

FORT BEND COUNTY EXTENSION EDUCATION CENTER GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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Guiding Principles for the Extension Education Building

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Situation: The Extension Education Center, a part of the Extension Service office complex, is a multi-use building shared by several Extension groups for a variety of purposes.

Background: The Center was developed and built in 1993 with grants from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and others. The facility was designed to be combination of a shooting range for 4-H projects and a classroom meeting area for Extension Programs. Records indicate the agreement and grant obligations to TWPD would be in effect for a period of 25 years. As of the creation of this document in 2025, the building is fully owned and maintained by Fort Bend County. Modifications have been made to the building over the years to help meet the prevailing needs and expectations of the building's use. Records also indicate a history of contentious expectations related to the use of the building. Further, several concerns have been discussed throughout various phases of the building's existence and use.

Assessment: The purposes, intensity, and consistency of the building's use have evolved over the years based on Extension program growth and facility space needed. The presence of lead from shooting sports practices and events with black powder firearms and possible contamination of lead within and beyond the shooting area has caused specific concerns from time to time. As apprehensions have arisen, measures have been taken to address issues. Recurring concerns have been expressed recently and the need for written guidance is evident.

Recommendations: Written information outlining the guiding principles for the building will help support the co-existence of Extension groups using the building. Further, an understanding of a bigger picture plan for the building will maintain a clean and safe environment for all who enter the building. Stakeholders of the various groups who have interest in using the building should provide input. Ultimately, as the building is a County owned and maintained property and the Extension Service is the designated beneficiary and steward of the building, Extension staff will make decisions regarding the use and care of the building, beginning with the County Extension Director, extending to the Administrative Manager and Technical Assistant/Property Manager, and with further involvement of County Extension Agents and support staff as needed.

The mission and purpose of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the 4-H Program serve as a constant reminder for the context of these guiding principles. These statements are guardrails for how the building should be used:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Mission: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses and communities through education and service.

Vision: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to Texans when and where they need us.

Values: We value People, Programs and Partnerships.

4-H

The primary purpose of 4-H is to empower young people with the knowledge, life skills, and attitudes necessary to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society. This is achieved through hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that focus on various areas like science, leadership, citizenship, and healthy living. 4-H also emphasizes the development of essential life skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving, all while fostering a sense of belonging and responsibility.

4-H programs are designed to promote positive youth development by providing opportunities for young people to learn and grow in a supportive environment.

The "learn by doing" approach is central to 4-H, allowing youth to acquire knowledge and skills through practical experiences rather than solely through traditional classroom instruction.

Fort Bend County

Further, as a department of Fort Bend County, housed in and on Fort Bend County property, the applicable laws, rules, protocols, policies, and interests of the County also play a significant role in the operations of the Extension Education Center.

Overarching philosophy of the Extension Education Center (EEC) building

The EEC building exists as a part of the Extension Service complex as a place where employees and volunteers can extend the purpose and work of Extension. Extension personnel, volunteers, and 4-H families can use the building for meetings, workshops, practices, and other educational activities in cooperation with Extension Service employees. Use of the building is specifically reserved for activities that fulfill the mission of Extension.

As Fort Bend County continues to grow and the Extension Service remains nimble in meeting the needs of our communities, use of the building will remain focused on serving the greatest number of people possible as safely and equitably as possible within the mission of Extension education. Decisions made about the building's use will gauge the benefit to clientele against the possible drawbacks for users, employees, and the County.

Activities and events not aligned with the purpose of the building and Extension's primary mission are discouraged. Priority use will be given to those activities that encompass Extension's mission, beginning with Extension employee work activities and extended to the work of affiliate groups (e.g.: 4-H, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, etc.)

Building design and common usage

The Classroom: (often referred to as "the lobby") The building includes a large open area, usually filled with tables and chairs, ideal for meetings and instructional use. Access to this area is granted through the main double glass doors at the front of the building.

- Currently, the classroom is used for Master Gardener meetings, workshops, and plant sales.
- Employees use the classroom for programmatic workshops and various group meetings.
- The building is often used to host community blood drives.
- 4-H clubs use the classroom for meetings and practices (such as robotics, shooting sports verbal instructions, and other events).

The County provides routine cleaning services in classroom areas. A limited supply of lead-mitigating products (such as D-Lead products) are purchased from the Extension supplies budget for use in the classroom.

