

# MODULE 4 – RISK MANAGEMENT: COVERING YOUR ASSETS

PRIMER FOR 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS INSTRUCTORS

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**Promoting Positive Youth Development through  
Comprehensive Education,  
Life-Long Recreation, and  
Healthy Competition**



# National 4-H Shooting Sports



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2019  
Sports Program

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Shooting Sports instructors who have successfully completed the state where they are enrolled as a certified instructor with appropriate training are not authorized to conduct a 4-H Shooting Sports Program nor are they authorized to lead any 4-H Shooting

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## Introduction

### On the Cover

The cover photo has a purpose. It reminds us that we regularly send a massive amount of lead and sharp pointy things down range. We must never forget the force, the power, and the deleterious potential of this activity in which half a million 4-H kids take part. Guiding 4-H members, parents, and other 4-H volunteer leaders through this process without injury or harm is your major responsibility as a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor.

### Overview of what will be covered in this module:

1. 4-H Members and Firearms: The Case for 4-H Shooting Sports
2. The National Minimum Standards for 4-H Shooting Sports
3. State Level Best Practices
4. Your Risk Management Plan
5. 4-H Shooting Sports Risk Management Model



## 4-H Members and Firearms: The Case for 4-H Shooting Sports<sup>1</sup>



### The Instructional Focus of 4-H Shooting Sports

1. Life Skill and Positive Youth Development (PYD)
2. Training Adults to Teach Kids
3. Teaching the First Shot
4. Safety
5. National 4-H Mission Mandates - Healthy Living, Citizenship, STEM



### Safety Record of 4-H Shooting Sports<sup>2</sup>

1. Reach 338,621 4-H age youth per year (2014)
2. About half in short-term experiences, i.e. camps or fair
3. About half in long term community club experiences
4. The program began in 1980
5. More than 6 million youth have been reached
6. Four documented injuries requiring emergency medical attention (1980-2013)

## Youth Sports Injury Data

Sport	2014 Total Annual Participation	Number of Injuries Annually (2013)	Injury Rate
Football	5,286,000	354,300	6.7%
Wrestling	805,000	38,900	4.8%
Basketball	9,694,000	359,300	3.7%
Softball	2,622,000	53,000	2.0%
Soccer	9,828,000	171,000	1.7%
Baseball	6,711,000	106,100	1.6%
Hockey	743,000	11,200	1.4%
Gymnastics	2,809,000	33,000	1.1%
4-H Shooting Sports	338,621*	0.12**	Less than 0.00004%

\* 2014 enrollment

\*\* 4 injuries from 1980 – 2013 \* 6 Injuries in 38 Years

## Youth Sports Injury Comparison



1. Soccer vs 4-H Shooting Sports
  - 42,500 times more likely to be injured
2. Football vs 4-H Shooting Sports
  - 167,500 times more likely to be injured
3. 4-H Shooting Sports is one of the safest activities for youth

### Rationale for Introducing Youth to Firearms



1. Teach safe and responsible use of firearms
2. Significant adults in the life of a young person
3. Opportunity for quality family involvement
4. Positive peer groups for kids
5. Respect the power of firearms and archery equipment
6. Education that emphasizes respect of other people

### The Goal of 4-H Shooting Sports

The goal is not to claim Olympic gold medals.....

But to create “Gold Medal” kids!

Suggested Reading:

Goodwin, J., White, D. J., & Sandlin, M. R. R. (2019). 4-H Members and Firearms: The Case for 4-H Shooting Sports. *Journal of Extension*, 57(1), Article 1COM2. Available at: from <https://joe.org/joe/2019february/comm2.php>

## National 4-H Shooting Sports Minimum Standards<sup>3</sup>



Developed by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, Approved and Supported by the 4-H National Headquarters, These Items are Non-negotiable for State 4-H Shooting Sports Programs.

