



# BSA SAFETY MOMENT

## SHOOTING SPORTS

### SUMMARY

The Boy Scouts of America and the National Rifle Association (NRA) have worked together for more than 100 years to develop a strong shooting sports program. Many NRA trained men and women in BSA local councils are willing and available to work with units and youth. Too often, individual units want to go shooting with whatever guns they have at whatever location they think is safe. However, the BSA Shooting Sports program is both age-appropriate and structured with specific types of firearms and the appropriate places to shoot. Leaders and chartered organizations need to know and follow the program.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

This Safety Moment is not an all-inclusive document of every shooting rule available to you, but should serve as a reference document for you to make sure the shooting activities your Scouts are participating in are conducted appropriately and in the safest manner possible.

Safety considerations should be on the top of everyone's list, especially when dealing with firearms.

- Every council generally has a Shooting Sports Committee to manage and provide resources for all activities involving shooting sports whether during summer camps or during year-round shooting opportunities.
- Age-appropriate guidelines limit the shooting sports in Cub Scouting to council and district activities.
  - Cub Scouts in the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks can only shoot BB guns. Webelos Scouts can shoot pellet rifles.
- Unit level activities only occur in Boy Scouting and Venturing.
- Some programs in Boy Scouting are limited to council camps and special safety programs (pistol and cowboy action shooting).
- An established public range is preferred for any live fire.
- There are provisions for set-up and use of private ranges. These provisions involve council and landowner approvals.
- Using appropriate and adequate eye and ear protection will help to minimize the risk of injury.
- The proper ratio of range personnel and youth.
- Both instructors and range safety officers are needed for live fire. Each has a different role.
- Permission slips from parents are important, and in some states required for youth who will be shooting.
- Know and follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) for any range being used. Review the council range SOP in advance.
- The BSA shooting sports program does not include any firearms or devices regulated by the National Firearms Act, including machine guns, silencers, and short-barreled firearms.
- Use appropriate targets. The BSA program does not include the use of humans, human representations, animal targets in Cub Scouting, or incendiary or exploding targets.
- When handling firearms or operating a shooting range, take a PAUSE for safety: **P**ause before you start. **A**ssess possible hazards. **U**nderstand how to proceed safely. **S**hare your plan with others. **E**xecute the activity safely.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- BSA shooting sports: <https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/shooting-sports/>
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>
- Scouting Safely: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/>
- The Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16/>