The Kitchen: A small commercial-style kitchen is included inside the building located off to the side of the classroom area. The kitchen includes two electric stoves, an Ansul Hood vent system (inspected twice per year for a substantial fee paid from an Extension budget line-item), a three-compartment sink, a hand-washing sink, stainless steel counters, and a commercial refrigerator. A fire extinguisher is also located in the kitchen area.

- The kitchen is used for occasional food storage and preparation.
- Master Gardeners use the kitchen for “Lunch and Learn” events.
- Other Extension programs may include food demonstrations and/or preparation of food for service.

The Range: The building also includes a shooting range intended for youth development education in a variety of shooting sports disciplines. The use of the range area is reserved specifically for youth-related shooting sports events and almost exclusively for 4-H members. The shooting range is separated from the classroom with a full-length glass wall.

Access to the area is granted through double glass doors with locks that open with a singularly designated lock and key. Additional entrance access to the range can be granted from the inside through a regular-sized door located on the south side of the building and a large roll-up-garage-style door on the north side.

- The range is used for 4-H club shooting sports practices with members under the supervision of trained and certified 4-H coaches. 4-H leaders and participants’ parents may also attend and watch practices.
- Occasional 4-H shooting sports contests are hosted in the facility as well. Shooting sport disciplines include but may not be limited to rifle, air rifle, air pistol, and archery.

Commonly sport rifles use lead-based ammunition in the shooting range area. This practice brings with it an element of danger and concern for the safety of all those who use the building. With this, a statement regarding danger mitigation is necessary.

Danger Mitigation: Whereas the building includes a shooting range, residue from lead-based ammunition is a concern. Within and because of lead-based shooting activity, the responsibility for safety remains with those using lead products in the facility. Routine maintenance, cleaning, and mitigation of lead residue produced by shooting sports activity are the obligation of those who bring in and use the lead-based elements.

Cleaning procedures within the shooting range area and cross-contamination prevention are the responsibility of the lead-based users. Generally, most cleaning recommendations available only address high-volume commercial ranges with continual and prolonged use. Therefore, users of the EEC shooting range should follow the current best practices known for recreational and occasional gun range usage and/or scaled versions of commercial recommendations.

When 4-H families or others engage in shooting sports activities in the EEC range, they indicate understanding and acceptance of the possible risks to themselves and their children. All users should make every effort to minimize the possible risk to themselves and others that can be caused by exposure and/or cross contamination outside of the range area.

Anyone accessing and using the shooting range does so at their own risk.

See Appendix C for Liability Waiver.

If a significant concern is expressed with reasonable evidence for alarm, action will be taken by the Extension staff and/or Fort Bend County officials. Actions may include deep cleaning, lead testing and/or other formal danger assessment. Actions may also include denying use or closing the building to further occupation.

Reservation process:

Internal Extension personnel and Extension groups (i.e.: 4-H Clubs, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists) can reserve the building by calling or emailing the Senior Administrative Assistant (Karen or her successor), who will confirm the reservation by returned email.

Outside groups must formally make a reservation by using an official Reservation Request (see Appendix A). Usage fees may apply.

- Volunteers, Master Gardeners, 4-H Leaders, or other Extension affiliated parties are NOT allowed to represent or reserve the facility for outside groups on behalf of authorized Extension personnel.
- Range reservations require a verification of certified status of a shooting sports coach as the responsible party and adequate liability insurance coverage.

Scheduling use and access to the building:

Express permission required: Because the building is used by multiple groups, usage must be scheduled through the Extension office personnel using the prevailing reservation system. No groups or individuals may use the building without express permission from the County Extension Director or designated representative from the Extension staff.

Documentation of use of the building must be recorded in a log provided inside the building classroom after each use. Failure to complete the log after each use may revoke building use privileges.

Possession of keys/key cards to access the building must be documented through the sign-out system maintained in the Extension office. The person who signs for the key takes full responsibility for the key's usage and any damage, loss, or theft that happens during the time the key was in that person's possession and/or reservation period.

Respect for the building itself as well as other groups who use the building is paramount. Users of the building should be courteous and kind to others who use the space. Occasionally, usage of the building spaces will coincide (i.e., one group in the classroom and one group in the range) or occur simultaneously (i.e., back-to-back).

Responsibility to clean/reset: Regardless of who else uses the building, each user is responsible for cleaning up after each use including, but not limited to, taking out the trash, returning tables and chairs to their starting position, keeping any items or equipment that are taken into the range in the range or outside. Items in the range should not be taken into the classroom to avoid cross-contamination.