1. The **National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum** is the established adult teaching curriculum for training adults to teach youth the shooting sports within the 4-H program.
2. All instructors accept and abide by the **National 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics**.
3. State, County, and Club level 4-H Shooting Sports Programs should have a **written risk management plan** which includes items such as emergency response and preparedness, insurance, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, etc.
4. 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.
5. State level 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor certification workshops must provide a minimum of **twelve (12) hours of instruction**; including a minimum of nine (9) hours instruction in each specific discipline and a minimum of three (3) hours instruction in teaching positive youth development, life skills, and risk management.
6. To **maintain certification** as a 4-H shooting sports Level I or Level II instructor, one must teach or assist in instruction within the discipline certified at least once every three (3) years. In addition: Level 1 Instructors – must be re-certified a minimum of every seven (7) years. Re-certification could include any of the following, as determined by the State Coordinator: Continuing education credits, Updates to curriculum or state standards/requirements, Refresher course on curriculum, Attend a Level 1 training, Other options. Level 2 Instructors – Must be re-certified after a major revision of the curriculum, as determined by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, or at the determination of the State Coordinator. Re-certification could include: Attend a Level 2 training, Attend an update training hosted by a Level 3 Instructor or a Level, 2 Instructor certified using the revised curriculum. Level 3 Instructors – Must be re-appointed annually by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.
7. Only **factory ammunition** is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.
8. **Regarding simulated combat sports (physical or virtual) including but not limited to, paintball guns, air-soft, laser guns, archery tag, eSports.** Pointing any type of gun including paintball guns, air-soft guns, laser guns, archery tag bows & arrows or sighting devices at any person or any humanoid shaped target is prohibited in any 4-H program activity.



## National 4-H Shooting Sports Minimum Standards

9. Any firearm built or modified to give the impression of a modern military style firearm such as an AR or AK is not allowed in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Front pistol grips, heat shield/shroud, suppressors, and magazines extending more than 2 inches below the receiver are prohibited. Below are visual examples of firearms that would not be permitted.



10. **Reactive Targets** – Targets which make use of or are composed of 1) live ammunition, 2) explosive; flammable; chemical substances, or 3) pressurized containers are to never be used at any 4-H program activity.
11. **Cloverbud** age 4-H youth are not allowed to participate in ANY live-fire activity involving firearms, air rifles, air pistols, or archery equipment.
12. All 4-H Shooting Sports functions (events, meetings, club practices, etc.) which include the handling or use of firearms or archery equipment requires the **physical presence and constant supervision** of at least one adult 4-H Shooting Sports instructor who is currently certified in that respective discipline(.



## National 4-H Shooting Sports Code of Ethics<sup>4</sup>



I will:

- ✓ Set a good example as a mentor and role model for 4-H Shooting sports youth and volunteers,
- ✓ Conduct myself and my 4-H Shooting Sports program in a professional and ethical manner,
- ✓ Strive to be knowledgeable of the like skills embodied in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program and positive youth development through adherence to those principles,
- ✓ Strive to be technically competent in the subject matter I teach, adhere to state and national 4-H shooting sports guidelines, curriculum, standards of safety, best practices and policies,
- ✓ I will respect the dignity of each individual participant and stakeholder in the 4-H shooting sports program.



## National 4-H Shooting Sports – Best Practices<sup>3</sup>

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, recognizing the diversity of the 4-H shooting sports programs within each state recommends the following Best Practices in the implementation of a state level 4-H Shooting Sports program:

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1. Eye protection - Adequate eye protection is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near the firing lines are subject to the same requirements.
  2. Ear Protection: Adequate ear protection carrying an *OSHA Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of at least 25 dB* is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. *Noise Canceling devices without an OSHA NRR rating are not adequate as they are designed to make listening more enjoyable, not reducing the dB of sound entering the ear.* Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements. In all disciplines, devices placed over, on, or into the ear are not allowed to receive wireless, communication, background noise or similar broadcasts that could interfere with range commands.
  3. Footwear – Participants in any shooting event or activity, while on the shooting line, are required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet, including soles. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but are not limited to: sandals, clogs, flip-flops, slippers, house shoes, and bare feet.
  4. Lead Contamination – The National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee recognizes the potential dangers of lead contamination and includes ways to mitigate lead contamination into all 4-H Shooting Sports Training and Curriculum. The 4-H National Committee also suggests that states include ways to mitigate lead exposure into your specific State Plan including:
    - Wash up: Wash your hands, face, forearms, etc. with cold water after shooting, handling spent ammunition, cleaning guns, or reloading. Use an effective lead removal product, as standard soap and water may not be enough.
    - Change clothes and shoes: Change your clothes and shoes before leaving the range. Wash your range clothes separately from your other clothes.
    - Clean up properly: Use the right methods to clean the range, such as wet mopping or using a HEPA vacuum. Don't dry sweep, as this stirs up lead dust.
    - Don't eat, drink, or smoke: Never eat, drink, or smoke inside a firing range.
    - Shower: Shower at the end of the day after handling lead objects.

Lead can enter the body through inhalation or ingestion and can damage organs and cause health problems. Symptoms of lead poisoning include high blood pressure, joint and muscle pain, headaches, and abdominal pain. Seek medical attention if you suspect lead poisoning.

