

# NEBRASKA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS POLICY

Adapted from the National 4-H Shooting Sports

## I. Situation Statement

The Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports (SS) Program encompasses the initiative goals of volunteer leadership of Nebraska Extension. The program in Nebraska is administered by a nationally certified state committee consisting of Extension staff and volunteers. The program is designed to: 1) give youth thorough safe instruction and training in the use of firearms and conservation; 2) enhance self-confidence, personal development, responsibility, and sportsmanship; 3) create an appreciation and understanding of natural resources; and 4) provide volunteer instructors safe and proper instructional techniques and information on how to plan and manage shooting and conservation clubs. The program relies on state 4-H certified & trained instructors to conduct classes in the various disciplines (archery, rifle, pistol, shotgun, muzzleloading, and hunting skills).

The program requires 4-H certified & trained instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program.

The 4-H SS Program is a youth development education program which uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and conservation 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 leader who acts as a teacher and role model for younger 4-H/youth members.

## II. Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports – Minimum Standards

The Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee recognizes the diversity of the 4-H shooting sports programs within the state. It is advised that programs at the county level adopt and adhere to these standards. Should an injury occur in a county due to the disregard of any of these minimum standards, the potential negative legal/liability ramifications for a land-grant university system could be significant. The following minimum standards are not negotiable:

- All instructors accept and abide by the National/Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics.
- The National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum is the established adult teaching curriculum for training adults to teach youth shooting sports within a 4-H program.

- Club level 4-H Shooting Sports Programs will have written risk management plans which include items such as emergency response and preparedness, insurance, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, state-level reloading policies, etc.
- That the thrust of the 4-H shooting sports curriculum is to teach the child life skills, as opposed to teaching shooting skills to the child.
- That certifications by other national organizations are a welcome supplement to the 4-H shooting sports certification process.
- All certified 4-H shooting sports instructors are a minimum of 21 years of age and have completed a state level 4-H shooting sports workshop in the specific discipline they will be teaching.
- To maintain certification as a 4-H shooting sports Level I instructor, the individual must teach youth or assist in instruction of youth, a minimum of four hours each year within the discipline certified. These individuals are also required to complete and submit their annual report to the state coordinator.
- Cloverbud age youth are not allowed to participate in any shooting sports activity that includes the handling or live-fire of any air-guns, firearms, or archery equipment.
- Only factory ammunition is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.

The following minimum guidelines for instructor training at the state level workshops must be adhered to:

- All certified adult 4-H volunteers with supervisory responsibilities in the shooting sports program are a minimum of 21 years of age or older.
- All state level certification workshops must provide a minimum of twelve (12) hours of instruction; including a minimum of eight (8) hours instruction in each specific discipline taken and a minimum of four (4) hours instruction in teaching youth development principles, ages & stages, risk management, and life skills.
- All instructors must teach youth or assist in instruction of youth, a minimum of four hours in their respective discipline every year. Instructors must also complete and submit their annual instructor report to the state coordinator to remain a certified instructor in their respective discipline.

### **III. Program Objectives**

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program strives to enable people, their parents, and adult volunteers to become responsible, self-directed, and productive members of society. Extension staff, leaders, instructors, and coaches must understand the goals and objectives of the program to manage or present it properly. These goals and objectives are consistent with the goals and objectives of the 4-H program. The program transfers knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop human capital, using the subject matter and resources of the land-grant universities.

The specific goals and objectives of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program include, but are not

limited to those listed below.

- A. To enhance development of self-concept, character, and personal growth through safe, educational, and socially acceptable involvement in a shooting related activity.
- B. To encourage participation in natural resources and related natural science programs by exposing participants to the content through in shooting activity.
- C. To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration.
- D. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior.
- E. To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.
- F. To strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities.
- G. To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety, shooting and hunter education programs using experiential educational methods and progressive development of skills and abilities.

#### **IV. Philosophy**

- A. All instructors in the program will be certified by a member of the Nebraska State 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team to teach specific course(s). All instructors (Level 1 & 2) will participate in an update when new curriculum material or new instructional methods are available.
- B. The shooting sports program can be an individual or group 4-H project activity.
- C. The enrollment in the program has the potential of reaching new youth audiences as well as new volunteer leaders.
- D. The program is open to all youth provided they are under the direct supervision of a certified 4-H Shooting Sports instructor. Youth must be eight years old before January 1 of the current year before enrolling in a shooting sports project. Youth must be 9 years old or older before January 1 of the current year before enrolling in shotgun or muzzleloading projects.
- E. A 4-H Shooting Sports instructor of a discipline has the right to refuse any participant from the shooting sports activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the group.

