GREAT SALT LAKE COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Safety Spotlight
Shooting Sports/Firearms Safety and Training

Shooting Sports is a key activity to recruiting and retaining boys in the BSA programs. Boys want to shoot and will follow the policies and procedures to learn safety and marksmanship at all ages and levels. Adult leaders need to set the proper example in following all the rules especially the safety rules.

NRA Training and Certification

All live fire must be supervised by an NRA Range Safety Officer (RSO) who is in charge of the range and an NRA Instructor for the firearm being used. These are two separate individuals. NRA Instructors must be 21 years of age and be knowledgeable of the firearms in the discipline. NRA training consists of several separate courses taught by an NRA Training Counselor.

NRA Basic Instructor Training (BIT) - 6 hours
NRA Rifle Instructor - 14 hours
NRA Shotgun Instructor - 11 hours
NRA Pistol Instructor - 10 hours
NRA Muzzleloading Rifle, Shotgun and Pistol - each requires approximately 11 to 12.5 hours

NRA Range Safety Officer may be taught by an NRA Chief Range Safety Officer or an NRA Training Counselor and is 9 hours. It may also be done as a home study course by an NRA certified instructor.
Youth may be trained as NRA Apprentice instructors ages 13 to 17 or as NRA Assistant instructors ages 18 to 20 and may assist under the supervision of an NRA Instructor.

Five Levels of Shooting

The New BSA National Shooting Sports Manual describes the Five Levels of shooting for each of these: Rifle, Shotgun, and Pistol.
Level One is a beginning shooting experience and may be done at a state or county fair type situation with five minutes or less of instruction.
Level Two is an open shooting experience and would require a minimum of a half hour of instruction.
Level Three is ongoing year round shooting and would require three to eight hours of instruction.
Level Four is competitive shooting.
Level Five is NRA Rifle Instructor, Assistant Instructor, Apprentice Instructor, or Coach
The Five Levels are detailed for the three muzzleloading firearms.

Insurance

Individuals who are teaching youth and adults to use firearms should have reasonable insurance coverage either through their own home owners policies or separate insurance coverage. Most home insurance companies offer additional umbrella policies. The NRA offers insurance specifically for NRA instructors and RSOs.

Do's and Don't's

Do:

- Do file a BSA Tour & Activity Plan with the council for any activity involving the shooting of any firearms regardless of location.
- Do go to an established public or private range for any live fire.
- Do have the recommended safety instruction prior to any shooting. See *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual.*
- Do use adequate eye and ear protection.
- Do use the appropriate firearms for the age group.
- Do have the proper ratio of NRA personnel and youth. See *BSA National Shooting Sports Manual*.
- Do have signed permission slips from both parents for Ventures shooting handguns.
- Do follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the range or use the council SOP for ranges if none other is available.
- Do observe restrictions on firearms in any facilities used or use facilities with no restrictions.

Don't:

- Do NOT use any fully automatic firearms.
- Do not set up your own range in the desert or at someone's farm.
- Do not allow any unsafe practices with firearms.
- Do not circumvent any rules.

Firearms

Rifles:
Cub Scouts (7-9 yrs) may shoot BB Guns
Webelos (10 yrs) may shoot BB Guns and Pellet Guns
Boys (11-18 yrs) may shoot .22 caliber bolt action single shot rifles. Repeater rifles must also be bolt action with a box magazine. Tubular magazine rifles are NOT allowed. Semi-automatic rifles are NOT allowed. Trigger pulls must be 3 pounds or more.
Boys (14 – 21yrs) Venturers and Sea Scouts may shoot rifles of any caliber.

Shotguns:
Boys (11 -18 yrs) may shoot any gauge shotgun of any action, 12 gauge semi-automatic shotguns are recommended.
The ratio of NRA Instructors to shooters is 1 to 1, however an instructor may move from one shooter to the next, up to 5 shooters because the instructor is in control of the ammunition.

Pistols:
Boys (14 – 18 yrs) registered as Ventures or Sea Scouts may shoot handguns after minimum of half hour safety training and carrying signed permission from both parents.
Any action handgun may be used.
The ratio of NRA Instructors to shooters is 1 to 1.

Muzzleloading Firearms

NRA Instructor to shooter ratio is 1 to 1 for all muzzleloading firearms while loading or firing. RSO to shooter ratio matches the cartridge firearms. Any modern muzzleloading firearm may be used. Kits must be certified by a qualified gunsmith. Muzzleloading firearms must be cleaned periodically while being used and at the end of every shooting day.

Archery

Level One Instructor training is recommended for Archery. Level Two Instructors are authorized to train Level One Instructors. Training is available through NADA or USA Archery.

Other Shooting Activities

Council programs may have shooting activities that include wrist rockets (slingshots), catapults, balloon launchers, model rockets, water rockets, Atalatal, hawk throwing, and some other creative devices. These items are fun and, in most cases, seem harmless. However, any type of shooting activity can be dangerous, and if safety precautions are not taken, accidents can happen easily. Great care should be taken that safety is the key factor for any activity where items are shot through the air.
Airsoft is not an approved BSA shooting activity for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers, or Sea Scouts.
Paintball guns are not approved for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts.
Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts may only use paintball guns to shoot at approved targets—never at another person.
All safety guidelines enforced in archery and BB gun shooting apply to all other types of shooting sports.
A safe range must be provided for any activity, such as wrist rockets, catapults, or rockets, that involves shooting objects or water in the air.
A range master must supervise the range.
All shooting activities must be approved by the council shooting sports committee or the National Camping School–trained shooting sports director or an NRA rifle instructor.
Cannons or artillery may not be used by any units in BSA.

Merit Badges

The merit badge counselor must take responsibility to assure that all instruction involving the handling of firearms or live ammunition must be supervised by a certified National Camping School (NCS) shooting sports director, National Rifle Association (NRA) rifle instructor, or NRA coach for the Rifle Shooting merit badge or an NRA shotgun instructor or coach for the Shotgun Shooting merit badge. That involving muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director or NRA/NMLRA-certified muzzleloading firearms instructor for the merit badge discipline. Shooting must be supervised by an NRA certified range safety officer (RSO). If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, the RSO and qualified NRA instructor both must be present. The RSO and NRA instructor may not be the same person. NRA Rifle Instructors and NRA Shotgun Instructors should be registered as merit badge counselors.

Council Shooting Sports Committee

The purpose of the committee is to manage and provide resources to the council, the camping committee, and the council camps for all activities involving shooting sports whether during summer camps or during year-round shooting opportunities.
All shooting sports activities should be coordinated through the shooting sports committee to verify that a safe and responsible program is planned and conducted by properly trained and currently certified personnel.
Members of the committee include Chairman, sub committees, and all District Shooting Sports Commissioners (chairmen).

District Shooting Sports Committee

Plans and Conducts District Shooting Sports Events on a regular basis, monthly if possible.
Supplies NRA Personnel for shooting events.
Works with the District leadership in training boys of all ages and holding shooting opportunities at all District events.
Many shooting activities for younger boys may involve older boys to help supervise particularly in such events as rubber band guns and water rockets for example.

Resources

The following documents may be updated at any time so check them before using.
National Shooting Sports Manual Website
http://scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/OutdoorProgram/ShootingSports.aspx
Guide to Safe Scouting
http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf
Outdoor Program Committee Guide
http://scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/OutdoorProgram/Camping.aspx
Camp Property and Program Management
http://www.ncsbsa.org/resources/general/Camp%20Program%20&%20Property%20Mgt.pdf