5. Inventory Control
  - Inventory list of equipment should be maintained by one individual in charge of equipment for the local group/county program/state program. A sign-out process will be used to record who/when/what/when returned.
  - Approved, current instructors, only, may sign out program equipment from inventory.
  - Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should



also have access to all program equipment, the inventory list, and sign-out records.

- 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 person 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.*

#### 6. Storage of Firearms & Muzzleloading 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 room with limited access, etc.
- 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.

#### 7. Storage of Air Guns

- Air guns will be stored in gun cases that can be locked and stored in a storage room accessible only to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator.
- Keys to the storage area should only be available to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

#### 8. Storage of Archery Equipment

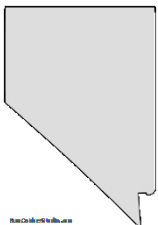
- Archery equipment will be stored in a locked closet or room accessible only to instructors, county coordinator or state coordinator.
- Doors should be double locked, and a key should only be available to instructors, county coordinator and state coordinator. Extension staff responsible for the 4-H Shooting Sports program in the county/state should also have access to all program equipment.

#### 9. Ammunition

- All ammunition, shotgun shells, rifle shells, pistol shells, powder, caps, BB's, and pellets will be stored separately from the guns which use them. Access to the ammunition should have access limited: the instructors, county coordinator or state coordinator. 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.

#### 10. 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.
- When transporting firearms, air guns, ammunition and muzzleloading 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 should 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.



## 11. Youth & Adult Participation

- 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.
- Instructors are encouraged to identify strategies to accommodate youth / adults with disabilities.
- 4-H Shooting Sports Programs are open to all youth 8 years of age or older (as of Jan. 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.



