



About the program

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program teaches youth rifle safety and procedure and lets children participate in an Olympic skill sport while fostering healthy competition. All interested youths under 18 years old (or high school seniors no older than 20) are welcome, regardless of gender or physical ability.

Shooters are trained to use a .177 air rifle, and levels vary from beginners learning safety basics to winners of the Legion-affiliated National Championship, which consists of regional champs competing in a shoulder-to-shoulder match.



"I love working with kids, and this is such a good, clean, wholesome sport and activity."

Stan Lupkes, a shooting club coach and member of Meridian (Idaho) Post 113

Resources

The American Legion embodies strong American values and forms a grassroots force dedicated to love of country and commitment to veterans, their families, their communities and young people.

For more information on Junior Shooting Sports, email juniors shooting@legion.org, visit www.legion.org/shooting or contact your department chairperson. For additional information, contact:

Civilian Marksmanship Program

888-267-0796

www.odcmp.org

National Rifle Association

800-621-7615

programs.nra.org

National Safety Council

800-621-7615

www.nsc.org

USA Shooting

719-578-4670

www.usashooting.com



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THE AMERICAN LEGION JR. SHOOTING SPORTS HOW TO START A CLUB



Artwork # 234ACY0715

Stock# 22-009



How to start a Junior Shooting Sports Club at your post

1. Determine Your Goals

Junior Shooting Sports can be an effective and fun way to get youth and Legionnaires involved with your post. Some of your goals for the program may include:

- Educate young people about firearm safety.
- Introduce the shooting sports to community members and educate them about shooting.
- Harness shooting sports to help young people develop leadership, discipline, concentration, sportsmanship and responsibility.

2. Identify Leaders

Form a committee of Legionnaires dedicated to researching and organizing the activity.

Reach out to your Legion Junior Shooting Sports program chairman, who can help guide committee members through the process, and connect your post with other active Junior Shooting Sports groups in your region.

The shooting club adult leader(s) should be qualified and certified to instruct basic rifle safety and marksmanship. (Visit the USA Shooting or the Civilian Marksmanship Program websites for more information on coach certification.)

Other Legionnaire volunteers should take part as assistant instructors.

A manual for adult leaders is at the Junior Shooting Sports Program's website under Resources.

3. Get Insured

Although Legion Junior Shooting Sports Clubs have had zero rifle-related injuries, shooting is a sport with inherent risks. It is imperative that your post have liability coverage for this activity.

While many existing post insurance policies cover these activities, if the club practices at another site you need to check that facility's insurance coverage.

If your post coverage is not adequate, you may wish to look into an additional rider to your own policy or specific shooter's coverage.

4. Select Facilities

One of the advantages of using air rifles is that ranges can be set up easily in most facilities.

The major requirement is that a shooter be 10 yards from the target. Some space for pellet traps and backstops should be left behind the targets. Walls should be covered to prevent damage—moving quilts or canvas tarps will suffice. Shooters should have about four feet of space between them.

Each shooter needs a pair of safety glasses, an air rifle, pellets and a target trap. In addition, your post may want to provide spotting scopes or mats for prone firing.

5. Fund Your Program

If you need to raise funds for a program, consider charging a registration fee or club membership dues or requiring participants to bring their own pellets and targets.

Consider visiting or sending out mailers to local businesses, particularly sporting goods stores, which may be interested in sponsoring the program.

Fundraising events, such as an adult shooting competition with entry fees, also are popular ways to boost the program and can gain community goodwill.

6. Recruit Participants

To attract participants, consider making presentations or passing out Legion Junior Shooting Sports brochures at local youth groups, such as Boy and Girl Scouts or 4-H.

7. Promote the Program

Participants' parents need to be on board. Your post could hold an informational meeting for the parents, and encourage them to become involved as volunteers.

Community leaders and school officials can help gain support from the general public. Invite the community to public competitions through radio and television ads, and leverage social media, such as Facebook's events pages.

8. Expand

As your Junior Shooting Sports Club grows, think about going beyond fundamental marksmanship training. You could offer Qualification Awards programs, host local competitions and even have select participants compete to attend the Legion's National Championships at the Olympic Training Center/USA Shooting Range Facilities in Colorado Springs, Colo.