



Policies and Procedures for Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports, updated Nov. 2021

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Questions about this policy may be sent to Laura Quist at 231-577-9056 (cell) or quistla1@msu.edu.

Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Program Safety Practices and Policies, Updated February 2020

1. 4-H Shooting Sports Age Policy

1.1 Michigan 4-H Youth Development Programs are open to young people aged 5 through 19. The “4-H age” will be determined by a young person’s age as of January 1 of the 4-H program year (which runs from September 1 through August 31). However, no youth under the age of 8 may participate in live-fire activities in any discipline.

Age 5-7	Cloverbud-age youth, ages 5-7, will not be allowed to participate in any 4-H shooting sports activities that include the handling or live-fire of any air-guns, firearms or archery equipment. Currently, the Hunting & Wildlife discipline MAY be taught without live fire. If done in this manner, there are many activities that might be suitable for Cloverbuds. This includes activities such as wildlife identification (scat, skulls, fur, calls, etc.), plant identification, habitats, animal tracks, winter wildlife, basic outdoor skills, safety in the outdoors, nature scavenger hunts, ecology, predator-prey relationships, camouflage coloration, safety, and more.
Age 8	BB gun and archery are appropriate for young people age 8 with one-on-one direct, adult supervision, at the discretion and authorization of a certified shooting sports instructor; also hunting & wildlife.
Age 9	Air rifle, BB, archery, hunting & wildlife
Age 12+	Air pistol and gunpowder disciplines (22, shotgun, muzzle loader), air rifle, BB, archery, hunting & wildlife

2. Adult Supervision Policy

- 2.1 There must be two or more adults present when working with 4-H youth at all times regardless of the activity. It is **required** that at least one instructor with **current** MI 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor certification in the discipline for which they are providing leadership be **present** during any shooting activity. If, during a club meeting or any 4-H shooting sports activity, youth are divided into groups to go to separate areas/ranges, at least one adult with current MI 4-H Shooting Sports certification in the appropriate discipline must go with EACH group to their respective range along with the appropriate number of additional adults to meet the required supervision ratio.
- 2.2 When working with youth ages 9-19, the youth to adult ratio should be no more than five youth to one adult on the firing line. Only one adult is required to be certified, however, it is preferred that other adults providing supervision on the firing line have experience in the discipline being supervised. Non-

certified adults must receive guidance from the instructor on how to properly supervise the youth on the firing line.

- 2.3 Youth not on the firing line must be supervised per MI 4-H general adult supervision policy.
- 2.4 Factors such as the experience level of the youth, experience of the instructor, equipment limitations, and the physical characteristics of the facility must all be considered. Safety must be the overriding factor in determining the proper youth to adult ratio.

3. Classroom Safety Policy

- 3.1 No live ammunition will be allowed in a classroom when firearms are present. All students must be made aware of this policy and abide by it. Possession of live ammunition in the classroom is grounds for removal of the student from the program.
- 3.2 Dummy ammo, snap caps and safety trainers may be used for demonstration and gun handling exercises. These should be clearly identified as training aids and easily distinguished from live ammunition.
- 3.3 All Firearms used in the classroom must be checked by the instructor and the student each time they are handled to ensure that the firearm is un-loaded in both the barrel and magazine.
- 3.4 The actions of all firearms should remain open, safeties on and magazines out when not being handled.
- 3.5 Safe gun handling rules must be observed at all times.
- 3.6 No horseplay or disruptive behavior will be tolerated.

4. Live Fire Safety Policy

All youth must demonstrate proficiency as determined by the MI 4-H certified shooting sports instructor in the following areas prior to participating in any live fire exercise:

- Firearms safety rules.
- Safe gun handling fundamentals.
- Basic range commands.

5. Mandatory protective equipment/gear

Firearms (including BB-gun & Pellet gun)

- 5.1. Eye protection must be worn at all times when on or near the firing line.
- 5.2 Hearing protection must be worn at all times when on or near the firing line while .22 caliber rifles, muzzle loading rifles or shotguns are being used.

Target Archery / 3D Archery

- 5.3 Arm guards and hip quivers must be used as designed. Arm guards must be worn on the contestant's bow arm (forearm) below the elbow.

