

FLORIDA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM
State Plan:
Program Guidelines and Equipment Management
Revised September 2014

Introduction: 4-H Shooting Sports Program

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program should be viewed as a vehicle for achieving youth development... the mission of Extension 4-H youth programs. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program teaches young people the safe and responsible use of firearms, principles of archery and hunting basics. Lifelong skill development is one of the main benefits of involvement in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program and applies to both youth and adults involved in the program. Specifically the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is designed to....

- Provide youth proper training in the use of firearms, archery equipment and other areas of the shooting sports.
- Provide thorough instruction in shooting sports safety.
- Develop life skills such as self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility and sportsmanship.
- Create an appreciation and understanding of natural resources and their wise use.
- Provide volunteer instructors safe and proper instructional techniques.
- Show volunteer leaders how to plan and manage 4-H Shooting Sports Clubs.

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is a National program with guidelines provided by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. This committee is made up of Extension professionals, industry representatives, volunteers and others. The committee plans, organizes and conducts National and regional training programs to certify Level II Instructors (see definition below) in order that they might conduct shooting sports training programs. These Level II instructors are discipline certified to provide instruction to Level I instructors within their respective states.

LEVEL I Instructor - Participants who successfully complete a state training conducted by a Level II instructor. Level I Instructors are discipline certified to work directly with youth. Level I instructors must be 21 years old or older.

LEVEL II Instructor - Participants who successfully complete a National or Regional training conducted by the National Shooting Sports Committee. Level II Instructors are discipline certified to provide Level I instruction. Level II instructors must be 21 years old or older.

The Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Program follows the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program guidelines via the Florida State Shooting Sports Committee. The Florida State Shooting Sports Committee is comprised of Level II Instructors, Extension Specialists, County Faculty and volunteers. This group is responsible for establishing guidelines specific to Florida, planning events, organizing and conducting Level I trainings and developing educational recourses. The State Shooting Sports Committee will also serve as an approval mechanism for any and all events, trainings or resource development within the program. The 4-H Shooting Sports

Program is an official 4-H program open to any individuals that qualify under current age policies.

Shooting Sports Certification Training Guidelines and Requirements.

- County, multi-county, or district Shooting Sports Program Level I trainings must be approved by the State Shooting Sports Committee and be conducted by a team (volunteers or agents) that have received proper Level II training from nationally trained instructors (See Level I Training Request Form).
- All 4-H Shooting Sports events/programs conducted for youth must be supervised by individuals that have successfully completed and are currently certified Level I or Level II discipline training. Instructors must be 21 years old or older.
 - Junior instructors must be 14 years old as of September 1. They must have completed Level I training and can only assist while a Level I instructor is managing the shooting line.
- All aspects of a training activity must be organized prior to the training (i.e. planning, announcing, conducting, evaluating). Responsibilities of county agents, volunteers, and state staff are to be outlined prior to the training event (See Level I Training Request Form).
- Volunteer responsibilities include, but are not limited to, providing support for and assisting with conducting Shooting Sports discipline training.
- The State Shooting Sports Committee will establish consistency in certification and recognition of participant completion of training programs.
- State requirements for certification of volunteers at Level I for all disciplines involve a minimum of 16-20 hours of face to face training in each of the discipline areas. The 16 hour training program includes a homework assignment that must be completed to receive certification.
- Level I volunteer certification is determined by exam, homework, practicum, and/or instructor observation. The discipline instructor reserves the right to withhold certification if the volunteer is found to lack effective instructional skills, knowledge or safety practices.
- The Level I certification period for all disciplines shall be **three years** from the date of the initial training. Active volunteers must submit participation information to their County 4-H program
- A Level I instructor can be recertified in a discipline by:
 - 1) Attending one (1) of the state Level I training programs offered.
 - 2) Teaching in the classroom and range at any State sponsored 4-H Shooting Sports event or camp under the supervision of a Level II trainer.
 - 3) Attending an annual discipline update-training meeting.
 - 4) Attending a State Shooting Sports Committee sanctioned regional volunteer training.
 - 5) Making arrangements with a Level II instructor to observe a club or local event. (This is dependent on the availability of the Level II instructor.)

Note: In all cases for recertification, a Level II trainer must be consulted to observe and/or verify the recertification process.

