

WEST VIRGINIA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS POLICY- REVISED 7/18/05

- I. The West Virginia 4-H Shooting Sports (SS) Program encompasses the goals of volunteer leadership, capacity building for youth and families, and environmental stewardship. The program developed in 1986 and revised in 1993 is modeled after the National 4-H SS Program and is administered by a nationally certified state committee consisting of Extension personnel both paid and volunteer. The program is designed to: 1. give youth thorough, safe instruction and training in the use of firearms, archery equipment, 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 including air rifle, smallbore, and centerfire; air pistol; shotgun; muzzleloading; and wildlife conservation). The West Virginia 4-H Shooting Sports Program will utilize the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum. All 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors need to obtain 4-H Shooting Sports Program Instructor Certification prior to conducting 4-H shooting sports programs with youth.

Statewide and 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 midday format. 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 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 corp 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 including air rifle, smallbore, and centerfire; Shotgun; Muzzleloading; Air Pistol; and Wildlife Conservation) 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 appropriate supervision rather than an individual 4-H member independent project.

The 4-H Shooting Sports 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 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

1. 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.
2. To enhance development of participant's self-concept, character and personal growth through safe educational and socially-acceptable involvement in shooting activities.
3. To strengthen families through life-long recreation activities.
4. To develop leadership qualities in youth and adult participants.
5. To expand 4-H membership and involve additional 4-H adult volunteers.
6. To encourage understanding of natural resource concepts through participant's interest in shooting and wildlife conservation.
7. To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.
8. To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration.
9. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior.
10. To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety and hunter education programs.
11. To provide 4-H training and certification in the various shooting sports disciplines for adult volunteers.
12. To maintain and expand a state level committee of Nationally trained and certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors.

III. PHILOSOPHY

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The county is responsible for implementing the WVUES Volunteer Policy as it pertains to shooting sports instructors and for verifying proper certification.
5. 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.
6. The enrollment in the program has the potential of reaching new youth audiences as well as new volunteer adult leaders.
7. Competitive events may be available in specific disciplines as developed and implemented by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.
8. 4-H Shooting Sports Programs are open to all youth 9-21 years of age. The individual can join when he/she is in at least the third grade and/or 9 years of age (example: a child can join 4-H if he/she is 8 years and will reach his/her 9th birthday during the 4-H club year); and will not be eligible for membership if he/she reaches his/her 21st birthday on or before January 1 of the current 4-H year. All 4-H groups and clubs are open to all individuals without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or national origin. 4-H Cloverbuds is a pre-4-H program for 1st and 2nd grade youth and are not eligible for any aspect of 4-H shooting sports programs.
9. Only youth 12 years of age and older on January 1 of the current year, may use firearms (any gun which uses a powder charge).
10. 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.
11. Inter-agency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
12. Pistol training will be limited to air pistols.
13. 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. This policy has also been adopted by the West Virginia 4-H Program.

IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

This program is administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator. The committee includes Extension Agents, Extension Specialists, and volunteers. The committee will:

1. Administer the program.
2. Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
3. Conduct instructor training and certification activities.
4. Develop informational materials used in publicizing the program.
5. Provide orientation of county Extension faculty to the 4-H 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 Extension 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
 - Other State 4-H Shooting Sports contests, events, fun shoots, activities or programs as established by the committee and supported by the WVUES.

V. INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Program requires the use of national or state 4-H trained and certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery; Rifle including air rifle, smallbore, and centerfire; Shotgun; Air Pistol; Muzzleloading; and Wildlife Conservation). No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. Age: Instructor – 18 years of age or older (Must be 18 years of age on or before January 1, of the current year).
2. Be recommended by County Extension Faculty.
3. Have been approved as a WVUES Volunteer through local County Extension Office.
4. Successfully complete instructor training sessions administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and demonstrate competent knowledge of curriculum material and instructional techniques to be measured through a written test and teaching practicum. A minimum score of 70% is required on the test and practicum.
5. Volunteers who respond positively to the question on criminal offenses must be approved by the WVUES/4-HYD Director before being approved as instructors.
 - A. Have no felony convictions.
 - B. Have no convictions for hunting or fishing violations in the immediate past two (2) years.
6. Only one discipline certification may be achieved at a single state sponsored training and 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 an additional 6 hours on topics of shooting sports philosophy, youth development, risk management, planning county programs and other topics identified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.
7. The State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee reserves the right to withhold certification of any instructor who fails to meet these requirements. The instructor in each class reserves the right not to certify a person if he/she feels the candidate will not be a competent instructor.

VI. INSTRUCTOR RENEWALS, RECERTIFICATIONS AND 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. Reporting your teaching in the 4-H Shooting Sports program.
6. To maintain certification as a Shooting Sports instructor, you must teach or assist in teaching a class within your discipline every two years. It is required that all classes be reported and documented as per Section X.

7. Should instructor certification lapse an 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 can be obtained from your local county Extension office or online at (<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/youth/ssinstform.pdf>). Extension 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 WVU 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.
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 practicum where workshop participants will demonstrate teaching skills in their respective discipline.

IX. INSTRUCTOR CODE OF ETHICS

1. All certified instructors will adhere to the 4-H philosophy and goals, as well as, the National 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Code of Ethics.
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.
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 volunteers 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. State Shooting Sports Coordinators may call meetings as necessary. In addition, the state committee will conduct quarterly meetings as appropriate.

Prepared by State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, 1986, (Revised 3/28/05, amended 7/18/05)