6. Non-Military Training Policy

The purpose of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote youth development through the safe and responsible use of "Firearms" and "Archery equipment or tackle". We teach "marksmanship, sportsmanship, stewardship and safety". We do not train youth in the "offensive or defensive" use of this equipment. Therefore, it is the policy of the Michigan State 4-H Shooting Sports Program Committee, that:

- 6.1 The word "**WEAPON**" will not be used in association with this equipment or activity.
- 6.2 The use of humanoid or tombstone targets will not be allowed during 4-H Shooting Sports meetings, activities, or events.
- 6.3 The use of tactical equipment and/or apparel or "look-alikes" is not appropriate for 4-H shooting sports activities.

7. Paintball, Lasertag, Airsoft Gun Policy

We teach that pointing ANY type of firearm including air guns, paintball guns, laser guns, laser sighting devices, at any person is inappropriate and dangerous. Paintball, airsoft, laser tag, or any other activity which involves participants shooting at each other, is inconsistent with the goals and teaching of the 4-H Shooting Sports program. *Therefore, under no circumstances shall paintball, laser tag, airsoft or similar games/activities and associated equipment be presented as a Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports activity.*

8. Risk Management Plan

Each MI 4-H Shooting Sports club will develop and operate in accordance with a risk management plan, which will include abiding by all MI 4-H and MI 4-H Shooting Sports policies and incorporate the contents of this document as well as locally relevant policies (emergency procedures, equipment maintenance, facility use agreements, county specific 4-H policies, etc.).

9. MSU and MSUE 4-H Youth Development Position Statement on Gun Raffles

As a youth development program, the goal of a 4-H group is to involve youth in the planning and implementation of fundraisers which support 4-H programming. Because youth under the age of 18 cannot be involved in selling or purchasing raffle tickets, we do not encourage counties to do raffles as a fundraiser. There are many other ways to raise dollars to support 4-H activities locally. The liability issues that come into play for 4-H and MSU as a whole do not support 4-H involvement in the raffling of any kind of gun. *Therefore, the Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Program, Board of Directors, and/or any Michigan 4-H Club will not operate gun raffles.*

Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program, As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee Revised 1 01/2019

Minimum Standards

The following minimum standards are not negotiable. A state level 4-H program with an active 4-H Shooting Sports component is advised to adopt and adhere to these standards at the state and county level. Should an injury occur in a state due to the disregard of any of these minimum standards, the potential negative legal/ liability ramifications for a land-grant university system could be significant.

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 will have written risk management plans which includes items such as emergency response and preparedness, insurance, safe storage of firearms and ammunition, state-level reloading policies, 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 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 youth development, life skills, and risk management.

It is preferable and recommended that state level certification workshops provide fifteen (15) hours of instruction composed of twelve (12) hours of discipline instruction and three (3) hours of 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.
 - A. Level 1 Instructors – Must be re-certified a minimum of every 7 years.
 - Re-certification could include any of the following, as determined by the State Coordinator
 - i. Continuing education credits
 - ii. Updates to curriculum or state standards/requirements
 - iii. Refresher course on curriculum
 - iv. Attend a Level 1 training
 - v. Other options
 - B. 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
 - i. Attend a Level 2 training
 - ii. Attend an update training hosted by a Level 3 Instructor or a Level 2 Instructor certified using the revised curriculum.
 - C. Level 3 Instructors – Must be re-appointed annually by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee. *(effective 10/1/2018)*
 7. Only factory ammunition is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.
 8. **Regarding simulated combat sports including but not limited to, paintball guns, air-soft, laser guns, archery tag.** Pointing any type of gun including paint ball guns, air-soft guns, laser guns, laser paint-ball, archery tag bows & arrows or sighting devices at any person or any humanoid shaped target is inappropriate in any 4-H program activity.
 9. **Reactive Targets** - Targets which make use of or are composed of (1) live ammunition, (2) explosives, chemicals or flammable substances, or (3) pressurized containers are never to be used at any 4-H event or activity.
 10. Cloverbud age youth are not allowed to participate in any shooting sports activity that includes the handling or live-fire of any air-guns, firearms, or archery equipment.
 11. 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(s). *(adopted 4/2018)*
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National 4-H Shooting Sports Objectives of 4-H the Shooting Sports Program

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program strives to enable people, their parents and adult volunteers to become responsible, self-directed and productive members of society. Agents, leaders, instructor and coaches must understand the goals and objectives of the program in order to manage or present it properly.

