



Youth Development Through 4-H Shooting Sports

Skills for Life...

Activity for A Lifetime

Overview & Position Statements



Protected Under
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Adapted from National 4-H Shooting Sports
Committee Position Statements
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Why Does 4-H Have Shooting Sports?

- Like all of our 4-H programs, the purpose of shooting sports programs is youth development and teaching of life skills to young people. Our programs are valuable for helping young people develop self-confidence, personal discipline, responsibility, teamwork, self-esteem and sportsmanship. The discipline and self-control required for responsible firearms use carries over into many other aspects of life.
- Nearly two-thirds of the homes in the U.S. have firearms. Exposure to safety and responsible handling is vital to preventing accidents at home, at neighbors, or at a friend's home.
- 4-H programs provide a positive experience for youth and promote the safe and ethical use of firearms and archery equipment. 4-H youth may learn to shoot, but we teach first and foremost, the appropriate handling and use of firearms.
- It is our belief that firearms education reduces gun accidents.
- Hunting and shooting sports are rich American traditions. 4-H shooting sports programs help continue this tradition through involvement of the total family: youth, teens, parents and even grandparents.
- The Shooting Sports rank third in popularity among International & Olympic Sports behind track & field and swimming. The uniqueness of shooting sports as a lifetime sport makes it exceptional.
- Each of the shooting sports disciplines teaches safety, concentration, self-discipline, self-confidence, goal setting, decision-making and build toward more advanced activities and opportunities.
- As is the case with other sports and scholastic programs, college bound youth have opportunities to vie for college scholarships.

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Do shooting sports educational programs like those conducted by 4-H help spread America's violent gun culture?

- No! In fact, there is ample evidence that the opposite is true. The 4-H shooting sports program is designed to teach good self-concept and character, and to promote the highest standards of safety and ethical behavior. In addition, with 60 to 80 million gun owners in America, and the vast majority of them using guns safely and responsibly, America has a *peaceful* gun culture.
- In a society that has chosen to possess firearms, all members, regardless of age, should be provided adequate training to ensure safe, ethical and responsible interaction with firearms.

Isn't easy access to firearms one reason for the violent behavior we've seen in Columbine and other school shootings?

- The safest location for a responsible gun owner to store a firearm is the secure environment of their home.
- Firearms and ammunition should be stored so that they are only accessible to authorized users.

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Is hunting inhumane and unnecessary in modern life?

- Three primary values arise from hunting: societal, economic, and ecological:
 - **Societal:** Hunting is a viable and healthy food source, promoting good sportsmanship and ethics. It is a valued part of our American heritage and is exceptionally good mental & physical exercise. Hunting is an ideal and common family activity.
 - **Economic:** Hunting minimizes the economic loss, loss of human life and property damage that may result from highway collisions with animals and farm crop depredation. Hunters spend millions of dollars each year to pursue the sport, and much of that money goes directly into wildlife management programs.
 - **Ecological:** Hunting is a vital wildlife management tool. Hunters' dollars support wildlife habitat projects in every state in the US. Hunting improves the health of natural wildlife populations and contributes to the conservation & wise use of our natural resources. A well placed shot by a skilled marksman is a more humane cause of death than natural causes experienced by wildlife.