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Acquisition, Custody, and Storage of Firearms Used in 4-H Shooting Sports Programs

Abstract

Shooting sports has been a 4-H program offering since the 1930's. Tragic events related to the use of firearms as weapons have caused public and private entities to evaluate and consider the appropriateness of youth access to and usage of firearms. 4-H educators have the primary responsibility for managing the risk associated with shooting sports programs. All 4-H educators should follow protocols for the acquisition, custody, and storage of firearms. In Oregon, 4-H educators and volunteers must follow an Oregon-centric risk management plan. This Tools of the Trade article focuses on Oregon's precautionary system used to administer its 4-H Shooting Sports Program.

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Introduction

Shooting sports has been a 4-H project area since the 1930's (L. Lauxman, personal communication, February 24, 2013). It is one of the fastest growing 4-H project areas across the nation. More than 215,000 youth are participating in organized clubs, special interest groups, and camps related to or involving shooting sports (Lauxman). Nearly 27,000 qualified and specially trained volunteers (Lauxman) provide the leadership necessary to create a place for youth to experience programs that lead to positive youth development.

Tragic events related to the use of firearms as weapons have caused the media, branches of the federal and state governments, university systems, school districts, public safety agencies, proponent and opponent stakeholders, and youth and families to evaluate and consider the appropriateness of youth access to and usage of firearms. In Oregon, 4-H educators and shooting sports volunteers must follow the *Oregon 4-H Shooting Sports Club Risk Management Plan (2012)* to address public concerns to protect themselves and the Oregon 4-H program.

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is the only 4-H project area that requires prospective leaders to attend and qualify through mandatory training in specific disciplines. These disciplines or projects

include archery, muzzle loading, pistol, rifle, shotgun, and western action shooting. Regardless of the training received by leaders, 4-H educators have the primary responsibility for managing the risk associated with the shooting sports programs operating within their counties. All 4-H educators need to follow protocols for the acquisition, custody, and storage of firearms.

This Tools of the Trade article focuses on Oregon's precautionary system used to safely and responsibly administer its 4-H Shooting Sports Program.

Literature Review

Studies have considered the 4-H Shooting Sports Program's impact on youth at-risk (Sabo & Hamilton, 1997); its influence on youth development, family, and resiliency (Hauer & Carlson, 1999); and its effects on life skills development, parent financial commitment, and state economy (Jenke, 2003). However, information regarding the mechanics of running a 4-H Shooting Sports Program is lacking.

Acquisition

In Oregon, private sellers and companies (sellers) engaged in the business of manufacturing and/or intrastate or interstate sale of firearms are subject to a process that verifies transferees or buyers (buyers) of regulated firearms are legally permitted to make purchases. These sellers hold a Federal Firearms License (FFL).

The acquisition of shotguns, smallbore pistols, and rifles used in 4-H Shooting Sports from a seller with an FFL requires the buyer to complete Form 4473 the *Firearms Transaction Record Part I-Over the Counter* (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, 2012). The seller submits Form 4473, along with thumbprints of the buyer, to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System and awaits approval that confirms the buyer's ability to purchase a firearm.

What happens when the buyer is a 4-H educator or trained 4-H volunteer making a firearm purchase for the club or county program (entity) using personal resources or funds made available through the 4-H program?

One of two paths can be followed. The acquisition can be accomplished either: (1) personally; or (2) on behalf of an entity (e.g. 4-H) as outlined on Form 4473 (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, 2012).

The buyer must personally complete Section A.... When the buyer is a corporation..., or other such entity, an officer authorized to act on behalf of the business must complete Section A...and attach a written statement,..., stating: (A) the firearm is being acquired for use of and will be the property of that business entity and (B) the name and address of that business entity.
(Page 3)

Custody and Storage

Once the firearm is acquired, it is incumbent on the 4-H educator to follow prudent risk management practices. It is essential to understand how to store the firearm and track custody.

If a 4-H educator is the buyer of the firearm, the firearm's identifying information is recorded in the county's program inventory. The state's 4-H shooting sports plan requires that all firearms be stored appropriately. Oregon's rules for storage include the following.

1. Firearms are stored unloaded.
2. Firearms are stored separately from ammunition inside a lockable metal gun cabinet or fire-resistant gun safe.
3. The lockable metal gun cabinet should be located within a lockable closet and secured to the floor and/or wall.
4. Firearms are fitted with a trigger or action lock.
5. When firearms are stored, the actions are left open. The only exception is for over/under or side by side shotguns because they are more easily stored with the actions closed.

If the firearm is acquired by a buyer (e.g., volunteer), an intermediate step is necessary. The Oregon 4-H Shooting Sports Program uses a modified version of a form the Oregon holders of FFLs must use to register firearms called the *Custody/Transfer of Firearms Form* (2013) (See Appendix).

The transfer of custody of the firearm is accomplished when the volunteer completes the *Custody/Transfer of Firearms Form* (2013). An original copy of the form is kept by the volunteer. A duplicate copy is kept by the 4-H educator responsible for the county program. If the firearm is checked out to a qualified leader for an extended amount of time, the same form is used transferring custody to the volunteer and the program inventory is adjusted.

Air-rifles, BB guns, muzzle loaders, and archery equipment are not subject to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives regulations. The same protocols should be employed to assure the exercise of caution and due diligence.

Conclusion

The Oregon 4-H Shooting Sports Program is committed to the safe and responsible acquisition, custody, and storage of firearms used in the 4-H program. As the 4-H Shooting Sports Program continues to evolve, new developments and new implementation strategies will focus on protective factors to minimize risks that threaten safety, increase personal responsibility, and address concerns of 4-H stakeholders.

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Appendix

CUSTODY/TRANSFER OF FIREARMS FORM

Developed using State of Oregon Form 125-5180

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please print, using ink or type
2. Fill out in duplicate for each transfer
3. Keep an original copy for personal records and a duplicate for 4-H program files
4. If an error is made while filling out this form, do not destroy. Keep the copy in your files. Repeat the process using a new form.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Custodian or Transferor Name and Address | Transferee Name and Address | |
| Date of Custody or Transfer (Month, Day, Year) | Time of Transfer Time: AM PM | |
| City/Town where Custody or Transfer took place | Description of Firearm (Handgun, Shotgun, Rifle, Archery Equipment). Attach additional sheet(s) if necessary. | |
| Make or Brand of Firearm or Archery Equipment. Attach additional sheet(s) if | Serial Number. Attach additional sheet(s) if | Caliber(s). Attach additional sheet(s) if |

| | | | |
|--|-------|---|------------|
| necessary. | | necessary. | necessary. |
| Identification of Custodian or Transferor (Driver's License) | | Identification of Transferee (Driver's License) | |
| Signature of Custodian or Transferor | Phone | Signature of Transferee | Phone |
| Intended Use: | | | |

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