

FORM Code 1501 (Abridged Version)

Shooting Sports Programs and Firearms

The 4-H Shooting Sports program is administered through the New York State 4-H Shooting Sports (NYS4-HSS) program which is currently housed at CCE of Saratoga County in Ballston Spa. Please contact William Schwerd, NYS4-HSS Director (518-885-8995 or wms4@cornell.edu) or John Bowe, Assistant NYS4-HSS Director (518-668-4881 or jfb32@cornell.edu) with questions about the program.

Shooting Sports programs are covered by insurance provided the *New York State 4-H Policies & Guidelines for Shooting Sports* are followed. Insurance requires CCE Board of Directors to pass a resolution permitting firearms on CCE premises related to educational programming. Liability insurance for the 4-H Shooting Sports program only covers 4-H meetings, activities, trainings and shoots directly related to the 4-H program. Individuals who are not registered 4-H members or 4-H/CCE leaders/instructors/volunteers are not permitted to participate in the 4-H Shooting Sports program, under any circumstances. Insurance also does not cover participation in out of state shoots, competitive shooting events in or out of state, or 4-H participation in shooting events run by others. No field hunting is permitted.

The minimum age for 4-H participants varies by discipline. Any program involving Archery must be conducted under the direct supervision of a NYS Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor who is over 21 years of age. Any program involving Air Gun (pistol/rifle), Rifle, Shotgun or Muzzleloader (all Firearm programs) MUST be conducted under the direct supervision of a NYS Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor who is over 21 years of age and at an: 1) approved conservation/sportsman's type venue/facility, or; 2) approved CCE 4-H Education/Training venue/facility (includes on-site 4-H camp programs), or; 3) other approved CCE/NYS4-HSS specific venue/facility, as applicable. Non CCE facilities must have their own liability insurance covering the premises and operations as a shooting club or facility and must provide a Certificate of Insurance to CCE showing that the facility has premises liability insurance.

All 4-H Shooting Sports programs MUST comply with *New York State & National 4-H Shooting Sports Best Management Practices*. These practices are based on the age of participants, stages of youth development, risk management and the New York State Penal Law. Pertinent sections of the New York State Penal Code, along with age and other specific requirements, are listed later in this section by specific discipline. Failure to comply with required 4-H Shooting Sports practices may result in the closure of your 4-H Shooting Sports program and potential legal charges filed against volunteers or staff. Please read carefully and strictly comply with all requirements.

Program Requirements Involving the Handling or Discharge of Firearms and/or Archery Equipment

All youth participants MUST be fully enrolled 4-H members and MUST have completed the *Code of Conduct* and *Acknowledgement of Risk* (AOR) forms specifically checking the 4-H Shooting Sports box on the AOR. Participants and equipment MUST be under the direct physical supervision of a NYS4-HSS Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor who is over the age of 21, during all Firearms or Archery

programming. 4-H Camps that offer Shooting Sports programs will also need to comply with NYS Department of Health regulations related to Archery and Rifle Certification. (Questions related to operation of 4-H Camp programs should be directed to Shawn Tiede, NYS 4-H Camp Director at 585-786-2251, ext. 127.)

All programs MUST be conducted from the *National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum* specific to the 4-H Shooting Sports discipline but may be supplemented with approved supporting materials. 4-H Shooting Sports Leaders/Instructors/Volunteers MUST be fully registered with 4-H and all applicable *NYS4-HSS Instructor Training & Certification Policies* MUST be followed. CCE Boards may vote to allow the purchase and storage of 4-H Shooting Sports equipment and materials at CCE locations (compliant with any rental policies and/or local ordinances in effect). Firearms related programming MUST be conducted on an organized range. The range MUST have its own liability insurance covering its premises and operation as a shooting range or facility. The facility MUST provide a Certificate of Insurance showing that it has such liability.

