



Montgomery County 4-H Shooting Sports Guidelines

2026-2027

OBJECTIVES:

To teach safe and responsible use of firearms including sound decision making, self-discipline and concentration.

Have fun and develop life skills through a strong youth development approach, based upon long-term mentorship and low youth/adult ratios.

Increase family involvement activities and programs for youth of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds.

Develop Youth leaders while gaining skill in critical thinking, hand-eye coordination, responsibility and teamwork.

Rules

1. To conduct any 4-H shooting sports project or activity, Texas 4-H requires that there be a State 4-H Certified Instructor of that discipline on the range/field. To become certified a volunteer, an adult must have the following:
 - a) be an enrolled 4-H Volunteer on TX4H,
 - b) have cleared a 4-H Youth Protection Standard background check and
 - c) complete a State 4-H Shooting Sports Leader/Coaches Workshop. State Workshops are held at various locations throughout the year. Montgomery County 4-H has a line item to reimburse the registration fee after a new leader has returned 50 hours of service to the project in Montgomery County. This is available until the line item is depleted.
2. Youth between ages 9 (or 8 and in the 3rd grade) as of September 1st of the current year and 12th grade must complete a 4-H enrollment form and pay \$25/\$30 enrollment fee online at TX4H. They must be members of a 4-H Club in Montgomery County.
3. Members are required to participate in a required 4-H Firearm Safety Training prior to participating in any 4-H Shooting Sports activity including practices. One parent is required to attend this training with their student. This training is not related to the Hunter Ed Safety Training required for a hunting license.
4. If a project leader or coach deems necessary for safety reasons, a student may be asked to take the safety training again or make ANY modifications needed to make a safe environment for everyone. This may include but not limited to shooting with a firearm better suited to the size and ability of the student.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

5. All students **MUST** always have a parent in attendance and physically on location on the deck during practices and competitions. There are **NO DROP OFFS**. Parent participation is strongly encouraged at all shooting events and activities. (Individual Project groups may have exceptions on a case by case basis at the discretion of the project leader/instructors)
6. All students and parents must use proper terminology on the range and at all practices. The terms firearm, gun, or bow are acceptable terms to reference. Use of the “W” word is NOT tolerated by anyone.
7. Parents are expected to take an active role in practice learning how to conduct practices under the supervision of the Certified Coach(es). This includes but is not limited to the following: safety practices, scoring, pull, call the line, pay attention to the mistakes and corrections being made so that you can be of assistance to others, whatever is required by the discipline.
8. Due to safety concerns, 1st and 2nd year members in a discipline must attend a minimum of 3 practices before the **first** competition they will attend. When crossing discipline lines, it is up to the project leaders/coaches involved and the County Extension Agent to determine the safety of the shooter in meeting practice requirements. Demonstration of skill and safety in the new discipline may be necessary for approval to compete without meeting the minimum practice requirement for the new discipline.
9. Members are responsible for securing transportation to and from practice and competitions. Coaches are not responsible for transporting their members to and from competitions. Adults **MUST** have a Volunteer Enrollment on file and may require Youth Protection Training to transport children other than their own.

Appropriate Dress for 4-H Shooting Sports Events Including Practice

1. Clothing must be neat and clean in appearance.
2. We require that shirts with sleeves be worn even under shotgun vests.
No backless tops, see-through shirts or blouses, tank tops, spaghetti straps, cut-off clothes, strapless tops or dresses, plunging necklines, oversize arm holes, and clothing exposing the midriff are unacceptable.
3. No short-shorts. Shorts must be at least finger tip length when arms are straight by your side. Also, no shorts or pants that are too big and fall down past the hips. Shorts and pants must stay up either by proper fit, a belt or suspenders. Pants that are too long and drag the ground are also a safety hazard.
4. Vulgar or obscene patches, medallions, or insignia that may be offensive will not be worn. No signs, slogans, or pictures advertising alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco products or depicting blood, gore, violence, or sex may be worn.
5. Closed toed shoes, like athletic shoes, must cover the feet. Boots are not allowed in some disciplines (check with the project leader) Crocs are not allowed at competitions and may not be allowed at practice.
6. Eye and ear protection must be worn on the firing line at all times according to discipline requirements.
7. You can and will be removed from the firing line if dress is inappropriate.
8. Remember what we are really about – using the disciplines of shooting sports to prepare young people for adulthood while having fun. Remember, too, that each of you, individually and collectively, represents all of 4-H. Think about the image that you are projecting for both the

members of the organization and the more than 100 year old program itself. If you question it, do not wear it. If we question it, you will need to change before shooting or watching.

Parents should adhere to the above mentioned requirements, responsibilities and dress guidelines as well.

Selecting a Club

In the case where multiple clubs are offering the same discipline(s), a 4-H member must select a single club to participate with for the current 4-H year. The 4-H member may visit multiple clubs prior to enrolling to see which fits their family the best, but will only enroll in one club offering the discipline they choose.

