



## RISK MANAGEMENT FOR 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

### *Volunteers and Youth Protection*

This is one publication in the series *Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work*. This series is intended to prepare UF/IFAS Extension county faculty, staff, volunteers, and youth to satisfactorily complete the important task of providing best practices in risk management strategies.

Our goal is to conduct educational events and activities that coincide with the 4-H mission and mandates while protecting the safety of participants, sponsors, property, finances, and the goodwill/reputation of the 4-H name. The inherent risk of events and activities can be mitigated through planning and preparation. This risk management guide has been created to outline ways to prepare for and deal with the specific risks associated with your program.

Early planning is key to conducting successful events and activities. A helpful tool in this process is the “Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work: Pre-Event Planning Guide and Matrix,” which is found within the *Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work* series: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_series\\_risk\\_management\\_for\\_4-h\\_youth\\_development\\_work](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_risk_management_for_4-h_youth_development_work). As you work through this matrix, questions may arise that are unique to a specific situation and may not be completely answered by the series. Extension faculty and staff should refer these questions to appropriate personnel. Questions that require time for research punctuate the need for early planning.

This publication will focus on basic overall precautions to be taken by everyone involved with 4-H. Another tool is the *Risk Management Checklist*, which can be used as a guide when planning an activity or event.

### Volunteers

It is a privilege to serve as a Florida 4-H youth development volunteer. Volunteers have an important role in maintaining both a safe environment for 4-H youth and a sense of belonging within the 4-H group and organization.

All volunteers who work with youth in a supervisory role, and/or who work with the 4-H youth program on an ongoing basis, will participate in youth protection. Additional information and guidelines for this process are located in the [Florida 4-H Policy](#).

### Volunteer Selection and Screening

The intent of the University of Florida UF/IFAS Extension volunteer selection process is to share a common philosophy and follow appropriate protocol to provide safe and secure environments for everyone involved in Extension’s youth programs.

Background screenings are mandatory for all volunteers who supervise youth or volunteer ten or more hours a month. For additional information regarding background screenings, please refer to the [Screening Process and Procedures](#). In addition to completing a Level 2 Department of Children and Families (DCF) Clearinghouse background screening, all volunteers must enroll yearly as a volunteer on [4-HOnline](#), complete a notarized Affidavit of Good Moral Character form, and successfully complete the Office of Youth Conferences Services online Youth Protection Training (# YCS800) annually. The training lasts about 60 minutes and includes a brief quiz. The Youth Protection Training can be completed on the [OYCS website](#) using a web browser.

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An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

## 4-H Code of Conduct

4-H volunteers at the local, state or national level represent the UF/IFAS Extension 4-H Youth Development Program and must abide by the Florida 4-H [Code of Conduct](#).

## Volunteer Role

University of Florida Extension County Directors or their designee may appoint volunteers to positions of program responsibility. Volunteer roles should be clearly defined by county faculty. There are several volunteer role descriptions (<http://florida4h.org/staff/volunteering/files/roles/roles.pdf>).

## Volunteer Reassignment or Dismissal

Volunteers may be reassigned at the discretion of the County Director. Volunteer Services may cease, at any time, at the request of the volunteer or at the discretion of the Extension agent. Refer to [Florida 4-H Policy](#).

## Health Information

It is mandatory for all participants in 4-H programs, including adults to complete the health form. For more information refer to Florida 4-H Policies Membership and Participation (<http://florida4h.org/policies/#membership>).

Treat all health information confidentially, although 4-H activities are not subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) Privacy Rule. More HIPPA information can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/summary/index.html>.

As a volunteer leader, it is beneficial for you to have some basic medical and emergency contact information for members whose parents might not be present. Any information collected for health care reasons within a 4-H setting shall be protected and not shared. In case of an emergency, always call 911 first.

## Club Resources

4-H clubs are the foundation for successful club programming. Having the necessary resources can and will help the 4-H agent and club leader work together in achieving club program success. Refer to [Club Resources](#).

## Inclusiveness

4-H membership is available to all youth ages 5–18 without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, or national origin. However, selected projects or programs do have enrollment restrictions. Not all projects or program activities are deemed appropriate for all age ranges due to either developmental appropriateness, safety, or other considerations. For more information, refer to [Florida 4-H Policies](#).

The University of Florida, under the guidelines of ADA and 504 federal legislation, is required to make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. To help provide the best possible service to students, staff, faculty, and visitors, the University of Florida has an ADA Compliance Office with a coordinator responsible for access for persons with disabilities. For more information refer to [Florida 4-H Policies](#) and [Best Management Practices](#).

University of Florida 4-H programs are required to be open to all youth and adult volunteers regardless of religious background or creed. For more information refer to the Florida 4-H [Policy](#).

## Emblem Use

4-H National guidelines and procedures are established for any print or electronic presentation of the 4-H emblem that must be adhered to by Extension faculty and 4-H volunteers and members. For more information, refer to Florida 4-H Policies [Name and Emblem](#), [Using the 4-H Name and Emblem](#), and the 4-H [Branding Guide](#).

## Internet/Social Media Safety

As the Internet becomes more predominant in society, youth are using the web more and more often. In designing Extension or 4-H websites, youth should not be identified by their names or 4-H clubs.

It is important for adults and youth to be aware of risks associated with Internet use. The Florida Extension program must handle and monitor the use of personal information in a confidential manner. All 4-H websites must contain the 4-H clover emblem. Using the 4-H clover emblem on an Internet site must adhere to federal regulations. All 4-H websites must link to <http://florida4h.org/>.

For more information, refer to Florida 4-H policies for [Websites and Social Media](#) and [Best Management Practices](#).

## Firearms

Under state law, Section 790.115, Florida Statutes, the possession of firearms, destructive devices, other weapons and ammunition (for antique firearms, short-barreled shotguns, short-barreled rifles, automatic rifles, and other destructive devices) at any 4-H activity or event is prohibited. An exception is made for education classes to be conducted on properties designated for 4-H use provided the firearms are handled, used and stored in a safe and responsible manner, and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Please refer to the Florida 4-H policies page, <http://florida4h.org/policies/#weapons>, for specific details. Additionally, a fact sheet titled *Shooting Sports State Plan and Program Guidelines* is available as part of the *Risk Management* series: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h390>.

## References

OYSC website

Florida 4-H Policies

Florida 4-H Volunteers

Florida 4-H Club Resources