## The Risk Management Model and Legal Implications<sup>5</sup>

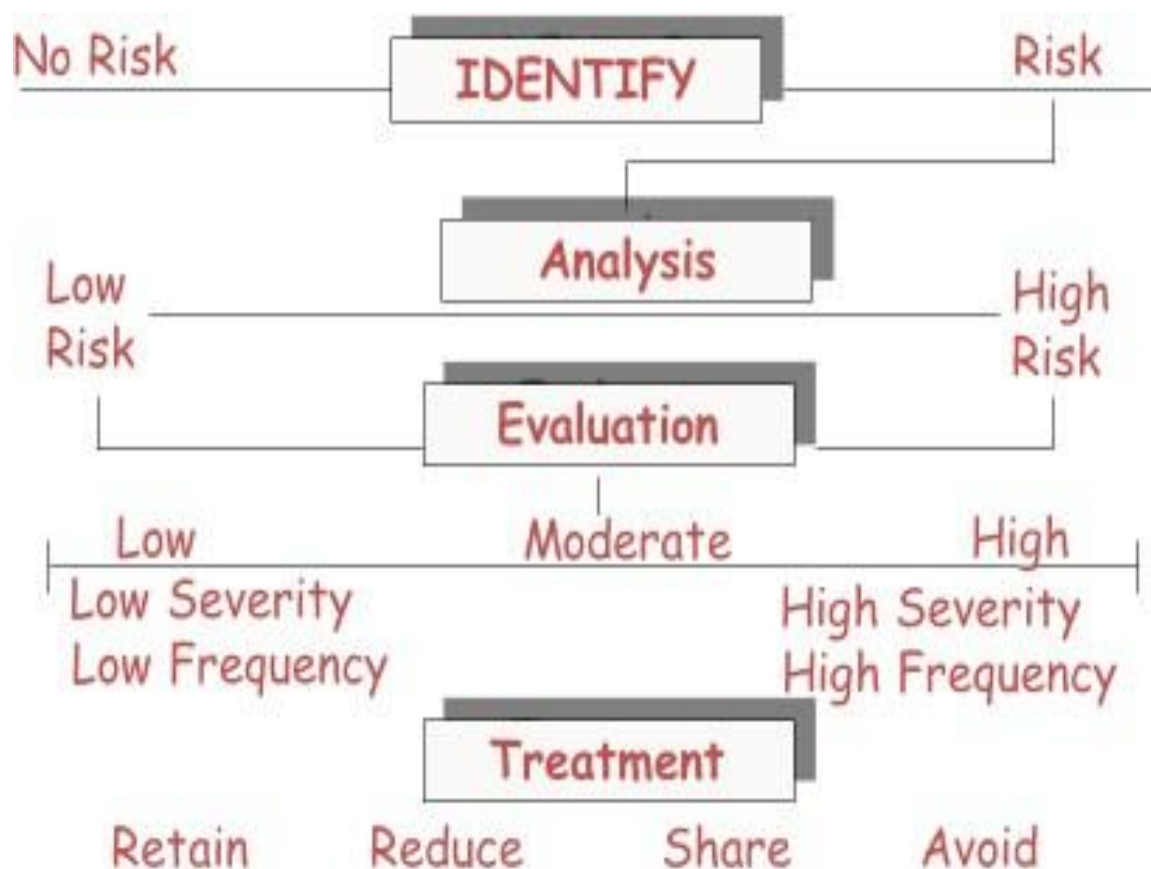


### The Four Steps of the Risk Management Model

- **Identify Risk** – There are no 100% Risk-free human activities. So know that there is a risk, then, identify the possible risks involved with an activity. Think outside the box and try to think of every wild, crazy, and unexpected thing that could happen which might harm someone.
- **Analyze Risk** – After risks are identified, the next step is to analyze the risk to determine if it would be a low-risk activity or a high-risk activity.
- **Evaluate Risk** – Further evaluation of the risk helps to identify both the severity and the frequency of the risk. When the severity and frequency characteristics of a risk are known, we can go to the final step of treating the risk.
- **Treatment of Risk** – We have four choices in how we deal with a risk:
  - A. **Avoid the risk.** This means that we do not engage in the activity. This not an option if we conduct youth programs—remember nothing is risk free.
  - B. **Retain the Risk.** We make this choice by being involved with the activity.
  - C. **Reduce the Risk.** We do this by training our instructors, having risk management plans in place, etc.
  - D. **Share or transfer the risk,** with an insurance policy, as an example.

## How Do You Manage Risk?

Risk Management Model



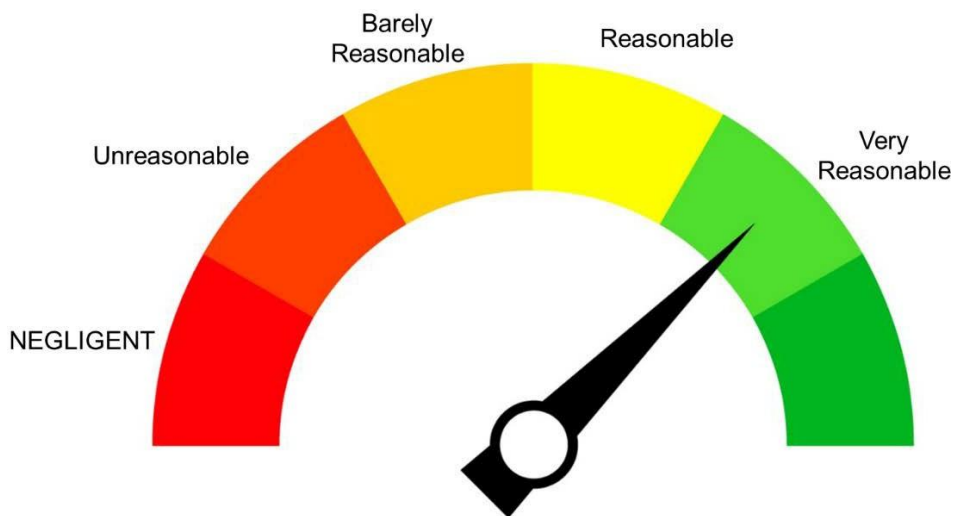
Pick a risk that might be associated with a 4-H shooting sports activity. Some examples might include:

1. paper cuts from completing the 4-H Record Book,
2. ricochet at an air gun range, and
3. accidental discharge of a shotgun while resting the barrel of the gun on the toe.

Then run the activity, a step at a time, through the risk management model above. Discuss ways that the risk associated with these three activities are treated.

## What Does it All Mean?

1. You have a **duty** – You have a duty to:
  - A. Provide a **safe environment** for this program, and
  - B. Conduct activities in a **reasonable** and **prudent** manner.
2. **Reasonable and Prudent** – If someone is injured on your watch, a jury of your peers will be asked to assess your actions as to whether or not they were **reasonable** and **prudent**.
3. **Negligence** – The failure to perform a duty owed as a **reasonable** and **prudent** person would perform; with that failure resulting in a consequence of the breach of duty that should have been foreseen.
4. Elements of Proving **Negligence**
  - A. Duty Owed
  - B. Duty Breached
  - C. Actual Damages
  - D. Proximate Cause





## Duties Owed by You

1. Properly plan the activity
2. Provide proper instruction
3. Explain the inherent risks
4. Monitor for injury
5. Provide safe equipment
6. Provide for proper emergency response
7. Maintain adequate records
8. Provide close supervision
9. Inspect, Inspect, Inspect!

This is a lot to remember....

Write it all down....

It is called your Risk Management Plan!



