

4-H Shooting Sports Education

Safety Meeting

County 4-H shooting sports teams may use the following agenda or adapt it to fit their program and the disciplines that the county offers.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Cardinal Rules of Shooting (3)*
- Eye and Ear Protection*
- Explanation of Range Rules and Range Commands
 - Range Officer's word is law
 - Eye protection is required
 - Ear protection is required with firearms
 - Cease Fire – any one can call, used for unsafe behavior
- Lead*
- Behavior Expectations
 - Pay attention to instructors – active listening
 - Zero tolerance of disruptive behavior. Everyone must be able to hear and see the instructors
 - If someone does something that is deemed dangerous they may have to sit out of shooting for that night. If you repeatedly create a dangerous situation you will not be able to continue in the program.
- Other safety information that youth should have (where parents should park, site specific rules and regulations, etc.)
- Dress for: weather, some disciplines will shoot prone, no loose clothing in archery

*Note: These topics are discussed in the 4-H Shooting Sports youth manual (4-H 950).
Instructors might want to assign pages 2&3 for review.

Rationale

Cardinal rules of shooting – these rules are the standard for safety when handling firearms and archery equipment

Eye and ear protection – eye and ear protection are essential for the safety of all shooters

Range rules and commands – give the guidelines and procedures that will be followed by everyone on the range.

Lead – information about the toxicity of materials youth may be handling

Behavioral expectations – clear guidelines of what is appropriate behavior on the range, what will be expected, and the consequences of inappropriate behavior

Other safety information – safety guidelines and recommendations based on the particular ranges used

Dress – discussion of types of clothing that can pose safety concerns

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Additional information for each of the recommended topics:

Cardinal rules of shooting –

The 3 cardinal rules:

- ▶ Always keep the arrow or muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- ▶ Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot
- ▶ Always keep your firearm or bow unloaded until ready to use

Eye and ear protection – Eye and ear protection are mandatory for all shooters, coaches, and others on the range.

The likelihood of an injury is relatively small, but the impact of such an injury could be serious. Stray or deflected pellets, target chips, gases and powder residue from shotguns and other foreign objects have the potential to damage the eyes. Wearing shooting glasses protects them. Many shooters combine their eye protection with corrective lenses or tinted lenses that increase contrast, reduce light intensity, or enhance vision in other ways.

The sound levels produced by any powder firearm can cause hearing damage. Hearing damage is usually gradual, so the shooter seldom notices the loss until it is serious. The damage is cumulative and permanent. The damage from the prolonged exposure during target shooting is a real and present threat. Inexpensive and comfortable hearing protection (plugs or muffs) are available. Some shooters use both plugs and muffs for added protection. Choose the type of protection that fits your shooting style and budget. Always wear them on the range.

Range rules and commands – Range Commands will vary from discipline to discipline and range to range and.

Range commands give the guidelines and procedures that will be followed by everyone on the range. It is especially important that youth understand the *Cease Fire* command and that any one can call a *Cease Fire*. The *Cease Fire* is used to stop unsafe behavior immediately. It is important that youth always read, understand, and follow the range commands that pertain to the range they are on.

Lead – Avoid eating or drinking on the range. Never eat or drink until after your hands have been washed. Lead from the balls or exposed lead ammunition is of concern. Hands should always be washed after handling the 100% pure lead balls used in muzzleloaders. Lead ball should never be placed in the mouth. Percussion caps and centerfire primers are even a source of lead. The priming compound used in modern caps is lead styphnate. For this reason, care should be taken when handling caps. Lead exposure is cumulative. (Suggestion for coaches and shooters: always have anti-bacterial moist towellets available on the range so you can wipe your hands carefully once you are through shooting.)

Behavioral expectations – Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Everyone must be able to hear and see the instructors at all times. Youth must use active listening skills throughout the shooting sports meetings. If anyone does something that is deemed dangerous they may have to sit out of shooting for that night. If they repeatedly create a dangerous situation they will not be able to continue in the program.

Other safety information – This information includes safety guidelines and recommendations based on the particular ranges used. Examples: where parents should park, stand when watching shooting, when to talk to their child, etc.

Dress - discussion of types of clothing that can pose safety concerns (e.g. no loose clothing in archery). This discussion may also include information about appropriate clothing for different weather and shooting situations (e.g., some disciplines will shoot prone).