- If the area is found to be dirty or in disarray upon arrival, notify the staff members who confirmed the reservation (Karen or her successor) as soon as possible.
- Those using the shooting range take on the additional responsibility of cleaning and lead mitigation protocols for the range area.

Classroom Reservation Protocols

- **Outside groups** must reserve and receive approval from the County Extension Director and present proof of insurance coverage.
- Volunteers, Master Gardeners, 4-H Leaders, or other affiliated parties are **NOT allowed to represent or reserve** the facility on behalf of authorized Extension personnel.
- **Classroom reservations** will adhere to a **standard cost list** for outside group reservations.

- **Keys/Key Cards:** Groups with currently certified volunteers may receive a maximum of 2 access cards/keys per club/group. A \$100 deposit is required for each key.
- Groups **cannot reserve more than 2 time-blocks** per week.
- Groups **must leave the classroom area clean**, including trash take out. Basic cleaning supplies will be provided through the County supplies budget. Any specialty cleaning supplies needed will be provided by the user.
- **If a reservation will not be used**, the Extension office should be notified at least 24 hours prior. The unused time slot will be made available for other reservations.
- **Special events** can be reserved a year in advance.
- Groups/clubs not adhering to classroom protocol will have their classroom access suspended.
- The classroom facilities **should only be used for Extension events**, Master Gardener/Master Naturalists activities, 4-H club activities, or otherwise preapproved outside organization events.
- **Extension events**, including 4-H, Master Gardener, Master Naturalists programs and the like, **take precedence** when reserving spaces. Every month, the reservation schedule will be posted on the door of the Education Center. Only AgriLife Extension and Fort Bend County Staff may change reservations/schedules.
- The *range* will be closed for practice each year from Monday before Thanksgiving to January 1st of the following year for maintenance and equipment audits. The education center **classroom may still be reserved** for educational and club activities on a limited basis.
- Failure to properly clean the facility or lock up/set alarms will result in suspended access. If key/access card is misplaced, contact the Administrative Manager (Cheryl or her successor) as soon as possible.

Range Reservation Protocols

- **Outside groups** must reserve and receive approval from the County Extension Director and present proof of insurance coverage.
- Volunteers, Master Gardeners, 4-H Leaders, or other affiliated parties are **NOT allowed to represent or reserve** the facility on behalf of authorized Extension personnel.
- **Range reservations** will adhere to a **standard cost list** for outside group reservations.

- **Keys/Key Cards:** Currently chartered 4-H clubs with certified shooting sports coaches may receive a maximum of 2 access cards/keys per club/group. A \$100 deposit is required for each key.
- **Time blocks:** Clubs cannot reserve more than 2 time-blocks per week
- **Clean up:** All clubs must leave the range clean, including lead clean up. Cleaning materials will be provided by the club using the range.
- **Unused reservations:** The Extension office should be notified at least 24 hours prior if a reservation will not be used, so that the space can be made available for other use.
- **Special events** can be reserved a year in advance. Club meetings can be reserved for each 4-H year. Groups/clubs not adhering to range protocols may have access to the range suspended.
- **Use:** Range and Education Center facilities should only be used for 4-H Club activities or approved outside organization events.
- **A certified shooting sports coach** must be present any time the range is in use. Reservations require a verification of certified status of a responsible party.
- **4-H and AgriLife Extension programs take precedence** when reserving spaces. Every month, the reservation schedule will be posted on the door of the Education Center. Only AgriLife Extension and Fort Bend County Staff may change reservations/schedules.
- **Annual closure:** The *range* will be closed for practice each year from the Monday before Thanksgiving to January 1st of the following year for maintenance and equipment audits. The education center *classroom* can still be reserved for educational and club activities on a limited basis.
- **Responsibility:** Failure to properly clean the facility or lock up/set alarms will result in suspended access. If a key/access card is misplaced, contact the Administrative Manager (Cheryl) as soon as possible.

Range Equipment storage and access

The Range is furnished with limited storage space available for 4-H Club equipment.

