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FLORIDA 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM STATE PLAN[1]

Program Guidelines and Best Management Practices

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The following program guidelines, policies, and best management practices were all developed based upon the National 4-H Shooting Sports guidelines and regulations. Any of the following policies follow national guidelines at the very least and only increase safety or specify management policies for Florida 4-H Shooting Sports.

Introduction to 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 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 2 instructors (see definition below) in order that they might conduct shooting sports training programs. These Level 2 instructors are discipline-certified to provide instruction to Level 1 instructors within their respective states. The following Level 1 and Level 2 instructors are National 4-H Shooting Sports levels of training. Florida 4-H, additionally, has a Junior instructor certification.

- **Junior instructors** - Participants must be 14 years old as of September 1. They must have completed Level 1 training and can only assist while a Level 1 instructor is managing the shooting line.
- **Level 1 Instructor** -Participants who successfully complete a state training conducted by a Level 2 instructor. Level 1 Instructors are disciplinecertified to work directly with youth. Level 1 instructors must be 21 years old or older.
- **Level 2 Instructor** - Participants who successfully complete a national or regional training conducted by the National Shooting Sports Committee. Level 2 instructors are discipline-certified to provide Level 1 instruction. Level 2 instructors must be 21 years old or older.

Level 2 Instructor Certification in Florida - An interested Level 1 instructor must assist a current Level 2 instructor for at least 1 class. The Level 2 instructor will need to evaluate and determine if the Level 1 instructor is ready to attend a Level 2 training to represent the state in the highest manner. Then Florida 4-H State Shooting Sports Coordinator and the Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Discipline Chair will review the thoughts from the Level 2 instructor and decide. If the state is in extreme need, the state coordinator may override this process, seeking the discipline chair's advice. This is for extreme cases only and should not be practiced often.

The Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Program follows the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program guidelines via the Florida State Shooting Sports Advisory Group. The Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Group is comprised of Level 2 instructors, Extension Specialists, county faculty and volunteers. This group is responsible for establishing guidelines specific to Florida, planning events, and organizing and developing educational resources. 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 Guidelines and Requirements

- County, multi-county, or district Shooting Sports Program Level 1 trainings must be approved by the State Shooting Sports Coordinator and be conducted by a team (volunteers and/or agents) that has received proper Level 2 training from nationally trained instructors Trainings must be requested using the Level 1 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 1 or Level 2 discipline training. Instructors must be 21 years old or older.
- 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 within the 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 advisory group will establish consistency in certification and recognition of participant completion of training programs. All certifications will be housed in the 4-Honline system that will be managed by the State Coordinator.

State requirements for certification of volunteers at Level 1 for all disciplines involve a minimum of 16-20 hours of training in each of the discipline areas.

- New Level 1 volunteer certification is determined by exam, homework, and a practicum. 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 1 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 at the start of each 4-H year.
- A Level 1 instructor can be recertified in a discipline by doing one of the following:
  - Attending one (1) of the state Level 1 training programs offered
  - Teaching in the classroom and range at any state-sponsored 4-H Shooting Sports event or camp under the supervision of a Level 2 trainer
  - Attending an annual discipline update /training meeting
  - Attending a State Shooting Sports-sanctioned regional volunteer training
  - Making arrangements with a Level 2 instructor to observe a club or local event. (This is dependent on the availability of the Level 2 instructor.)
  - **Note:** In all cases for recertification, a current Level 2 instructor must be consulted to observe and/or verify the recertification process.
- Level 1 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 Coordinator. **A** minimum of ten participants in each discipline is required to conduct a training **or the training can be canceled**.
- All shooting sports training instructors (Level 1 and 2) 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/IFAS 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 landowners 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 by youth aged 5-7 years will **not** be allowed; this is a regulation of National 4-H Shooting Sports. 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.

Florida 4-H program discipline-specific ages are as follows:

Small bore, air rifle, and archery: 8 years old by Sept. 1 (Competition: archery and air rifle is 8 yrs. while small bore (22cal) is 11 yrs. 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)

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.

