state contests and events and to **assist** with educational and events for youth and adults. This committee includes the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator, County Extension Educators, certified discipline instructors (Levels 1-3) and 4-H youth shooting sports ambassadors.

Instructor Certification Terminology

Level 3 Instructor: Certified to instruct at a National Certification Workshop

Level 2 Instructor: Attended and completed National Certification Workshop to instruct at state level workshops

Level 1 Instructor: Attended and completed State Certification Workshop to instruct at the county/local level

V. INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

The program requires the use of National 4-H certified instructors (Level 2) to conduct certification workshops in the various disciplines (coordinator, air pistol, air rifle, archery, black powder/muzzleloader, hunting & wildlife, living history, shotgun, smallbore pistol, smallbore rifle and western heritage & cowboy action). Each county or extension unit must have a certified County Coordinator for the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. National 4-H certified instructors are to utilize clear barrel indicators or other safety devices that indicate a locked open action in all firearms during instruction training and stress their utilization in class and when certifying 4-H members.

Certification workshops will not be conducted on the campus of Oklahoma State University-Stillwater which includes the use or training for the use of weapons and firearms of any type. It is the policy of OSU to prohibit or strictly regulate the possession or use of weapons, firearms, ammunition, fireworks, explosives, and dangerous chemicals on the OSU-Stillwater campus.

Extension employees and 4-H volunteers, are granted a level of protection under Article VII, Section 701 (the Governmental Tort Claims Act) of Oklahoma Statute when they are functioning within the realm and scope of their duties. In order to help Extension professionals and volunteers understand what normal and reasonable duties might be, all individuals seeking to serve as an Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor must attend and successfully complete a 4-H Shooting Sports Certification Workshop. No person may be certified as a Level 1 instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. 21 years of age
2. Be a certified 4-H volunteer, recognized by the OSU Extension Center, in the county which they serve as a shooting sports instructor.

3. With the approval of Extension educator(s) in the county where they serve as a certified volunteer, they must attend and successfully complete a state recognized 4-H Shooting Sports certification workshop, which will include a minimum of 16 to 19 hours of instruction. Sixteen (16) hours must be registration and instruction for Shotgun, combination Rifle/Pistol class, Hunting Skills and Western Heritage/Cowboy Action and thirteen (13) hours for Pistol, Rifle, Archery, Black Powder/Muzzle Loading (including range safety), plus three (3) hours in 4-H Positive Youth Development and Risk Management.
4. Have no felony convictions.
5. The instructor in each class reserves the right not to certify a person if he/she does not demonstrate the ability to be a safe and competent instructor.

VI. DUTIES OF CERTIFIED SHOOTING SPORTS INSTRUCTORS

1. Keep focus of program on 4-H philosophy and Positive Youth Development.
2. To provide **basic** instruction to students.
3. The certified shooting sports instructor has the right to refuse participation from any shooting sports practice, event or activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the program.
4. Provide 4-H members a minimum of 8 hours of instruction within each shooting sports discipline in which the member is enrolled. These eight (8) hours include members completing the appropriate shooting sports curriculum and instructional time on the range. **NOTE:** While 8 hours or completion of the appropriate curricula is a minimum, this does not infer nor guarantee that a 4-H member has demonstrated the safety and skill necessary to participate in competitive events. Additional instruction may be necessary before a member is ready to participate in competitive events.
5. These 8 hours **do not** include time spent in the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) Hunter Education course. Nine (9) year old must provide an ODWC Certificate of Completion and upon turning 10 years old, the 4-H members must provide Hunter Education Card to Certified Discipline Instructor and OSU Extension Educator prior to participating in a shooting sports training certification or contest at any level.
6. Certified instructors are to have a copy of each 4-H member's ODWC Hunter Education card in their discipline's Risk Management binder.

7.

Certified instructors are to have a 4-H member's Youth Participation Form available to them at all practice sessions and contest events.

8.

Follow job description provided during certification workshops.

9.

To report all classes conducted and students attending and/or trained to the County Extension Educator who will provide annual reports to the State 4-H Office and the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator.

10.

At least one certified discipline instructor on the county level is required to attend all 4-H shooting sport events and contests conducted on the local, county, region, district or state level. When a county's certified instructor(s) are unable to attend 4-H shooting sport events and contests, an arrangement may be made between two county Extension offices to have a certified instructor from a neighboring county supervise certified participants with the consent of certified instructors of both counties involved in the supervision.

11.