- All clubs may have their equipment audited at any time by the County Extension Director (CED), County Extension Agent (CEA) for 4-H, or a designee of the Director. Audits may include any shooting sports and/or robotics equipment stored in the facility.
- The CED, facility manager, or other designee of the Director, must be granted access to all storage closets and safes.
- Any modifications to the range and range storage must be approved by the CED.
- A specific amount of space (approximately equivalent to the width of a shooting lane) along a wall will be reserved for storage for equipment not in use (such as target stands, electronic scoring equipment, chairs, etc.)
- Shooting sports participants must enter and exit through the side door for range practice. Instructors must set up equipment before practice starts and not open the glass doors between the range and classroom until practice and active shooting has stopped.
- To minimize cross-contamination, equipment (including carrying bags/cases) that are taken into the range should not be taken into the classroom. Those items can be taken out through the side doors and returned to a vehicle or left in the range storage area.
- 4-H Clubs are defined by a current and completed 4-H Club Charter with currently enrolled/approved youth, approved leaders/coaches, and families. Only approved 4-H youth and leaders may enter the range unless there is a special event sanctioned by Extension (for example a 4-H Parent Advisory Board “Shoot Out” fundraiser).
- Any equipment not properly labeled and stored and/or equipment not claimed nor accounted for in the club inventory will be treated as County property and may be reassigned or disposed of as needed.

Range safety

- The National 4-H Shooting Sports Minimum Standards & Best Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program policy (Appendix B) shall serve as a standard of range safety.
- Regular review and renovation of shooting lines, safety and emergency posters, will be necessary.
- All shooting sports equipment must be pointed down range, even when cleaning and repairing.
- When not in use, firearms must be unloaded and with chambers opened and pointed down range.

Cleaning

- When the classroom and/or range are used, all bathroom floors must be cleared and toilets flushed before the group leaves. If food has been thrown in the trash cans, the trash must be taken outside and placed in the dumpster.
- Any items left in the building, including jackets, equipment, reusable water bottles, etc. will be placed in a lost and found inside the AgriLife Extension office. Items can be collected during regular office hours. Lost and Found items will be donated or thrown away at the end of each month. Contact the Extension Office to inquire about lost items.
- If anything needs to be fixed, email Doug Staff at doug.staff@ag.tamu.edu (or his successor). If there is an emergency repair, call or email the emergency contact number posted in the building.

Incidents

- Incidents should be reported promptly. Incidents may include code of conduct violations, medical emergencies, or other concerns. Email detailed information about incidents to the County Extension Director (Amy Ressler at amy.ressler@ag.tamu.edu or her successor) and the County Extension Agent – 4-H (Willa Williams at willa.williams@ag.tamu.edu or her successor).
- If there is a medical or safety emergency, call 911.
- Security cameras are installed around and inside the building.

Appendices:

A: Reservation Request Information Sheet and Form

B: National 4-H Shooting Sports - Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program as Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee

C: Liability Waiver

Appendix A –
Extension Education Center Reservations

APPENDIX A:

Extension Education Center Classroom and Range Reservations by Outside Groups

The Extension Education Center range and classroom/lobby are used for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Prairie View A&M University educational programs. This includes Master Gardener workshops, 4-H club meetings, and county 4-H events.

Outside groups may use the educational center and range if they align with the AgriLife Extension program priorities and if they receive approval through the County Extension Director.

For outside groups to reserve the facilities, they must submit the following at least one month before the event to Karen Santos at karen.santos@ag.tamu.edu :

- Reservation Application, including any flyers or guides that will be shared with participants
- Reservation deposit fee of \$250 (non-refundable if group cancels within one month of the event, damages, or leaves the facility unclean)
- Proof of insurance for the event

Checks should be made out to “Fort Bend EAC” and sent to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at 1402 Band Rd #100, Rosenberg, TX 77471. The deposit fee is due upon reservation, and the balance is due the day of the event.

Group Size	Cost per Day
50 participants or under	\$500
More than 50 participants	\$500 plus \$10 each individual participant

Examples of facility use costs:

The group has reserved the facility for 2 days and received approval to use the facility. Thirty people attended the first day and 62 people attended the second day. The facility was left clean with no damage.

$$\text{Day 1 } (\$500) + \text{Day 2 } (\$620) = \$1120$$

The group reserved the facility for one day with 50 participants and did not clean the facility. There was additional damage to the range equipment totaling \$200.

$$\text{Day 1 } (\$500) + \text{non-refundable reservation fee } (\$250) + \text{damage costs } (\$200) = \$950$$

Note: All groups using lead ammunition in the range must bring their own lead remediation cleaning supplies. For example, providing sticky mats, D-Lead hand soap, and using lead cleaning solutions to wet mop the floors. Failure to use lead specific cleaning supplies will forfeit the return of the reservation fee.

Non-Extension Sponsored Facility Reservation Form

Please attach an event flier/support to completed reservation form for approval by the County Extension Director and program-area agent when necessary.