- F. A county will not sponsor or schedule any shooting sport activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H Shooting Sports trained & certified instructor of the appropriate discipline in active status.
- G. Inter-agency cooperation, collaboration, and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
- H. It is strongly suggested that all youth complete the State of Nebraska Hunter/Bow Hunter Education Program sponsored by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.
- I. It is recommended that a county does have a SS coordinator to assist in administering and promoting the SS program in the county.
- J. Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.

#### V. **Program Administration**

The program is administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee and the Nebraska State 4-H Office. The State 4-H Office and 4-H Advisory Committee will:

- A. Administer the program.
- B. Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
- C. Conduct instructor training and certification programs.
- D. Develop informational materials to be used in publicizing the program.
- E. Provide orientation to county staff of the shooting sports program.
- F. Initiate resource development in partial support of programming.
- G. Maintain files of 4-H instructor certification status.
- H. Cooperate with county staff to assist in program operations and administration.

#### VI. **Instructor Certification Requirements**

The program requires that members of the Nebraska State 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team, who are nationally certified, conduct classes in the various disciplines: archery, hunting skills, shotgun, muzzleloading, pistol (air, .22), rifle (BB, pellet, small bore). No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

- A. **Adult Leader** - individuals who are 21 years of age or older and provide direct supervision and teach youth. They also must provide direct supervision of an Apprentice Leader.
- B. **Apprentice Leader** - individuals who are ages 14 to 20, have successfully completed

- a state or national sponsored workshop. These individuals may assist a certified adult instructor while under their direct supervision.
- C. Attend and successfully complete an instructor training program administered by members of the Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports Training Team and demonstrate competency to instruct as determined through a written test, trainer observation and other screening used during training.
  - D. All volunteers must be approved through the Child Protection and Safety Policy Process before being approved as instructors. This includes completing the Youth Protection Volunteer Screening Form. Failure to cooperate in such screening will disqualify any volunteer or staff member from service. The Youth Protection Volunteer Screening Form will be updated and re-approved on a four-year basis.
  - E. Only one certification per discipline may be achieved at a single state 4-H sponsored training workshop. A participant must attend all the training sessions at a state-sponsored workshop to become a certified instructor. The lead instructor in each discipline reserves the right not to certify a person if he/she feels the candidate will not be a competent instructor.
  - F. All state-level certification workshops must provide a minimum of twelve (12) hours of instruction, including a minimum of eight hours of instruction in each specific discipline taken and 4 hours of instruction in teaching skills, 4-H philosophy, youth development, risk management and additional topics identified by the State 4-H SS Advisory Committee.

4-H certification, achieved only by successful participation in a 4-H leader workshop, is an absolute requirement for an instructor in the shooting sports disciplines. No other certifications or qualifications are accepted as a substitute. Just because you are an expert marksman, does not mean you know how to work with youth. And just because you are a firearm's instructor certified by another organization, does not mean you know about 4-H philosophy and procedure. Each 4-H instructor workshop includes youth development principles and concepts, risk management practices, and program management in addition to shooting discipline training.

## **VII. Instructor Renewals & Recertification**

- A. To maintain your certification as a Shooting Sports instructor, you must teach youth or assist in instruction of youth, a minimum of four hours in your respective discipline(s) every year. This requirement must be documented as per Section XI. Instructors must also complete and submit their annual instructor report to the state coordinator every year.

- B. Should an instructor's certification lapse, the individual must repeat the training at an instructor certification workshop. It is suggested that certified instructors attend a training update workshop every 5 - 7 years.
- C. Renewal will be required of all instructors when new teaching materials become available or when a program change is initiated by the Nebraska State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee which requires an update.
- D. Certified, active instructors may attain an additional discipline certification by participating and attending a training workshop specific for the discipline desired if the individual attends this workshop within 18 months of initial certification.

