

MARYLAND 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PLAN & POLICY

Revised 07/08

I. Situation Statement

The Maryland 4-H Shooting Sports Program will utilize the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum. All 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors will need to obtain 4-H Shooting Sports Program Instructor Certification prior to conducting 4-H shooting sports programs with youth.

Statewide or Multi-State training programs and Instructor Updates utilizing National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum will be offered annually. The length of the training has involved a Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The state shooting sports committee has reviewed training requirements and has determined that this is an adequate time frame to provide acceptable training for instructor certification. The committee will also make efforts to incorporate additional training tracks focusing on improving instructor skills to teach a higher level of technical skill development of shooters wishing to pursue a more competitive level of shooting as has been provided previously in Maryland by NRA/4-H.

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum was developed, drafted and tested by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee over a period of years and has been offered to states since the mid 1980's. The curriculum is scrutinized continually and revisions made as appropriate. Writers of the curriculum included National Rifle Association instructors and training counselors, hunter education instructors, National Bowhunter Education instructors, National Archery Association instructors, National Muzzleloading Rifle Association instructors, and Extension Specialists.

Many youth shooting programs have been available, so the subject matter of 4-H Shooting Sports is not unique. Several of the programs laid claim to a youth development foundation. Most of them used a volunteer corps to present the program to young people. A few of them even tried to link shooting to other areas of concern. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program combines the best of all of these programs while keeping a relationship with the existing natural resources, safety or outdoor recreation programs. The materials and training programs emphasize young people and their life skills as the product of the program while using tested techniques and positive reinforcement. Strong and continuing recruitment of volunteers, intensive volunteer equipping and management, minimal commitment of professional staff and time and attractiveness to males and females, older teens, and families have been and continue to be key elements in successful 4-H Shooting Sports Programs.

The program relies on National and State 4-H trained & certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery, Rifle, Shotgun, Muzzleloading, Pistol, Hunting & Wildlife, and Program Coordinators) using the National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum. Shooting Sports has the potential of being a high liability activity. Therefore, the program requires 4-H trained & certified instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program to decrease the liability of such an educational experience. The intent of the program is that it be conducted as a group project with appropriated supervision rather than an individual 4-H member independent project

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is a youth development education program that uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and wildlife management 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 volunteer who acts as teacher and role model for younger 4-H youth members.

II. Program Objectives

- A. Youth development is the number one goal of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. 4-H Shooting Sports provide an outstanding way of promoting human growth and development in the life skills identified by the National 4-H Program.
- B. To enhance development of participant's self-concept, character and personal growth through safe educational and socially-acceptable involvement in shooting activities.
- C. To strengthen families through life-long recreational activities.
- D. To develop leadership qualities in youth and adult participants.
- E. To expand 4-H membership and involve additional 4-H adult volunteers.
- F. To encourage understanding of natural resource concepts through participant's interest in shooting and hunting.
- G. To expose participants to the broad array of vocation and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.
- H. To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration.
- I. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior.
- J. To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety and hunter education programs.
- K. To provide 4-H training and certification in the various shooting sports disciplines for adult volunteers.
- L. To maintain and expand a state level committee of Nationally trained and certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors.

III. Philosophy

- A. All instructors in the program will be certified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee to teach specific discipline(s). Instructors shall participate in an instructor update if new material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed.
- B. A county shall not sponsor or schedule any shooting sport activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H trained and certified Shooting Sports Instructor of the appropriate discipline.
- C. Instructor training and certification sessions will be scheduled and conducted by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee as a group. No certifications will be given by individual state instructors.
- D. The county is responsible for implementing MCE Volunteer Policy as it pertains to shooting sports instructors and for verifying proper certification.
- E. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is not an individual 4-H project, but should be taught as a group project, 4-H club, 4-H special interest group, or 4-H camping sessions.
- F. The enrollment in the program has the potential of reaching new youth audiences as well as new volunteer adult leaders.
- G. Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.
- H. 4-H Shooting Sports Programs are open to all youth 8 to 18 years of age (as of Jan. 1 of the current year) without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age or national origin. 4-H Clovers (age 5-7) are not eligible for any aspect of 4-H shooting sports programs.
- I. 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.
- J. Inter-agency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
- K. Muzzleloading will be limited to those 14 years of age or older.
- L. Games using paintball guns where participants shoot paintballs At other participants is NOT AN ACCEPTABLE 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS ACTIVITY. 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 devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H program.
- M. **Maryland 4-H Shooting Sports Policy on Footwear (effective July 21, 2008)**
Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting course in any 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 includes but is not limited to sandals, clogs, crocks, flip flops and of course bare feet. Shoes that have holes, perforations, or 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.

IV. Program Administration

- A. This program is administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, a sub-committee of the State 4-H Environmental Sciences Curriculum Committee and the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator. This committee will:
1. Administer the program.
 2. Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
 3. Conduct Instructor training & certification activities.
 4. Develop informational materials used in publicizing the program.
 5. Provide orientation of county faculty to the shooting sports program.
 6. Initiate resource development in partial support of programming.
 7. Maintain files of 4-H instructor certification status.
 8. Cooperate with County Faculty to assist in program operations and administration.
 9. Provide leadership for all State 4-H Shooting Sports events including the following:
 - All 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training and Certifications
 - State 4-H Smallbore Rifle Match
 - State 4-H Archery Contest/Fun Shoot
 - State 4-H Shotgun Match/Fun Shoot
 - Other State 4-H Shooting Sports contests, events, fun shoots, activities, or programs as established by the committee and supported by Extension 4-H Administration.

