



4-H Shooting Sports

Learn By Doing

IOWA 4-H SAFETY AND EDUCATION IN SHOOTING SPORTS (SESS) PLAN & POLICY

Spring 2006

The Iowa 4-H SESS Program will utilize the National 4-H SESS Program and Curriculum. All 4-H SESS Instructors will need to obtain 4-H SESS Program Instructor Certification prior to conducting 4-H SESS programs with youth.

Statewide or Multi-State training programs and Instructor Updates utilizing National 4-H SESS Program and Curriculum will be offered annually. The length of the training has involved a Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The state SESS committee has reviewed training requirements and has determined that this is an adequate time frame to provide acceptable training for instructor certification. The committee will also make efforts to incorporate additional training tracks focusing on improving instructor skills to teach a higher level of technical skill development of shooters wishing to pursue a more competitive level of shooting as has been provided previously in Iowa by NRA/4-H.

The National 4-H SESS Program and Curriculum was developed, drafted and tested by the National 4-H SESS Committee over a period of years and has been offered to states since the mid 1980's. The curriculum is scrutinized continually and revisions made as appropriate. Writers of the curriculum included National Rifle Association instructors and training counselors, hunter education instructors, National Bowhunter Education instructors, National Archery Association instructors, National Muzzleloading Rifle Association instructors, and Extension Specialists.

Many youth shooting programs have been available, so the subject matter of 4-H SESS is not unique. Several of the programs laid claim to a youth development foundation. Most of them used a volunteer corps to present the program to young people. A few of them even tried to link shooting to other areas of concern. The 4-H SESS Program combines the best of all of these programs while keeping a relationship with the existing natural resources, safety or outdoor recreation programs. The materials and training programs emphasize young people and their life skills as the product of the program while using tested techniques and positive reinforcement. Strong and continuing recruitment of volunteers, intensive volunteer equipping and management, minimal commitment of professional staff and time and attractiveness to males and females, older teens, and families have been and continue to be key elements in successful 4-H SESS Programs.

The program relies on National and State 4-H trained & certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery, Rifle, Shotgun, Muzzleloading, Pistol, Hunting & Wildlife, and Program Coordinators) using the National 4-H SESS Curriculum. SESS has the potential of being a high liability activity. Therefore, the program requires 4-H trained & certified instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program to decrease the liability of such an educational experience. The intent of the program is that it be conducted as a group project with appropriated supervision rather than an individual 4-H member independent project.

The 4-H SESS Program is a youth development education program that uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and wildlife management to assist young people and their leaders in attaining knowledge and developing essential life skills. The program can enhance family communications and quality time together. It creates an environment for a caring relationship between a young person and a significant adult, whether this is a family member, other adult, or teen volunteer. These activities provide the opportunity for immediate gratification to the youth and satisfaction and self-worth to the adult/teen volunteer who acts as teacher and role model for younger 4-H youth members.

Program Objectives

- To enhance the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of youth through safe, educational, and socially acceptable involvement in a shooting related activity.
- To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment including sound decision-making, self-discipline, and concentration.
- To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior.
- To encourage understanding of our natural resources and the development of a personal environmental stewardship ethic by young people through participation in shooting, hunting, and related activities.
- To strengthen families through life-long recreational activities.
- To expose participants to the broad array of vocational and lifelong avocational activities related to the shooting sports.
- To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety and hunter education programs.

Philosophy

- A. A certified instructor needs to be present. All instructors in the program will be certified by the State 4-H SESS Committee to teach specific discipline(s). Instructors shall participate in an instructor update if new material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed.
- B. A county shall not sponsor or schedule any SESS activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H trained and certified SESS Instructor of the appropriate discipline.
- C. Instructor training and certification sessions will be scheduled and conducted by the State 4-H SESS Committee as a group. No certifications will be given by individual state instructors.

- D. The county is responsible for implementing the Iowa Volunteer Policy as it pertains to SESS instructors and for verifying proper certification.
- E. The enrollment in the program has the potential of reaching new youth audiences as well as new volunteer adult leaders.
- F. Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.
- G. 4-H SESS Programs are open to all youth (in 4th-12 grade and a minimum of 9 years old as of Jan. 1 of the current year) without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age or national origin. Youth need to be 11 years to participate in shotgun, but 12 years old to be involved in competition. Some counties may be more restrictive. To participate in the Muzzleloader discipline, youth must be 12 years old. In order to compete within this discipline, youth must have completed all lessons in the Muzzleloader curriculum and have been a member of a 4-H Shooting Sports Club for at least a year. In order to compete in the other disciplines, youth must have completed all lessons in that discipline's curriculum.
- H. A 4-H SESS Instructor has the right to refuse any participant from the SESS activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the program.
- I. Inter-agency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
- J. Games using paintball guns where participants shoot paintballs at other participants is NOT AN ACCEPTABLE 4-H SESS ACTIVITY.
- K. To ensure our positive youth development focus and for ISU liability reasons all youth in our shooting sports programs must be club members. If a young person is a member of another county club they would only need to pay the program development fee once. If you have a special interest club or program that includes non-members then these young people still must pay the program development fee and enroll as members. Our goal is to make sure all of our youth involved in shooting sports have access to all activities, events and programs that your county and the state offers. All shooting sports programs must adhere to the elements that make up a 4-H club experience: communication activities, opportunities for leadership, record-keeping, and be on-going programs at least 6 hours per length per year with a caring adult.