Type of Event: _____	Time(s): _____
Sponsor/Club: _____	Flier/Agenda Attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Room/Facility Requested: _____	Day/Cell Phone Number: _____
Contact Person: _____	City/Zip Code: _____
Address: _____	Attendance: Youth _____ Adult _____
Out-of-County Sponsored Event: _____	Deposit Attached: <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check Total Received: _____
Person Picking Up Key: _____	Day/Cell Phone Number: _____
Date(s): _____	

Facility-use fee: Non-Extension and out-of-county clubs/organizations/individuals wishing to use an Extension facility for fund raisers and/or fee-based events will be charged a facility-use fee of \$500 per day for groups under 50 participants; above 50 participants, a fee of \$500/day + \$10/person will be charged. A copy of the event flier/agenda and any other applicable information and a deposit check of \$250 (**written to Fort Bend County EAC**) are required with each fee-based facility request. **To reduce or waive fee:** A written and mutually agreed-upon reciprocal agreement must be attached to form.

FBC Extension Service reserves the right to limit the use of certain meeting rooms due to the nature of the meeting and the equipment and supplies being utilized. General meetings will be assigned based on group size, type of program, and availability.

Extension staff programming takes priority on all meeting rooms; therefore, the possibility of your meeting being bumped should be a consideration. Every effort will be made to relocate your meeting within the Extension Complex.

Facility Capacity and Guidelines

<u>Annex Building</u>	<u>Extension Building</u>	<u>Education Center/Range</u>
Kitchen.....12-16	Build Out.....6-8	Meeting Room/Kitchen.....50
Meeting Room.....10-15	Conference Room.....10-40	Range*.....
	Breakroom/Kitchen.....8-15	
	Library.....4	

- Program setup and breakdown are the responsibility of the requestor.
- Please take out trash every evening, dumpster behind building.
- Tables and chairs are not to be moved in or out of the Range area.
- Range area to be swept every evening.

To the best of my knowledge, I have completed this form accurately and understand that failure to complete this form accurately could result in said club/organization/individual losing facility-use privileges in the future.

Responsible Party's Signature: _____	Date: _____
County Extension Director's Approval: _____	Date: _____
County Extension Agent's Approval: _____	Date: _____

Appendix B –
Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices
of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program
As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee



Minimum Standards & Best Management Practices of a 4-H Shooting Sports Program

As Established by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee

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.
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. Attending 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. Attending Level 2 training.
 - ii. Attending 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.
7. Only factory ammunition is used at 4-H shooting sports competitive events.



8. **Regarding simulated combat sports (physical or virtual) including but not limited to, paintball guns, air-soft, laser guns, archery tag, eSports.** Pointing any type of gun including paintball guns, air-soft guns, laser guns, archery tag bows & arrows or sighting devices at any person or any humanoid shaped target is prohibited in any 4-H program activity.
9. Any firearm built or modified to give the impression of a modern military style firearm such as an AR or AK is not allowed in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. Front pistol grips, heat shield/shroud, and magazines extending more than 2 inches below the receiver are prohibited. Examples of unacceptable firearm components are muzzle brakes, recoil compensators, and suppressors. Ported barrels are permitted on shotguns & pistols. Below are visual examples of firearms that would not be permitted.



10. **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.
11. 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.
12. 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.



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, instructors, and coaches must understand the goals and objectives of the program 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:

1. **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.
2. **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.



3. **Footwear** – Participants in any shooting event or activity, while on the shooting line, are required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet, including soles. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable include, but are not limited to: sandals, clogs, flip-flops, slippers, house shoes, and bare feet.

Suggested Best Management Practices – 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. Approved, current instructors, only, 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 separately 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 aged 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 is 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.

Appendix C –

Release Waiver, Indemnification, And Medical Treatment Authorization Form

Appendix C – RELEASE

RELEASE WAIVER, INDEMNIFICATION, AND MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZATION FORM

1. EXCULPATORY CLAUSE. In consideration for receiving permission to participate in any and all activities in, on, and across the Fort Bend County Extension Education Center Shooting Range (“Property”), I hereby release, waive, covenant not to sue, and agree to hold harmless for any and all purposes Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a member of The Texas A&M University System, The Texas A&M University System, the Board of Regents for The Texas A&M University System, and their members, officers, agents, volunteers, or employees (“RELEASEES” or “INDEMNITEES”) from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, injuries (including death), or damages, including court costs and attorney’s fees and expenses, that may be sustained by me while participating in this activity, while traveling to and from the activity, or while on the Property and/or premises owned, leased, or controlled by RELEASEES, **including injuries sustained as a result of the sole, joint, or concurrent negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, statutory fault, intentional torts, or strict liability of RELEASEES.**

