

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Program

General Information, Definitions and Policies

Revised February 2, 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 and 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.

The Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports program follows the National 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum to achieve the following goals:

- To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, including sound decision making, self-discipline, concentration and ethical behavior, using the highest standards of safety.
- To enhance development of a participant's character and personal growth, through safe, educational and socially acceptable shooting activities.
- To complement and enhance existing hunter safety programs and encourage the understanding of natural resources conservation.
- To help participants become aware of a broad array of vocational and life-long avocational activities related to shooting sports.
- To strengthen families through life-long recreational activities.



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Policy Statements:

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. These policies are reviewed and updated annually.

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors

- All applicants attending a State 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training Workshop must have completed their county volunteer selection process and 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 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 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-87 Eyewear Standards, ear plugs or muffs, and shoes that completely cover their feet. *Examples of non-acceptable footwear include but are not limited to sandals, clogs, crocks, and flip-flops.*



Ammunition, Targets and Equipment

- 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.
- Reloaded ammunition will ONLY be used by the 4-H member who reloaded it.
- 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.
- Inventory Control – An equipment log of all 4-H Shooting Sports equipment must be maintained by the 4-H Shooting Sports: Club, County program, 4-H Camp, or State program. A sign in and out process will be used to record the who/when/what and return of all equipment. Only approved Instructors should sign out shooting sports firearms and archery equipment.
- Club/Program owned Shooting Sports equipment should be audited annually. OSU Extension staff who oversee the local/county shooting sports program shall receive a copy of all shooting sports equipment logs and sign in and out sheets. These must be submitted with the annual 4-H club fiscal reports.
- 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.
- All club/4-H owned shooting sports firearms will be stored unloaded and in a locked secure (commercial firearm safe preferred) box or storage area, away from all unauthorized persons. Keys and/or combinations will only be available to certified instructors, and/or county/state coordinator.
- The use of an open bolt or open bore indicator when the firearm is not in use is recommended.
- Archery equipment will be stored in a locked room accessible only to certified instructors and/or county/state coordinator.
- All ammunition will be stored separate from the firearms which use them. Ammunition will be stored in a storage area with at least two separate locks. Access to the ammunition will be limited to Certified Shooting Sports Instructors and Coordinators.
- All local, state and federal laws will be followed when transporting firearms, ammunition or other Shooting Sports equipment. When transporting firearms, they will be unloaded and locked in hard cases. Gun locks such as trigger locks are also recommended.
- Firearms will be transported in such a manner that they can not be seen from the outside of the vehicle.
- 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.
- 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, state-level reloading policies, etc.



Discipline Prerequisites

- 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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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

- 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. 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. 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 Instructor (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:

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

Instructor renewals and recertification:

- Certification remains current as long as the Instructor teaches or assist in teaching at least one class in their discipline(s) every three years. However, annual teaching on the county level is preferred.
- Instructor Certification can remain current for up to seven years with continued teaching, and/or additional State trainings. After seven years, instructors will need to repeat a State Workshop Training or a State Shooting Sports Update to renew all certifications. Renewal opportunities for Ohio will be announced in 2024.
- Renewal of certifications will be required of ALL instructors if/when a National/State Shooting Sports program change necessitates an update.