Program Administration

- A. This program is administered by the State 4-H Director with guidance by the State SESS Committee and the State 4-H Environmental Sciences Program staff. The SESS committee will:
 - 1. Administer the program.
 - 2. Develop a program outline for counties to follow.
 - 3. Conduct Instructor training & certification activities.
 - 4. Develop informational materials used in publicizing the program.
 - 5. Provide orientation to county staff of the SESS program.
 - 6. Initiate resource development in partial support of programming.
 - 7. Maintain files of 4-H instructor certification status.
 - 8. Cooperate with County Staff to assist in program operations and administration.
 - 9. Provide leadership for all State 4-H SESS events including the following:
 - All 4-H SESS Instructor Training and Certifications
 - State 4-H Youth SESS Qualifying Match

- Other State 4-H SESS contests, events, fun shoots, activities, or programs as established by the committee and supported by Extension 4-H Administration.

Instructor Certification Requirements

The program requires the use of national 4-H trained & certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery, Rifle, Shotgun, Air Pistol, Muzzleloading, Hunting & Wildlife, and County Coordinator). No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. Age: Instructor - 21 years of age as of January 1 of current year.
2. Successfully complete instructor training sessions administered by the nationally trained State 4-H SESS Committee and demonstrate competency to instruct as determined through a written test, trainer observation and other screening used during training.
3. Have been approved as a current Iowa 4-H volunteer through local County Extension Office.
4. All volunteers must be approved through the Child Protection and Safety Policy Process before being approved as instructors.
5. Be recommended by County Extension Staff and County Coordinator.
6. Only one discipline certification may be achieved at a single state sponsored training & certification workshop except coordinators. A participant must attend all of the training sessions at a state 4-H sponsored workshop which includes 12 hours of discipline instruction and additional 6 hours on topics of SESS philosophy, youth development, risk management, planning county programs and additional topics identified by the State 4-H SESS Committee. The State 4-H SESS Committee reserves the right to withhold certification.
7. Effective January 1, 2004, all shooting program instructors must have current 4-H SESS Training and Certifications.

Instructor Renewals and Recertification & Reporting

1. Your desire to continue as a volunteer in the 4-H program.
2. Your County and/or State's interest in seeing you continue as a 4-H SESS Volunteer.
3. Keeping up-to-date in your certified discipline through teaching the program in your County.
4. Attending instructor updates as deemed necessary by the certifying committee.
5. Annually reporting your teaching in 4-H SESS programs.
6. To maintain certification as a 4-H SESS Instructor, one must teach or assist in teaching a class within the instructors discipline every two years. It is required that all classes be reported and documented.
7. Should instructor certification lapse the individual must repeat the state 4-H training program.
8. All instructors in the program will be certified by the State 4-H SESS Committee to teach specific discipline(s). Instructors shall participate in an instructor update/renewal if new material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed.

Instructors are to report all students trained to the County Extension Office and to make annual reports to the State 4-H SESS Committee or other designated representative. Reports are to cover the 4-H year July 1-June 30. Forms for reporting SESS programs are located in the Instructor Notebook. THIS REPORTING OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES IS A PREREQUISITE TO MAINTAINING THE CERTIFICATION OF INSTRUCTORS WHO CONDUCTED OR ASSISTED WITH THE PROGRAM AS PER OTHER REQUIREMENTS IN THIS SECTION RELATED TO MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION.

Duties of Certified Instructors

1. To provide basic instruction to students and other duties as outlined in the individual Iowa Volunteer Job Description as developed in cooperation with County Extension Office.
2. To report all students trained to the County Extension Office and to make annual reports to the State 4-H SESS Committee or other designated representative. Reports are to cover September 1-August 31 and be submitted by September 1.
3. To keep current as certified instructors by teaching classes every 2 years and attending instructor updates or retraining sessions as available and as required by the State 4-H SESS Committee.

Instructor Training

1. Instructors certified through the State 4-H SESS Committee will receive a copy of the 4-H SESS curriculum for their individual discipline. If an instructor terminates their 4-H involvement then this material must be returned to the County Extension 4-H Office, as it is property of the 4-H program.
2. Methods of instruction at state workshops will include: A) Lesson outline and use of outline; B) Discipline Curriculum Manual; C) Other methods may include - Hands on Learning, Live Firing, Demonstrations, Lecture, Role Playing, Class Involvement, Simulated Experience, Visual Aids, and Exhibits.
3. Instructor training will include a segment where workshop participants will have an opportunity to demonstrate teaching skills.

Instructors Code of Ethics

1. All certified instructors will adhere to the 4-H philosophy and goals and the 4-H SESS Instructor Code of Ethics (attached).
2. Instructors of 4-H SESS Clubs are encouraged to work with youth to learn the 4-H Pledge, and to encourage member participation in club meetings, county and state 4-H activities. 4-H members are expected to 1) complete member enrollment and code of conduct forms; 2) exhibit project skills; 3) present a project talk, demonstration, or presentation; 4) maintain 4-H member records for project and community service completion.
3. Instructors should demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.

State 4-H SESS Committee Structure

1. Committee membership shall include all state level, nationally certified 4-H SESS instructors, both 4-H volunteer and Extension Staff (minimum of 12 members plus a youth from each of the 5 extension areas). Subcommittees include the following:
 - Instructor Certification
 - Regional/Area Events
 - Statewide Youth Shooting Match
 - National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational
 - Discipline Committee
 - Marketing
2. Committee leadership will be provided by Extension Staff nationally certified as 4-H SESS Coordinators.
3. The function of this committee will be as specified under *Program Administration*.
4. Committee meetings will be held annually or as needed. State SESS Coordinators may call additional meetings as necessary.
5. Executive Committee is made up of the Iowa 4-H State Director, 4-H Environmental YDS, plus 2 representatives from each of the 5 extension areas.

Prepared by State 4-H SESS Committee Spring 2006