Except for Shotgun, each 4-H Club with an active Shooting Sports Project will host safety trainings. 4-H members must attend the safety training offered by their selected club. Shotgun may attend any offered.

In theory this safety training should be transferrable between clubs should the 4-H member choose to change clubs the following year. However, rule #4 page 1 states for safety reasons, any coach may require a 4-H member to retake safety training.

Changing Disciplines

Changing disciplines ~~and/or project groups~~ within a club will be on a case by case basis with agreement from instructors. Additional training in the new discipline/project may be required.

GUIDELINES FOR COUNTY COMPETITIONS:

- A Declaration of Eligibility Form is required for any and every event that requires 4-H membership. This must be completed regardless of school absence.–
- Entries for most competitions are completed by the participant through some on-line system. For non-4-H contests, the lead coach in each discipline is responsible for ensuring each contestant has met the practice requirements. For 4-H Contests, the lead coach for the discipline will work with the County Extension Office to confirm practice attendance requirements have been met. Club Manager/Coaches must share their practice attendance records with the County Extension Office in a timely manner.
- Contests at state Livestock Shows such as State Fair of Texas, Heart of Texas, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston are considered Major Shows. Watch 4-H Focus Newsletter and Weekly Updates for Major Show Entry Dates. The Montgomery County 4-H Deadline is earlier than the Show deadline to allow for processing and submission at the county level. There will be late fees assessed if entries arrive after the county deadline.
- The 4-H member should obtain a copy of the Declaration of Eligibility Form (available at the 4-H Office to be completed and turned in on or before the date set by the 4-H Office and/or by the event committee. The form must be signed by a County Extension agent verifying 4-H membership before being taken to the school for academic verification. Once that is complete, the form is then turned in to the 4-H Office and/ or presented at the competitive event in which he/she is participating. 4-H members should keep a copy of the signed form for documentation. Because the school is confirming academic eligibility, Eligibility Forms are required regardless of the day of a contest. (You will need one even if you will not miss school, weekends and holidays)

- For your convenience, we recommend requesting and completing forms for all competitions within a grading period at one time.
- Due to safety concerns, members must be approved by their project leader before the first competition they will attend.
- A sanctioned practice is defined by the following: Practicing under the guidance of a certified 4-H instructor and with regulation targets/fields.
- Shooters will observe all requirements, dress code and code of ethics as previously stated at county and state competitions.
- Shooters should keep records of all scores for each discipline in a shooter's journal or binder. These records will be required for other applications. (i.e. Junior Olympic Shooting Camp and State at this time)

GUIDELINES FOR 4-H STATE COMPETITION:

Club Managers, Coaches and the County Extension Agent will work together in an effort to make County wide teams for any competition.

Questions regarding the shooting sports projects may be directed to the following:

M. Michelle Mihalek
County Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

Alyssa Sims
County Extension Agent
Urban Youth Development

Jo Picken
4-H Program Assistant

Tami Ward
4-H Volunteer Coordinator

Montgomery County Extension Office
4-H Program Area
(936) 539-7823

Shotgun Criteria

SAFETY & CODE OF ETHICS:

1. All members will be held to the code of ethics they signed upon enrollment located in the on-line enrollment form. You must read them prior to signing them; not having read them prior to signing is no excuse for misconduct.
2. All safety guidelines and rules from the mandatory 4-H safety class will be strictly enforced. This class lasts about two hours.
3. The primary safety rules every shooter MUST follow are:
 - a. Muzzle in a safe direction. Always point any gun, loaded or unloaded, in a SAFE direction.
 - b. Action open and empty until ready to shoot.
 - c. Finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 - d. Maximum of 2 shells in gun at any time.
 - e. Only one shooter at a time; guns loaded ONLY when it is your turn, and you are standing on the station/pad/stand.
 - f. When walking from station to station, gun must be unloaded and open.
 - g. In the event of a malfunction, leave gun as is and keep gun pointed in line of fire until a coach or official comes to take the gun and resolves the problem.
 - h. Shot sizes of 7 ½ - 9 only
 - i. No gauges larger than 12-gauge; rifles and pistols are not permitted on shotgun ranges.
 - j. Eye and ear protection must be worn at all times by everyone on or near an active shooting field, including trap personnel and spectators.
4. DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES touch another shooter's gun or equipment. If you see anything wrong you must alert a coach and or the owner of that gun or equipment as to the issue or safety problem that you observe.
5. Anyone may call CEASE FIRE ANY time there is a safety issue.
6. There will be no horseplay out on fields. Once you step onto the fields everyone including adults is expected to be serious, respectful and quiet. Use of distractions including heckling of shooters will not be allowed.
7. Each shooter must have a gun cleaning kit and keep their gun cleaned. An unclean gun is an unsafe gun.