The program transfers knowledge skills and attitudes to develop human capital, using the subject matter and resources of the land-grant universities.

4-H Shooting Sport Program Goal

4-H Shooting Sports provides the high-quality program necessary for Positive Youth Development by engaging youth in the safe, responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, in a variety of settings, through comprehensive education, life-long recreation, and healthy competition. The objectives of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program are to enable youth to:

1. Find and explore passions and interests
2. Engage in an effective 4-H program setting
3. Develop positive relationships with adults, youth, and peers
4. Explore a vast array of 4-H educational, recreational, and competitive activities
5. Thrive in multiple settings
6. Enhance developmental and long-term outcomes
7. Practice safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, enhancing existing shooting, conservation, and hunter education programs
8. Explore the three national 4-H Mission Mandates (STEM, Healthy Living, Civic Engagement)
9. Model safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior
10. Strengthen knowledge and life skills

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES National 4-H Shooting Sports

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:

Eye Protection: Adequate eye protection (shooting glasses, safety glasses or safety goggles, or hardened prescription glasses) 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 firing lines are subject to the same requirements.

Ear Protection: Adequate ear protection is required for all participants in Muzzle Loading, Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun disciplines. This includes Hunting and Western Heritage live fire events. Where electronic hearing protection is used, it may not include radio or similar broadcasts as background noise, since that could interfere with range commands. Such protection is strongly advised for archery events as well. Coaches or spectators on or near firing lines are subject to the same requirements.

Footwear - Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting in any outdoor shooting event is required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but not limited to: sandals, clogs, crocks, flip-flops, and bare feet.

Suggested BMPs – 4-H Shooting Sports Equipment – Storage & Transportation

In many states, the storage of Shooting Sports equipment has not been consistent nor have any standards been set forth to assist states in developing policies related to equipment storage and transportation. This is a list of suggested guidelines for states to consider.

Inventory Control

1. 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.
2. Only approved, current instructors may sign out program equipment from inventory.
3. 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.
4. 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.*

Storage of Firearms & Muzzleloading Equipment

1. All Firearms will be stored unloaded in a commercial firearm safe with an open bolt or open bore indicator when not in use.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Storage of Air Guns

1. 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.
2. 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.

Storage of Archery Equipment

1. Archery equipment will be stored in a locked closet or room accessible only to instructors, county coordinator or state coordinator.
2. 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.

Ammunition

1. All ammunition, shotgun shells, rifle shells, pistol shells, powder, caps, BB's and pellets will be stored separate 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.

2. Ammunition should be stored in a closet or room where there are at least two separate locks on the door.

Transportation of Equipment

1. 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 age 18 or older are permitted to drive vehicles transporting 4-H Shooting Sports equipment.
2. 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).
3. 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.

Youth & Adult Participation

1. 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.
2. Instructors are encouraged to identify strategies to accommodate youth / adults with disabilities.
3. 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 are 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.



Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Risk Management Plan

Club Name _____

County _____

Date Plan Adopted _____

Shooting Sports Disciplines: (Check all that apply on this range space.)

Archery___ Hunting & Wildlife ___ Muzzleloader ___ Pistol Rifle Shotgun

Lead 4-H Shooting Sports Certified Instructor:

Additional Certified, VSP-approved Instructor(s):

Non-certified, VSP-approved support volunteer(s):

County 4-H MSU Extension Staff:

The club leaders, parents, and members should review this completed plan annually for accuracy. Consider this plan your blueprint to action in the event of an emergency. Copies should be shared with all club volunteers and kept at the shooting range, in club files, and uploaded to 4Honline.

*The 4-H Shooting Sports Club Risk Management Plan is based on procedures and policies provided in the 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor workshop, the National 4-H Shooting Sports curriculum manual and supplemental handouts. **All shooting sports activities will strictly follow the policies, rules and guidelines set forth by Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports.***

GOAL: The goal of all 4-H Youth Development programs is youth development. All project areas work toward developing skills youth need to be productive and positive adults in society. Decision making, teamwork, problem solving, being responsible and having high self-esteem are just a few of the many life skills 4-H helps to develop.

OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage participation in environmental and outdoor education programs by exposing youth to shooting, hunting and other related activities.
- Support youth in developing valuable conservation and natural resources related knowledge, skills and stewardship.
- Enhance development of self-concept, character and personal growth through safe, educational and socially acceptable involvement in shooting.
- Teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment.
- Promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and conservation.
- Strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities.
- Provide hands-on learning experiences.

SUPERVISION:

- All 4-H Shooting Sports activities will be organized and conducted with at least one Michigan 4-H certified shooting sports leader present for each discipline being implemented.
- All 4-H Shooting Sports leaders/volunteers will have completed the Michigan 4-H Volunteer Selection Process (VSP) and maintain active/gold status while working with youth.
- Gold volunteers not certified as Shooting Sports Instructors may support shooting sports clubs by conducting non-live fire activities: serving as administrative leaders, reviewing range rules/gun safety, building backstops, preparing record books/shooting journals, leading community service activities.

RECORDS: Only enrolled 4-H members ages 8-19 will participate in live fire activities of this club.

The _____ 4-H Shooting Sports Club insures that youth do not participate in live fire until:

- 1) 4-H annual member enrollment is complete. Properly completed member annual enrollment requires consents to the Code of Conduct, Medical Release, Youth Development, Acknowledgement of Risk, Waiver and Release.
- 2) A hard copy of each participant's 4-H Member Health Form is printed and available in a sealed envelope at the location where live-fire shooting occurs.
 - i. Participants' names are written on the outside of the envelope.
 - ii. New members are added to this envelope as they join the club.
 - iii. All VSP approved volunteers in this club know the location of this envelope, and in the event of an emergency, will be able to share pertinent medical information with First Responders.
- 3) Safe firearm handling lessons are taught prior to live fire. Youth who miss lessons in a sequence are required to make up the material before proceeding.

EQUIPMENT LOG: An inventory log is kept of all firearms, archery equipment and supporting materials owned by the club. Inventory is submitted annually as part of the Annual Financial Summary Report. All inventory should be permanently labeled with the club/county 4-H club name. Visit the Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports website for Inventory Templates. The log will include:

1. the date acquired
2. the name of the custodian/caretaker
3. the item, make, model, and serial number.

EQUIPMENT STORAGE: All firearms, archery equipment, ammunition and supporting material shall be stored, locked, inventoried, and accessible in accordance with policies of Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports, National 4-H Shooting Sports and Michigan state law. Visit the Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports website to ensure your understanding of storage requirements is up to date.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

1. Member Health Forms. Forms printed from 4Honline will be provided by the county 4-H/MSUE office prior to any live-fire activity. A copy must be kept at the range in a sealed envelope, with member names written on the outside of the envelope. These forms should be present at each club activity or event. All information is to be kept confidential. Staff will review each form with the lead shooting sports instructor, highlighting any health conditions or medication that may require accommodation (bee allergies, ADHD, etc.).
2. Media Release Consents. 4-H staff will print and share consents for Media Release for members. Please do not take photographs of youth who have not given consent for their images to be taken or shared.
3. Emergency Contacts. Phone numbers and information shall be readily available at all 4-H shooting sports events/functions.

A. **Emergency Phone Numbers** – these numbers shall be posted at the range (on the wall, or on a clipboard with the attendance roster. See the Michigan 4-H Shooting Sports Resources for Risk Management for resources such as the club poster and wallet-size emergency contact card.)

Ambulance: _____

Fire: _____

Sheriff: _____

Poison Control Center: _____

Emergency Room: _____

Urgent Care Center: _____

Person responsible to call: _____

Notes: _____

B. **In the event of any incident**, accident, near miss or emergency immediately contact:

1. Local Police/rescue (911) / Non-emergency: _____
2. The parent(s) of the youth involved will be contacted by: _____
3. County 4-H staff name: _____
4. County 4-H staff phone: _____
5. State Coordinator – Laura Quist 231-577-9056 (cell) quistla1@msu.edu
6. MSU Dept. of Police & Public Safety: 517-355-2221
7. Immediately complete and submit the [MSU Incident Report Form](#) and keep a copy. Include names, times, and details of incident (facts only). Volunteers may complete this form.

C. **First-Aid:** It is advisable to have one person with current First Aid/CPR certifications present at all club activities.