Instructor to Participant Ratio: When working with youth actively participating on the firing line, an instructor must ensure the following ratios are strictly enforced. Each instructor may have under their supervision 8 youths (8:1 ratio) when any participant falls into the Junior division (9 to 11 year olds) and 10 youths (10:1 ratio) when all participants are in the Intermediate and Senior divisions (12 to 18 year olds). Other participants may be in attendance during this time so long as they are supervised by another adult and remain behind the range safety line ensuring all safety protocols are followed.

VII. RENEWALS AND RECERTIFICATION INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

1. To maintain certification a 4-H Shooting Sports instructor must teach or assist in teaching a class every two years or have assisted with shooting sports contests on the district or state level. This requirement must be documented through reporting Annual Instructors Certification by the county Extension office. This list is to be completed annually no later than July 15th to the State 4-H office.

2. Once certification lapses instructors must repeat the discipline and Positive Youth Development and Risk Management training at a recognized State 4-H Shooting Sports certification workshop to be re-certified.

3. Renewal will be required of all instructors when new teaching materials become available or when a program change is initiated by the Oklahoma 4-H Program Leader or the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee which requires an update or mandatory shooting discipline recertification. Level 1 Instructors must be re-certified a minimum of every 7 years or as determined by the State Shooting Sports Coordinator.

VIII. REPORTING

Shooting Sports practice Sign-In sheets of classes shall be reported to the County Extension Educator. Records of certified 4-H members are to be updated in the Oklahoma 4-H Enrollment System prior to submitting contest registration forms for all state contests. The County Extension Educator should maintain this information from the various disciplines and report it annually to the State 4-H office.

Certified 4-H Instructors Certification form is to be completed at the conclusion of a shooting sports program and should be available to the State 4-H office no later than July 15th each year. This reporting of teaching activities will continue the certification of instructors who were teaching a discipline, assisted with the teaching a discipline or assisted to conduct district and state event.

Firearm Exemptions – to purchase and possess firearms, approval must be granted by the President of University. To receive approval of a new purchase, an application using the *Purchase Procedures Firearms, Bow and Shooting Sports Supplies* must be made which details the purpose of the request, an *Annual County Safety Plan* which is a process of accounting for the use, storage and maintenance of the firearms must be on file at the State 4-H office and *Firearm Inventory List* report of storage and maintenance of firearms is to be completed twice a year. Firearm inventory and inspection is to be completed annually no later than July 15th and a copy submitted to the State 4-H office attached to the Annual Safety Plan. The January 15th inspection does not need to be submitted to the State 4-H Office. A copy of both semi-annual firearm inspection reports are to be kept on file in the county Extension office.

IX HUNTER SAFETY EDUCATION VERIFICATION

As of June 14, 2002 all participants must complete the Hunter Education Safety Program to be eligible for the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Youth enrolled in the Shooting Sports Program are strongly encouraged to successfully complete a Hunter Safety course before shooting a firearm; if training is not available at the time of enrollment, youth must successfully complete a Hunter Safety Course within one year from the date of enrollment to continue to participate in the Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Nine (9) year old must provide an Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Certificate of Completion. Upon turning 10 years old, the 4-H members must provide Hunter Education Card to Certified Discipline Coach and OSU Extension Educator.

X. FUNDING

1. Grants – due to state laws regarding the possession of firearms on university campuses and because 4-H is part of the land-grant university system, all funds used to secure firearms and bows **must** be handled through Ag. Sponsored Programs at Oklahoma State University. Individuals or entities that fail to secure approval for acquiring funds and who then do receive funds assume a higher degree of liability and are not recognized by the 4-H Program and are not authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem in the state of Oklahoma. *Annual County Safety Plan and Firearm Inventory Report for Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports* must be on file in the State 4-H Office prior

to approval of any grant requests being made by a certified shooting sports instructor on behalf of any shooting sports discipline, club or county shooting sports program.

XI. 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS ARCHERY AND GUN 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 or archery equipment that is capable of discharging a projectile by gunpowder, gas or other means of propulsion including without limitation, shotguns, rifles, handguns, pellet guns, BB guns, flare guns, paintball guns, air guns, bows, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore, the Oklahoma 4-H Program, Oklahoma 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee are unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H program.

XII. AMMUNITION RELOADING POLICY

Oklahoma 4-H has made the following guideline regarding reloading of any ammunition in the 4-H program.

1. New factory ammunition will be required (no reloads) for all Shooting Sports events including adult certification training, practices, camping activities, matches, contests, special events, etc.
2. The certified 4-H participant and certified 4-H instructor assume full responsibility and liability for the safety of the ammunition used including the safety of others on the range.
3. All ammunition is subject to random inspection by any range official or certified 4-H instructor. Rounds or shells may be disassembled and checked for compliance with original loading data and accuracy.