

BSA Guidelines for Firearms

The Boy Scouts of America adheres to its longstanding policy of teaching its youth and adult members the safe, responsible, intelligent handling, care, and use of firearms, airguns, and BB guns in planned, carefully managed, and supervised programs.

Except for law enforcement officers required to carry firearms within their jurisdiction, firearms shall not be brought on camping, hiking, backpacking, or other Scouting activities except those specifically planned for target shooting under the supervision of a currently certified BSA or National Rifle Association firearms instructor.

Cub Scouting Standards

Youth members of Cub Scouting are permitted to participate in the shooting activities named in here only.

Archery and BB gun shooting are restricted to day camps, Cub Scout/Webelos Scout resident camps, council-managed family camping programs, or to council activities where there are properly trained supervisors and all standards for BSA shooting sports are enforced. Archery and BB gun shooting are not to be done at the pack level.

Cub Scouts are not permitted to use any other type of handgun or firearm.

Boy Scouting Standards

Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts are permitted to participate in shooting activities outlined in the Cub Scout standards and in the standards listed here.



Boy Scouts are permitted to fire bows and arrows, BB guns, .22-caliber bolt-action, single-shot rifles, air rifles, shotguns, and muzzle-loading long guns under the direction of a certified instructor, 21 years of age or older, within the standards outlined in current Scouting literature and bulletins. BSA policy does not permit the use of handguns in the Boy Scouting program.

Shotguns

- 1. It is recommended that either 20-, 16-, or 12-gauge semiautomatic shotguns be used. Gas operated shotguns are recommended.**
- 2. Ammunition containing No. 8 shot or smaller is recommended on ranges with a protected down range of 600 feet. Additional down range distance of 150 feet (total 750) is required for No. 6 shot size. Shot larger than No. 6 is not to be used.**
- 3. Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn on shotgun ranges.**
- 4. All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified shotgun instructor or coach who is 21 years of age or older.**

Primary reference: Camp Program and Property Management (Shooting Sports, Section V)

Rifles

- 1. Breech-loading rifles will be single-shot, bolt-action of the .22-caliber rim-fire type only. They may be chambered for the .22-short or .22-long rifle, but not for the .22-WMR rifle (which uses a more powerful cartridge). Air rifles are also permitted.**
- 2. Semiautomatic rifles will not be permitted.**
- 3. Repeating rifles having a tubular magazine will not be permitted.**
- 4. Repeating rifles having a removable clip-type magazine will be permitted but must be used as single-loaders.**
- 5. All rifles used in BSA shooting sports shall have a trigger pull in excess of 3 pounds, and shall be tested with a 3-pound weight or scale at least once a week while in use. If the trigger mechanism is activated by the 3-pound pull, the rifle should be immediately removed from service.**
- 6. Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn on the range.**



All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified rifle instructor or coach who is 21 years of age or older.

Muzzle Loaders

The following standards are for muzzle-loading long guns.

- 1. Muzzle-loading rifles must be recently manufactured, percussion only. BSA recommends those that are .45- or .50-caliber. Rifles made from kits must be checked by an expert gunsmith.**
- 2. Recommended loads of .FFFg blackpowder are not to exceed 1 grain per caliber. One-half of this amount is frequently sufficient for target shooting.**
- 3. Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn.**
- 4. All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently certified NRA/NMLRA muzzle-loading rifle instructor who is at least 21 years of age.**
- 5. Each pupil must have one instructor or adult coach under instructor supervision when loading and firing.**

Primary reference: Camp Program and Property Management (Shooting Sports, Section V)

Venturing Standards

Venturers are permitted to participate in all shooting activities named under "Boy Scout Standards" and the standards here.

Handguns

- 1. Handgun use is limited to the Venturing program only.**
- 2. All training and shooting activities must be under the supervision of a currently NRA-certified pistol instructor or a pistol instructor of a local, state, or federal agency who is 21 years of age or older.**
- 3. All participants must complete a basic pistol marksmanship course prior to range firing. The NRA basic pistol marksmanship course (or equivalent training course) conducted by a law enforcement agency, a civilian gun club, or a U.S. military department is acceptable.**
- 4. With the approval of the local council, handgun shooting may be conducted on BSA camp ranges, provided the shooting is done under the auspices of an NRA-certified pistol instructor or pistol instructor of a local, state, or federal agency.**
- 5. Shooting safety glasses and ear protection must be worn on pistol ranges.**
- 6. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.**