2. INDEMNITY CLAUSE. I am fully aware that there are inherent risks to myself and others involved with this activity, including, but not limited to persons with firearms both on or off the Property and **RISK OF INJURY FROM THE USE OF FIREARMS, INCLUDING RISK OF BEING SHOT AND INJURED OR KILLED BY OTHER PARTICIPANTS**; and I choose to voluntarily participate in this activity with full knowledge that the activity may be hazardous to me and my property, and to the person and property of others. I acknowledge the activity may be physically strenuous, and I know of no medical reason why I should not participate in the activity. **I agree to indemnify and hold harmless INDEMNITEES** from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, injuries (including death), or damages, including court costs and attorney’s fees and expenses, which may occur to myself, other participants, and third-persons as a result of my participation and conduct in the activity, **including injuries sustained as a result of the sole, joint, or concurrent negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, statutory fault, intentional torts, or strict liability of INDEMNITEES.**

3. NO INSURANCE. I understand that RELEASEES do not maintain any insurance policy covering any circumstance arising from my participation in the activity or any event related to that participation. As such, I am aware that I should review my personal insurance coverage. RELEASEES do not carry general liability insurance to cover claims arising from the activity so it seeks a waiver of claims as additional consideration for the right to participate so RELEASEES, some of which are governmental units of the State of Texas, can: (a) provide the activity at the lowest possible cost to participants; and (b) provide access to a greater number of participants by expending limited resources related to the Property and the Agreement rather than on liability insurance.

4. BINDS HEIRS. It is my express intent that this agreement binds the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representatives, if I am deceased, and is governed by the laws of the State of Texas.

5. MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION, INDEMNITY FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES, and WAIVER. I understand RELEASEES cannot be expected to control all of the risks associated with this activity and RELEASEES may need to respond to accidents and potential emergency situations. Therefore, I hereby give my consent for any medical treatment that may be required, as determined by a medical professional at the medical facility, during or as a result of my participation in this activity with the understanding that the cost of any such treatment will be my responsibility. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless INDEMNITEES for any costs incurred to treat me, even if an INDEMNITEE has signed hospital documentation promising to pay for the treatment due to my inability to sign the documentation. I further agree to release, waive, covenant not to sue, and agree to hold harmless for any and all purposes, RELEASEES from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, injuries (including death), or damages, including court costs and attorney’s fees and expenses, that may be sustained by me while receiving medical care or in deciding to seek medical care, including while traveling to and from a medical care facility, **including injuries sustained as a result of the sole, joint, or concurrent negligence, negligence per se, gross negligence, statutory fault, intentional torts, or strict liability of RELEASEES.**

6. In the event of a dispute over the meaning or application of this agreement, it will be construed fairly and reasonably and neither more strongly for nor against either party.

7. ADDITIONAL RULES. In signing this agreement, I acknowledge and represent that I have read and understood the Fort Bend Extension Center Guiding Principles that apply to this Extension Center shooting range.

- The participant (and if under the age of 18) and the participant’s legal guardian must sign this document *prior* to entering

the Property.

- The participant agrees to report any violations or any unsafe conditions/conduct to the Fort Bend County Extension Director (Dr. Amy Ressler amy.ressler@ag.tamu.edu).
- The participant represents that they have the necessary experience and training to operate at their current level of certification for shooting sports activities.
- All shells/casings and trash must be picked up and carried out.
- No Smoking.

8. VOLUNTARY SIGNATURE. In signing this agreement, I acknowledge and represent that I have read it, understand it, and sign it voluntarily as my own free act and deed; RELEASEES have not made, and I have not relied on any oral representations, statements, or inducements apart from the terms contained in this agreement. I execute this document for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same, now and in the future.

9. TERMS USED BUT NOT DEFINED HEREIN. Terms used but not defined herein will have the respective meanings given to them in the Agreement.

**SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT INVOLVES THE WAIVER OF VALUABLE LEGAL RIGHTS.
CONSULT YOUR ATTORNEY BEFORE SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT.**

SIGNED this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Participant Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Participant's Date of Birth: _____

(If Participant is under 18 years old)

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: _____

(If Participant is under 18 years old)

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed Name: _____

(If Participant is under 18 years old)