Rifle Criteria

SAFETY & CODE OF ETHICS:

1. All members will be held to the code of ethics they signed upon enrollment located in the on-line enrollment form. You must read them prior to signing them; not having read them prior to signing is no excuse for misconduct.
2. All safety guidelines and rules from the mandatory 4-H safety class will be strictly enforced.
3. The primary safety rules every shooter MUST follow are the following:
 - a. Muzzle in a safe direction. Always point any gun, loaded or unloaded, in a SAFE direction.
 - b. Action open and empty until ready to shoot.
 - c. Finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 - d. Maximum of 5 rounds in gun at any time.
 - e. When away from the firing line, gun must be unloaded and open with Open Bolt/Barrel Indicator (OBI) present in the gun.
 - f. In the event of a malfunction, leave gun as is and keep gun pointed in line of fire until a coach or official comes to take the gun and resolves the problem.
 - g. Only firearms allowed under 4-H events will be shot at 4-H practices.
 - h. Eye and ear protection must be worn at all times by everyone on or near an active shooting line, including instructor and spectators. Ear protection is not required but is allowed for bb gun and air rifle practices.
4. DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES touch another shooter's gun or equipment. If you see anything wrong you must alert a coach and/or the owner of that gun or equipment as to the issue or safety problem that you observe.
5. Anyone may call CEASE FIRE ANY time there is a safety issue.
6. There will be no horseplay on the firing line. Once you step onto the shooting area everyone including adults is expected to be serious, respectful and quiet. Use of distractions including heckling of shooters will not be allowed.
7. Each shooter must have a gun cleaning kit and keep their gun cleaned. An unclean gun is an unsafe gun.

Archery Criteria

SAFETY & CODE OF ETHICS:

- 1 All members will be held to the code of ethics they signed upon enrollment located the on-line enrollment form. You must read them prior to signing them; not having read them prior to signing is no excuse for misconduct.
- 2 All safety guidelines and rules from the mandatory 4-H safety class will be strictly enforced. The primary safety rules every shooter MUST follow are the following:
 - a. Know and Obey all range commands.
 - b. Keep your arrows in your quiver until you are told to shoot.
 - c. Always wear your arm guard and finger tab unless approved by the coach.
 - d. Only use arrows the instructor gives you when using Club equipment. Personal equipment must be approved prior to beginning practices with the program to ensure safety is maintained.
 - e. Always keep your arrows pointed down or towards the target.
 - f. If you drop an arrow, leave it on the ground until you are told to get your arrows.
 - g. Always walk at the archery range.
 - h. Recurve and compound bows only. No crossbows may be used in 4-H.
 - i. No bow with over a 60 lb. pull.
- 3 DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES touch another shooter's bow or equipment. If you see anything wrong you must alert a coach and or the owner of that bow or equipment as to the issue or safety problem that you observe. .
- 4 Anyone may call CEASE FIRE ANY time there is a safety issue.
- 5 There will be no horseplay out on fields. Once you step onto the fields everyone including adults is expected to be serious, respectful and quiet. Use of distractions including heckling of shooters will not be allowed.

Pistol Criteria

SAFETY & CODE OF ETHICS:

- 1 All members will be held to the code of ethics they signed upon enrollment located the on-line enrollment form. You must read them prior to signing them; not having read them prior to signing is no excuse for misconduct.
- 2 All safety guidelines and rules from the mandatory 4-H home firearm safety class will be strictly enforced.
 - a. The primary safety rules every shooter MUST follow are the following: Muzzle in a safe direction. Always point any gun, loaded or unloaded, in a SAFE direction.
 - b. Action open and empty until ready to shoot.
 - c. Finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
 - d. Maximum of 5 rounds in gun at any time.
 - e. When away from the firing line, gun must be unloaded and open with an with Open Bolt/Barrel Indicator (OBI) present in the gun..
 - f. In the event of a malfunction, leave gun as is and keep gun pointed in line of fire until a coach or official comes to take the gun and resolves the problem.
 - g. Only firearms allowed under 4-H events will be shot at 4-H practices. Caliber of guns and bullets will be determined by the project leader within the 4-H Shooting Sports Guidelines.
 - h. Eye and ear protection must be worn at all times by everyone on or near an active shooting field, including instructor and spectators. Ear protection is not required but is allowed for air pistol practices.
- 3 DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES touch another shooter's gun or equipment. If you see anything wrong you must alert a coach and or the owner of that gun or equipment as to the issue or safety problem that you observe.
- 4 Anyone may call CEASE FIRE ANY time there is a safety issue.
- 5 There will be no horseplay on the firing line. Once you step onto the firing line everyone, including adults is expected to be serious, respectful and quiet. Use of distractions including heckling of shooters will not be allowed.
- 6 Each shooter must have a gun cleaning kit and keep their gun cleaned. An unclean gun is an unsafe gun.

Family Last Name (please print): _____

I have read the Montgomery County 4-H Shooting Sports guidelines for 2026-2027, understand these guidelines and agree to abide by them. My failure to do so could result in being removed from the project.

Parent Printed Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Parent Printed Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Member Printed Name: _____

Member Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Member Printed Name: _____

Member Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Member Printed Name: _____

Member Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Member Printed Name: _____

Member Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Member Printed Name: _____

Member Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Please tear off this sheet and return to
the club manager or project leader.