Youth participants in the hunting discipline can only participate in age-appropriate disciplines.

- **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. If there are any concerns, a gunsmith is required to inspect the equipment.
- **Participant Protection**
  - **Eye Protection:** Adequate eye protection (shooting glasses, safety glasses or safety goggles, or hardened prescription glasses) is required for all participants in muzzle loading, rifle, shotgun, and hunting disciplines. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements.
  - **Ear Protection:** Adequate ear protection is required for all participants in muzzle loading, rifle, shotgun and hunting disciplines. Where electronic hearing protection is used, it may not include radio or similar broadcasts as background noise, since that could interfere with range commands. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements.
  - **Footwear:** Any participant on the shooting line or shooting in any outdoor event is required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but not limited to: sandals, clogs, crocks, flip-flops, and bare feet.
- **County Risk Management Plans:** All counties are required to have a risk management plan in place for all shooting sports activities. This risk management plan should be turned into the Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator at the start of every year.

4-H Shooting Sports Equipment Policies

- 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.

- Loan requests for "state" shooting sports equipment to support county shooting sports programs must be submitted 30 days in advance to the State Shooting Sports Coordinator 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 below.
- 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 **two individuals** to maintain current inventory records and location of equipment. **Each County will submit an annual inventory list to the State Shooting Sports Coordinator.**
- According to Regulation of the University of Florida 2.001 Possessions and Use of Firearms: *Individuals participating in approved firearms education programs conducted on properties designated for 4-H use may utilize firearms on the property, provided firearms shall be handled, used, and stored in a safe and responsible manner and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. The program coordinator or property manager shall have the right to prohibit or limit the use, handling, or storage of firearms on properties designated for 4-H use for the safety of persons on the property.*
- Firearms not being utilized in approved educational programs are never permitted at any Florida 4-H Shooting Sports event, training, or meeting. This applies to all 4-H participants, both youth and adult, and is outlined in the Florida 4-H Code of Conduct policy. If any participant is found to have any firearm on-site, not related to 4-H programs, they will be asked to leave and may lose the ability to work with shooting sports programs in the future.
- According to UF Environmental Health & Safety, **we must store the firearms and shooting sports equipment in a UF facility, sheriff's office, or a county extension office**. No employee or volunteer should have any of the Shooting Sports equipment that belongs to 4-H in their own personal homes or businesses.
- All firearms and bows should be secured with a double locked system, meaning there are two locks between the item and the outside. Only those who are authorized shall have access to the key/combo.
- Storage of firearms & muzzle loading equipment
  - All firearms will be stored unloaded in a commercial firearm safe with an open bolt or open bore indicator when not in use.
  - All gun safes should be secured in a locked storage area, following local statutory requirements, if applicable. If no local laws apply, suitable locations include local law enforcement department firearm storage, storage closet, or a room with limited access.
  - Keys and combinations should be available only to certified instructors, county coordinators, and state coordinators. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.
- Storage of air guns
  - Air guns will be stored in gun cases that can be locked and stored in a storage room.
  - Keys to the storage room should only be available to certified instructors, county coordinators and state coordinators. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.
- Storage of archery equipment
  - Archery equipment will be stored in a locked closet or room.
  - Doors should be double locked, and a key should only be available to certified instructors, county coordinators and state coordinators. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.
- Storage of ammunition
  - All ammunition, shotgun shells, rifle shells, powder, caps, BB's, and pellets will be stored separate from

the guns which use them. Access to the ammunition should have access limited to the certified instructors, county coordinators or state coordinators. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

- Ammunition should be stored in a closet or room where there are at least two separate locks on the door.