- Level I trainings will be conducted as needed. Typically one State training is held yearly and is usually conducted at a designated 4-H Camp. Regional trainings will be conducted as needed pending approval of the State Shooting Sports Committee. (See Level 1 Training Request Form). A minimum of ten participants in each discipline is required to conduct a training.
- All shooting sports training instructors (Level I and II) will conduct training that complies with established National Shooting Sports discipline teaching guidelines provided during certification training.

Shooting Sports Events/Activities Guidelines

- **Insurance:** As with any other UF 4-H Program, there is liability coverage/protection from the State of Florida/University for 4-H Shooting Sports events, activities and club meetings. Information and certificates of coverage can be obtained from the county 4-H faculty/agent member. Please remember this is insurance against liability claims related to 4-H programming and should cover volunteers, agents and other UF employees directing a 4-H program. This policy does NOT cover facilities/properties that are not directly owned by UF. The American Income Life (AIL) club insurance is a policy related to injuries that might occur during a 4-H event or other activities. The AIL insurance is an annual optional coverage available to 4-H clubs through their counties. Contact the county 4-H faculty/agent for additional information. Additional liability protection (Fl. Statute 375.251) may apply to land owners who provide free access to their property for outdoor recreational purposes. Please see complete Statute for details.
- **Age Requirements:** Participation in the Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Program follows other State 4-H programs requiring participants to be eight (8) years old by September 1 of the program year. The exceptions to this rule are with the disciplines of shotgun, hunting and muzzle loading, which are **not** entry level/age disciplines. Participation by 5-7 year olds in the Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Program will adhere to the State and National age policy in which they are **not** allowed to participate.

Discipline specific ages are as follows:

Small bore, air rifle and archery	8 years old by Sept 1. (Competition: Archery and air rifle 8yrs. Small bore (22cal) 11yrs. by Sept. 1)
Shotgun and hunting	10 years old by Sept. 1. (Competition 11 yrs. by Sept. 1)
Muzzle loading	12 years old by Sept. 1. (Competition 12 yrs. by Sept. 1)

NOTE 1: Individual counties, at their discretion, may adopt a minimum age requirement that is older than the state guidelines, but in no cases may a county lower the minimum age requirement set forth in the State guidelines.

NOTE 2: Youth participants in the Hunting discipline can only participate in age appropriate disciplines.

NOTE 3: Participants in the muzzle loading discipline must be 12 years old or older and have participated in the 4-H Shooting Sports rifle or shotgun program for 1 year.

- **Youth Events:** All 4-H events through which 4-H members participate will follow rules and guidelines established by the State and/or National Shooting Sports Programs. (See Florida 4-H State Rulebook and/or State Events Overview). Annual State and Regional events and matches will be planned and approved by the State Shooting Sports Committee.
- **Equipment Safety:** All county shooting sports equipment should be routinely inspected for safety purposes. Private firearms/equipment used in 4-H activities and events should also be inspected prior to participation. The current shooting sports discipline instructor or his/her designee is responsible for equipment safety.
- **Risk Management Plan:** All counties are required to have a risk management plan in place for all shooting sports activities.

Guidelines for County 4-H Shooting Sports Program Equipment

- Equipment includes: Bows, arrows, firearms, targets, ammunition and other shooting sports program equipment related to the disciplines of archery, hunting, muzzle loading, rifle and shotgun.
- Storage of 4-H Shooting Sports Program equipment, owned by the counties, is to be determined by the county in accordance with county policy and Florida State law. Florida State law Sec. 790.174 requires that firearms be locked and/or stored in a secure manner to prevent minors from gaining access to them. Counties participating in the Shooting Sports program will designate an individual to maintain current inventory records and location of equipment.
- Typical storage areas include but are not limited to county Extension offices, law enforcement offices, private residences and other secure sites.
- Loan requests for “state” shooting sports equipment to support county shooting sports programs must be done 30 days in advance to the State Shooting Sports Committee through county 4-H offices. Requests must contain names of instructors and the disciplines in which they are certified to teach. An inventory list of all equipment and shooting sports supplies must be completed prior to and upon completion of the training by the county 4-H agent. Storage of this equipment will adhere to the guidelines stated above.

Shooting Sports Educational Resources Guidelines

- Shooting sports educational initiatives are to include: training, competitive events, camps and discipline (shotgun, rifle, archery, hunting, and muzzle loading) specific curriculum.
- Shooting sports curriculum must be approved by the State Shooting Sports Committee before statewide distribution.
- A Florida specific project book is not available. Several other states have these types of publications which can be adapted for use in Florida. Contact your local 4-H faculty/agent.