V. Instructor Certification Requirements

The program requires the use of national or state 4-H trained & certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery, Rifle, Shotgun, Air Pistol, Muzzleloading, Hunting & Wildlife, and County Coordinator). No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. Age: **Instructor** - 21 years of age as of January 1 of current year.
Assistant Instructor - 18 years of age as of January 1 of current year. (Asst. Instructor - can instruct youth under direct supervision of an Instructor and only if the Instructor is present during the instruction)
2. Successfully complete instructor training sessions administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and demonstrate competency to instruct as determined through a written test, trainer observation and other screening used during training.
3. Have been approved as a current MCE Volunteer through local County Extension Office.
4. Volunteers who respond positively to the question on criminal offenses must be approved by the MCE Personnel Director before being approved as instructors.
5. Be recommended by County Extension 4-H Faculty.

6. Only one discipline certification may be achieved at a single state sponsored training & certification workshop. A participant must attend all of the training sessions at a state 4-H sponsored workshop which includes a minimum 12 hours of discipline instruction and additional 6 hours on topics of shooting sports philosophy, youth development, risk management, planning county programs and additional topics identified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. The State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee reserves the right to withhold certification.
7. Effective January 1, 1998 all shooting program instructors must have current 4-H Shooting Sports Training and Certifications.

VI. Instructor Renewals and Recertification & Reporting

1. **Your desire to continue** as a volunteer in the 4-H program.
2. **Your County and/or State's interest** in seeing you continue as a 4-H Shooting Sports Volunteer.
3. **Keeping up-to-date** in your certified discipline through teaching the program in your County.
4. **Attending instructor updates** as deemed necessary by the certifying committee.
5. **Annually Reporting your teaching** in 4-H Shooting Sports programs.
6. To maintain certification as a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor, one must teach or assist in teaching a class within the instructors discipline every two years. It is required that all classes be reported and documented as per Section X.
7. Should instructor certification lapse the individual must repeat the state 4-H training program.
8. All instructors in the program will be certified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee to teach specific discipline(s). Instructors shall participate in an instructor update/renewal if new material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed.

Instructors are to report all students trained to the County Extension Faculty and to make **annual reports** to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee or other designated representative. Reports are to cover the calendar year and be submitted by December 31 of that year. Forms for reporting shooting sports programs are located in the Instructor Notebook or can be found on the state website at:

<http://extension.umd.edu/local/Dorchester/shootingSports/frames.html>. Extension 4-H Faculty should sign the report form, return a copy to the instructor, retain a County Office Copy and forward a copy to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee or designated representative. THIS REPORTING OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES IS A PREREQUISITE TO MAINTAINING THE CERTIFICATION OF INSTRUCTORS WHO CONDUCTED OR ASSISTED WITH THE PROGRAM AS PER OTHER REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI RELATED TO MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION.

VII. Duties of Certified Instructors

1. To provide basic instruction to students and other duties as outlined in the individual MCE Volunteer Job Description as developed in cooperation with County Extension Faculty.
2. To report all students trained to the County Extension Faculty and to make annual reports to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee or other

designated representative. Reports are to cover the calendar year and be submitted by December 31 of that year.

3. To keep current as certified instructors by teaching classes and attending instructor updates or retraining sessions as available and as required by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.

VIII. Instructor Training

1. Instructors Certified through the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee will receive a copy of the 4-H shooting sports curriculum for their individual discipline. If an instructor terminates their 4-H involvement then this material must be returned to the County Extension 4-H Faculty, as it is property of the 4-H program.
2. Methods of instruction at state workshops will include: A) Lesson outline and use of outline; B) Discipline Curriculum Manual; C) Other methods may include - Hands on Learning, Live Firing, Demonstrations, Lecture, Role Playing, Class Involvement, Simulated Experience, Visual Aids, and Exhibits.
3. Instructor training will include a segment where workshop participants will have an opportunity to demonstrate teaching skills.

IX. Instructors Code of Ethics

1. All certified instructors will adhere to the 4-H philosophy and goals and the 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Code of Ethics (**attached**).
2. Instructors of 4-H Shooting Sports Clubs and Special Interest Groups are to work with youth to learn the 4-H Pledge, and to encourage member participation in club meetings, county and state 4-H activities. 4-H members are expected to 1) complete member enrollment and code of conduct forms; 2) exhibit project skills; 3) present a project talk, demonstration, or presentation; 4) maintain 4-H member records for project completion.
3. Instructors should demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.

X. State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee Structure

1. Committee membership shall include all state level, nationally certified 4-H shooting sports instructors, both 4-H volunteer and Extension Faculty.
2. Committee leadership will be provided by Extension Faculty nationally certified as 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinators.
3. The function of this committee will be as specified under Section IV. Program Administration.
4. Committee meetings will be held quarterly. State Shooting Sports Coordinators may call additional meetings as necessary.