- Transportation of Equipment
  - All applicable local, state, and federal laws are to be followed when transporting firearms, ammunition, and other 4-H Shooting Sports program equipment and supplies. Only licensed individuals aged 18 or older are permitted to drive vehicles transporting 4-H Shooting Sports equipment.
  - All firearms MUST be fully unloaded, and the ammunition and firearms cannot be in the same case.
  - When transporting firearms, air guns, ammunition, and muzzle loading guns, the transporter should have the guns in locked hard cases with gun locks on each gun (either a trigger style gun lock or a cable style gun lock).
  - Equipment must be transported in such a way that the equipment cannot be seen from outside the vehicle. Some examples of concealment include transporting in the vehicle's trunk, in a locked trailer, beneath a pick-up truck bed topper, etc. The vehicle should not be left unattended when equipment is being transported.

Inventory Control

1. Inventory lists of equipment should be maintained by two individuals in charge of equipment for the local group/county program/state program. A sign-out process must be used to record who/when/what/when returned.
2. Only approved, current instructors may sign out program equipment from inventory.
3. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state must also have access to all program equipment, the inventory list, and sign-out records.
4. Equipment inventory should be audited at least annually (or more often if requested) by local and/or state Extension personnel responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports program. The state Extension staff responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports program has the ultimate authority to remove 4-H Shooting Sports program equipment from any 4-H Shooting Sports club or instructor based on lack of safety practices, inadequate storage and transportation safeguards, concerns about inventory control, inadequate emphasis on positive youth development, or other reasons based on professional judgment.

Youth & Adult Participation

- A 4-H Shooting Sports certified 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.
- Instructors are encouraged to identify strategies to accommodate youth / adults with disabilities, special needs, and/or accommodations.
- 4-H shooting sports programs are open to all youth 8 years of age or older (as of Sept. 1 of the current year) without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age, or national origin. Each state Land Grant University determines 4-H maximum age eligibility. Note that age eligibility for National 4-H Shooting Sports Events is determined by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and may be different than that of states. 4-H Clovers (age 5-7) are not eligible for any aspect of 4-H shooting sports programs, as these are not age-appropriate activities.

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 before statewide distribution.
- A Florida specific project book is available. Contact your local 4-H faculty/agent.

Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Discipline Chairs

- Florida 4-H has 3 separate Discipline Chairs (Archery, Rifle, and Shotgun)
- If any other disciplines have more than 100 youth participants in the program, other discipline chair positions may be created. This requires approval from the state coordinator and a majority of votes from the shooting sports advisory group.
- Each discipline chair will provide oversight of their specific discipline, in addition to planning the matches for the year.
- The state coordinator will actively provide oversight and have the final say in all matters.
- The discipline chair positions can only be held by a University of Florida 4-H Agent.
- Each discipline chair must work to grow the program and communicate with the state coordinator
- The discipline chair member may be recommended by the previous chair and approved by the state coordinator.

Florida 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Group By-Laws

Article I - Purpose

The purpose of the Florida State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Group is to give advice, direction, and assistance to the 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator, who is responsible for 4-H Shooting Sports Education in Florida. The 4-H Shooting Sports Education program is to provide knowledge, skill development, and wholesome attitudes about safely handling firearms and recreational shooting.

Article II – Membership

1. The voting membership of the organization shall be composed of three Discipline Chairs, five County Extension Agents (one per administrative district), up to five volunteers, and up to five youth.
2. The State Coordinator shall serve in an advisory role to the group.
3. All voting volunteer representatives selected by their respective county 4-H Shooting Sports Education program shall serve a three-year term. Representatives may succeed themselves once as a member of the committee. All Extension Agents will serve a three-year term and may succeed themselves once as a member of the committee.
4. In the case of loss or removal of a shooting sports advisory representative, the State Coordinator shall immediately select an individual to fill the unexpired term.

Article III - Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the advisory group are as follows: 2 meetings every year. Additional meetings may be called.
2. Meeting times and locations shall be established by a majority of the voting membership.
3. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds the total number of voting members present at a meeting.
4. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the State Coordinator. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call and at least ten days notice shall be given in writing to all members of the group.
5. All meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Each voting member present shall be entitled to one vote.

Article IV - Amendment

- Amendments to these By-Laws may be made with approval from the 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator and by a vote of two-thirds of the voting membership present at any regular or special meeting, Thirty days written notice of the amendment must be given to the group membership.

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An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

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