### **VIII. Duties of Certified Instructors**

- A. To provide basic instruction to youth.
- B. To communicate to the County Extension Office about their club program.
- C. All instructors must teach a minimum of four hours in their respective discipline to youth every year and complete and submit their annual instructor report to remain a certified instructor in their respective discipline. Instructors must attend updates or retraining sessions, as needed, and as required by the Nebraska State 4-H SS Advisory Committee.
- D. It is strongly suggested that all certified instructors and youth secure additional accident insurance.

### **IX. Instructor Training**

Instructor training will consist of the following phases:

- A. Explanation of the program.
- B. Registration cards (purpose).
- C. Methods of Instruction:
  - 1. Lesson outline and use of an outline
  - 2. Instruction manual
  - 3. Various methods-actual experiences, demonstrations, role playing, lecture, class involvement, simulated experience, visual aids, exhibits, and hands-on.

## **X. Instructor Code of Ethics**

- A. All certified instructors will adhere to the 4-H philosophy and goals.
- B. Instructors should demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.

### **Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics**

A complete 4-H shooting sports program must convey life skills development and be presented in such a way that is safe, technically competent, and helps to instill 4-H values in participants through teaching and example. Certified shooting sports instructors and volunteers must be cognizant of their role as a moral and ethical mentor, as well as teacher, to youth and adults in their state and community.

As a 4-H shooting sports instructor or volunteer:

- ☞ I will respect the participants, volunteers and property associated with the 4-H shooting sports program.
- ☞ I will set a good example as a mentor and role model for 4-H shooting sports youth and volunteer leaders.
- ☞ I will conduct myself and my 4-H shooting sports program in a professional and ethical manner.
- ☞ I will strive to be knowledgeable of the life skills embodied in the 4-H shooting sports program and aid positively in the development of youth through adherence to those principles.
- ☞ I will strive to be technically competent in the subject matter I teach and adhere to the state and national 4-H shooting sports guidelines and curriculum.
- ☞ I will respect the dignity of each participant in the 4-H shooting sports program regardless of gender, origin, ability, achievement, or conviction.

## **XI. Record Keeping**

Shooting Sports instructors should keep accurate, thorough, up-to-date records of their training activities meetings each year. There are many formats that can be used to record this information. An example is provided in the Risk Management Section (Activities Log) of the discipline/club instructor manual. The 4-H Shooting Sports Activity Log, or a similar form containing the requested information, must be kept as long as the instructor remains active in the shooting sports program or a minimum of five years, whichever is greater.

## **XII. Paintball 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 including air guns, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and dangerous. Therefore, the Nebraska 4-H Shooting Sports Program is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H program.

### **XIII. Footwear Policy**

Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting course in any outdoor 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 include, but are not limited to: sandals, clogs, crocks, flip flops and bare feet. Shoes that have holes, perforations, 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.

### **XIV. Risk Management**

Recommended Management Procedures for county programs:

- A. State 4-H volunteer leader procedures and policies followed - Leader enrollment forms completed, signed, if needed, approved and on file in the Extension Office for all certified SS leaders. All instruction must be done under the supervision of a Nebraska 4-H certified SS leader. Work closely with the 4-H Youth Development Program staff person in each county to meet state guidelines for volunteer leaders.
- B. Code of Conduct/Release Form - All 4-H members enrolled in the Shooting Sports projects are to have parent or guardian read and sign the Shooting Sports Code of Conduct/Release Form before beginning project meetings. The certified instructor or club leader must ascertain that all members are enrolled in the project and have the required forms completed before participation. Forms are to be completed on-line and/or turned into and kept in a permanent file in the Extension Office.
- C. Accident Insurance - Each county program should take out special accident insurance coverage on SS members. The “year” plan offered by specialty insurance companies is suggested. Many are available at \$1 per member per year. All shooting sports leaders should know the policy number and procedures required. A copy of the policy should be kept with the certified leader and the original on file in the Extension office.
- D. Emergency Plan - An emergency plan of action should be written and followed for each training site and/or activity. This plan should consider:
  - Potential risks analyzed and procedures planned



- Minor incidents/first-aid - who treats or determines procedure (first aid kit)
- Access to emergency medical treatment (telephone on site, phone numbers to call, transportation, etc.)
- Two-deep leadership (at least two adults on hand) know the plan and procedures
- Natural catastrophe procedure (fire, tornado, lightning, etc.)

Adopted January 24, 1996  
Revised March 2017