## Your Risk Management Plan

There should be written and current risk management plans in place for any state, county/parish, or club level 4-H Shooting Sports activity or event.

Example items in a risk management plan:

1. Goals
2. Personnel/Volunteer Management Policies
3. Job Descriptions
4. Logs and Records – Attendance, injury, etc.
5. Supervision Procedures
6. Emergency Response Procedures
7. Equipment Care, Use, and Storage
8. And whatever else is needed in your situation

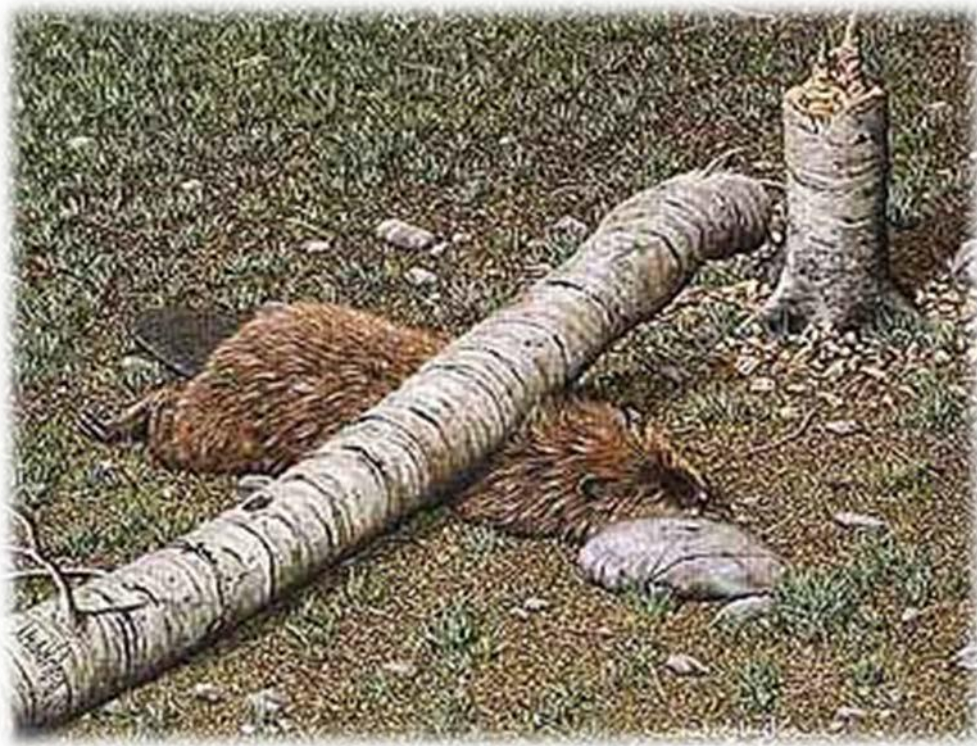
Example Risk Management Plans are available on the National 4-H Shooting Sports Website available at <http://4-hshootingsports.org/>

Download the Coordinator Workbook for more information on state plans and risk management plans available at <http://4-hshootingsports.org/>

## So You Think There is Nothing to Worry About, Correct?

1. You've carefully thought out all the angles.
2. You've done it a thousand times.
3. It comes to you naturally.
4. You know what you are doing, it's what you've been trained to do your whole life
5. Nothing could possibly go wrong---correct??

**Think Again!**



**Never let your guard down.**

## References

1. Goodwin, J. L., White, D. J., & Sandlin, M. (2018). 4-H Members and Firearms: The Case for 4-H Shooting Sports. *Journal of Extension*. In Press.
2. Arnold, C. (2017), National 4-H Shooting Sports Annual Report of Contacts/Reach, (2017), Report compiled annually by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee for internal use in donor/sponsor communications.
3. National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. (2018). *National 4-H shooting sports minimum standards and best management practices*. Retrieved from: [http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/instructor\\_resources.php](http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/instructor_resources.php)
4. National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. (2018). *National 4-H shooting sports code of ethics*. Retrieved from: [http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/instructor\\_resources.php](http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/instructor_resources.php)
5. National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. (n.d.). *Risk management*. Retrieved from: [http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/risk\\_management.php](http://w3.4-hshootingsports.org/risk_management.php)

### **2025 Changes to Module 4 Primer**

1. Added Curriculum Authorization statement to page 50 and updated contact information.
2. Pages 55-56: Updated the minimum standards to the ones approved by National Committee December 2024 at the annual meeting.
3. Page 57: Updated the code of ethics to the ones approved by National Committee December 2023 at the annual meeting.
4. Page 58-60: Updated the best practices to the ones approved by National Committee December 2024 at the annual meeting.