Archery Requirements

The minimum age for participation in the 4-H Archery program is 8 years of age by January 1 of the current year. 4-H Archery does not need to be located on a “official” shooting range, but MUST be conducted in compliance with the safety measures outlined in the *National 4-H Archery Curriculum* or the *Ohio State University 4-H Archery Curriculum (Basic Archery, 4-H 631)*.

Firearms Requirements

New York Penal Law § 265.05, Unlawful Possession of Weapons by Persons Under Sixteen, states:

*It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of sixteen to possess any air-gun, spring-gun or other instrument or weapon in which the propelling force is a spring or air, or any gun or any instrument or weapon in or upon which any loaded or blank cartridges may be used, or any loaded or blank cartridges or ammunition therefor, or any dangerous knife; **provided that the possession of rifle or shotgun or ammunition therefor by the holder of a hunting license or permit issued pursuant to article eleven of the environmental conservation law and used in accordance with said law shall not be governed by this section. A person who violates the provisions of this section shall be adjudged a juvenile delinquent.*** [emphasis added]

Note: All 4-H Shooting Sports firearms discipline programs must be conducted at an: 1) approved conservation/sportsman’s type venue/facility, or; 2) approved CCE 4-H Education/Training venue/facility (includes on-site 4-H camp programs), or; 3) other approved CCE/NYS4-HSS specific venue/facility, as applicable.

Participant Age Exemptions per New York Penal Code for 4- H Shooting Sports Firearms Disciplines

I. Air Rifle

The minimum age for participation is 9 years of age by January 1 of the current year. NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (d) provides the applicable age related exemption to § 265.05 for this firearms discipline. Air Rifle includes BB Guns, Compressed Air, Spring and CO2 Fired Guns, Air Soft and Paintball Guns.

Note: The Air Rifle component of the 4-H Shooting Sports program should be conducted at an organized range when possible. *The Crosman Portable Range*, using professional grade ballistic cloth, may be substituted with training in the use and establishment of the range in a safe location. Please refer to the *National 4-H Shooting Sports Rifle Curriculum* for more information about a safe location.

II. Air Pistol

The minimum age for participation is 10 years of age by January 1 of the current year with the completion of basic Air Rifle previous to enrollment in Air Pistol. NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (d) provides for the applicable age related exemption to § 265.05 for this firearms discipline.

Note: The Air Pistol component of the 4-H Shooting Sports program should be conducted at an organized range when possible. *The Crosman Portable Range*, using professional grade ballistic cloth, may be substituted with training in the use and establishment of the range in a safe location. Please refer to National 4-H Shooting Sports Rifle curriculum for more information about a safe location.

III. Shotguns, Muzzleloaders and Rimfire Rifles

The minimum age for participation is 12 years of age by January 1 of the current year. NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) provides for the applicable age related exemption to § 265.05 for this firearms discipline.

Note: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Law Enforcement interprets NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (c) *certificate of qualification* to mean “hunting license or hunter education certificate.” NYS DEC Law Enforcement interprets NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (d) to mean “Certified Hunter Education Instructor.” (Capt. Matthew Revenaugh, NYS DEC, personal communication, May 2014)

IV. Pistols (Rimfire/Centerfire)

The minimum age for participation is 14 years of age by January 1 of the current year. NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (e) provides for the applicable age related exemption to § 265.05 for this firearms discipline. See also § 265.20 (7) and (7) (a), as referenced in NY Penal Code § 265.20 (7) (e).

4-H Hunting & Wildlife and Living History Requirements

4-H Hunting & Wildlife and Living History discipline programs/activities do not involve firearms and are not required to be conducted at an approved facility but must be conducted under the direct supervision of a NYS Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor who is over 21 years of age. In instances where Hunting & Wildlife or Living History disciplines may occasionally overlap with Firearms disciplines, such as Muzzleloader, Rifle and/or Shotgun (i.e. Turkey Hunting Seminar), all firearms instruction **MUST** be conducted by a NYS Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor who is over 21 years of age for the Firearms discipline that is overlapping **MUST** be conducted at an approved firearms venue/facility.