- Clubs should also have first aid kits on hand during activities/meetings. First aid kits provide staff members and volunteers with supplies needed to respond to injuries until a healthcare professional can help. Contact Laura Quist for latest first aid kit content lists and free kits (when available).
- The first aid kit will be checked for supplies and re-stocked as needed at each club activity.

D. Safety Equipment:

- Eye, ear, and arm protection (as appropriate) will be worn by all participants, leaders and observers whenever there is live fire.
- Rifle and shotgun participants: leaders and observers will wear ear protection during live fire.
- Archery participants: leaders and observers will wear ear protection when the archery range is located near to gun range when there is live fire.

E. Minimization of Lead Exposure: No persons will eat or drink until washing hands after being on the range. If water is not available leaders will provide anti-bacterial moist towel-lets, water-less soap, or similar product for wiping hands once shooting has concluded.

F. Additional Health and Safety Notes Specific to Our Program or Site:

PROPERTY/FACILITY USE

1. A contract has been secured for facility use for meetings/live fire exercises of this 4-H club.
 - Name:
 - Address:
 - Phone:
 - Contact Person:
2. Responsibility for the following items has been determined:
 - Drinking water:
 - Evacuation of the site in an emergency:
 - Fire extinguishers:
 - Garbage collection and removal:
 - Toilet facilities and maintenance:
 - Telephone/Emergency communications:
 - Utility (electricity, gas, water, telephone, sewage):
 - Emergency shut down locations and procedures:

SITE HAZARDS: A safety inspection of the range will be completed before the club meets for the first time each year and throughout the year as needed. Safety procedures (signage, berms, and safety lines) will be reviewed with the site owner. All hazards, both natural and human, will be identified and eliminated or reduced.

TRANSPORTATION: Club leaders and parents will follow county and state guidelines when traveling. Contact your county 4-H staff person for details.

MISSING PERSON(S): <THIS CATEGORY MAY BE UNNECESSARY FOR CLUB MEETINGS. HOWEVER, IF THIS TEMPLATE IS USED FOR SPECIAL EVENTS, FAIRS, TOURNAMENTS, ETC., THIS SHOULD BE INCLUDED.>

In the event that a person become missing from an activity, the following minimum steps will be taken. (Use an additional sheet to explain a more detailed plan.):

1. Determine number of people missing. Make note of the time.
2. Question those who saw person(s) last, were they alone or with someone?
3. A team of two people will search the immediate area.
4. Notify law enforcement officials.
5. Notify county 4-H faculty.
6. Notify the parent(s) of the youth(s) involved.
7. While the search is taking place, the other youth and parents will remain as a group at the site or return home at the direction of the county 4-H staff or law enforcement officials.

WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ON PROGRAM ACTIVITIES: Before events are held, the program site should be evaluated for emergency shelter options in case inclement weather occurs. Other action steps may include the plan for transportation, and the contact of emergency services, 4-H staff, and parents.

When the temperature goes above _____degrees, activities will be changed as follows:

When the temperature goes below _____degrees, activities will be changed as follows:

1. **Rain.** Depending on the amount of rain and the type of activities being held, programs may need to be suspended temporarily. If rain is hard or heavy, staff members must evaluate the site for safety before restarting events. This is especially important for events when the possibility of injury might increase because of wet or muddy ground.
2. **Thunder & Lightning.** “If you hear it, clear it.” It is impossible to have thunder without lightning, even if you do not see the lightning. When thunder is heard or lightning is spotted, all programming must cease immediately, and participants must be moved to safe, indoor shelter until the person in charge of the event decides the weather is clear and it is safe to initiate programming again. “Safe to initiate programming again” means no thunder and lightning are heard or seen for 30 minutes.
3. **Tornado.** If a tornado warning or watch is issued by the Weather Service, all program activities should be suspended, and participants and observers should be encouraged to seek shelter in designated areas. Event cancellation may result if severe weather persists. It is recommended that staff members be familiar with specific emergency response plans for program facilities. Awareness of emergency exits and evacuation plans will assist staff program preparation.
4. **Snow.** If significant winter storms are predicted, events that require participants to travel should be cancelled or postponed. Many MSU Extension offices follow the lead of local school systems. If schools are closed, 4-H events are also cancelled. Be sure that all potential participants are notified of the cancellation