

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game considers the following document to be an agency guidance document for purposes of Idaho Executive Order 2020-002. The guidance document is not new law; it is the Department's interpretation or implementation of existing law.

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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Safety Guidelines and Waivers for Youth Hunts and Clinics PROCEDURE NO.: ENF-6.0

Revision Date: June 2015

- Standardized font size
- Corrections to **Youth Hunting Clinic** form

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR IDFG SPONSORED YOUTH HUNTING/SHOOTING EVENTS

- A. Youth hunting and shooting clinics will be located and scheduled to minimize the chance of conflict with the general hunting public. This will require that youth upland bird hunting clinics are conducted under carefully controlled conditions with stocked game birds rather than natural, wild birds. Each region should have the necessary resources to conduct successful hunting/shooting events on WMA's or on private property. If possible, youth upland bird hunting clinics should be held on private property to further reduce the likelihood of conflict with the general public, including the non-hunting public. Access Yes properties should be considered for youth hunting events if held outside of a general hunting season. Youth waterfowl hunting clinics, by the nature of their more controlled circumstances do not require the same restrictions as upland bird hunting clinics. Our objective will be to organize successful youth hunting/shooting events, not make each event fit rigid requirements. The regions will have flexibility to organize sound programs that meet basic safety standards. Our goal is to maintain maximum control over access and participation in the event.
- B. Pairing youth participants with a safety range master will be mandatory for all Department sponsored youth hunting or shooting events. For youth upland bird hunting clinics, no more than one youth hunter/shooter to one range master will be allowed to maintain a safe environment for all event participants. This may require limiting participation. Emphasis will be placed on first time participants, rather than repeat attendees, when selecting participants for these events.
- C. With approval of the range master and provided the parent stays well behind the youth and range master, one parent may be allowed to accompany the youth hunter/shooter. If a parent accompanies the youth participant, it will be understood that the parent will also be under the supervision and control of the range master. The parent may not interfere in any way with the youth or the hunting/shooting activities. Maintaining safety and complete control of the hunting/shooting environment will be the highest priority.
- D. As noted in paragraph "A," youth waterfowl hunting clinics are conducted under more controlled situations than youth upland bird hunting clinics and may not require the same restrictions as noted in paragraph "B." It will be the responsibility of the range master assigned to each blind to determine if an additional youth hunter and/or one parent can be safely accommodated in that blind.
- E. With respect to the responsibilities of the safety range master, the following requirements apply:
1. The safety range master will have final say on whether or not a youth participant is capable and ready to participate in the event. A preliminary safety training and gun



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safety/shooting proficiency demonstration will be conducted – BEFORE the hunting/shooting event starts. Clinic personnel will make every attempt to identify those youth who are not prepared or qualified to participate for any reason. Those youth will be tactfully withdrawn from further participation at this stage of the event. In those cases the range master must deal with the situation decisively as soon as he/she determines the youth cannot safely participate in the activity. Whenever that determination is made, the youth will be taken aside, with parent or guardian and will be told with respect and compassion that additional training/mentoring will be required before the youth can participate in a Department sponsored event. The Department will provide all reasonable assistance to the youth to get him or her prepared to participate in future events.

2. The range master will have TOTAL control of the hunting field or firing line for youth hunting/shooting events. This will include dogs and dog handlers. It will be the responsibility of the range master to identify ANY unsafe situation and call an immediate halt to activities until the unsafe situation is corrected. Dog handlers and/or their dogs will be removed immediately if the range master concludes they cannot assist the youth hunter in a safe manner.
 3. Dogs and dog handlers will be selected based on whether they are appropriate for the event. Youth hunting events will not be a training opportunity for hunting dogs. Only pointing dogs will be used for upland bird hunting workshops.
 4. During youth hunting and shooting events, guns will not be loaded until the range master gives approval to do so.
- F. Each youth hunting/shooting clinic or event will start with a safety training and proficiency demonstration to prepare the youth participants for a safe and enjoyable experience. For youth waterfowl hunting clinics, which typically start before legal shooting hours, the Regional Supervisor (with agreement from the event range masters) may approve a safety and proficiency demonstration in the blind before shooting commences. Prior to the event, all staff involved in the event will be briefed on rules, safety plan and procedures. Staff will be encouraged to take a positive approach to handling potential issues like removing a dog handler or disqualifying a shooter. While safety is the top priority, the Department also wants to make the event a positive experience for all participants.
- G. Each range master must meet a minimum set of qualification requirements to perform this important role. Conservation Officers or Level I employees receive the necessary basic firearms safety and shooting training but others with NRA shooting instructor training or military training may also meet the standards, as deemed qualified by the Regional Supervisor. Other desirable qualifications include First Aid and Hunter Education experience.
- H. For upland bird youth hunting events, the use of bird launchers (poppers, catapults, etc.) will be recommended when resources and opportunities make their inclusion in the event practical. The use of bird launchers increases the control over events. Each region should



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pursue opportunities to add these equipment items to their inventories for future organized events.

- I. Shotguns sanctioned for Department sponsored youth hunting/shooting events **WILL NOT** include break action, exposed hammer single shot models. The dexterity required to safely cock, mount and fire or cock, mount and de-cock these shotguns can exceed the ability of some youth who otherwise could safely participate with more suitable shotguns. The Hunter Education Coordinator will pursue options to replace IDFG exposed hammer shotguns with internally cocked single shot shotguns. **If an adequate inventory of Department provided shotguns is available**, youth participants in Department sponsored events will be required to use a Department provided shotgun. **If an adequate inventory of Department provided shotguns is not** available, youth participants may use a personally provided shotgun, provided it meets Department criteria (**exposed hammer shotguns will not be allowed under any circumstances**) and provided the youth demonstrates proficiency to the range master. If a youth (or parent) insists on using a personally provided shotgun which does not meet the IDFG standards or the youth cannot demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the range master, he or she will not be allowed to participate in the event. Each region will strive to provide Try-stocks to fit each youth, and will attempt to have a variety of shotguns (length of pull, drop, etc.) to optimize the shotgun fit for each youth participant.
- J. Each youth hunting/shooting event will have a written Safety Plan with Standard Operating Procedure developed with chain of command, order of response for incident categories, emergency phone numbers, and location of first aid kits. Each event will have at least one gunshot first aid kit on site with multiple first aid certified Department or volunteer staff on hand. Safety Plans will include preparations such as pre-determined distances and response time from nearest emergency medical facility to the event location, prior notification of nearest emergency medical facilities of the youth hunting/shooting event, as well as prior notification of local law enforcement agencies and phone numbers of youth parent/guardians.



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YOUTH HUNTING CLINIC

**PARENTAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO HUNTER/BOWHUNTER
CLINIC INSTRUCTORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

I/We, hereby give permission for _____
Name of Student

To attend the _____ Youth Hunting Clinic.
Location

In consideration of the above-named student being permitted to attend this
Clinic and in consideration of the instruction and use of facilities provided by the
Instructors, Volunteers and

(Other Sponsoring Organizations, if any)

we hereby acknowledge that any claim of bodily injury or for damages arising as a result
of, or in connection with the instruction or the use of these facilities by the above-named
student or arising from the student's presence on or about the property or facilities of the
Idaho Department of Fish and Game, said organizations, their representatives or
instructors shall be governed by the Idaho Tort Claims Act (Idaho Code Sec. 6-901,et
seq.)

DATED This _____ day of _____ 20____.

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____