

# Air Rifle Shooting: Safety Procedures and Risk Assessment

## Introduction

This document outlines the safety procedures and risk assessment for air rifle shooting activities. The guidelines are developed on the premise that participants possess average ability. Prior to starting the activity, the instructor will assess the group to identify any needs relating to disability or other factors. While the highest safety standards must be maintained, every effort will be made to ensure all individuals, regardless of ability, can enjoy and participate fully in the activity.

## Instructor Qualifications and Supervision

The instructor must hold training and accreditation from the National Smallbore Rifle Association (NSRA) and maintain an up-to-date log of shooting hours. The recommended instructor to participant ratio is 1:10. For groups exceeding six people, an additional adult will assist in supervising those not actively shooting. If the group lacks a leader, a member of White Wolf Bushcraft School staff will be designated to provide support.

## Protective Equipment

Participants should wear normal outdoor clothing appropriate for the prevailing weather conditions, in addition to any specified personal protective equipment (PPE). Persons under 18 years of age are required to wear arm guards. Optional finger guards are available for those with sensitive fingers.

## Activity Restrictions

There are no restrictions except that participants must be physically suitable for this type of activity.

## Range Safety and Equipment Checks

The shooting range conforms to NSRA standards, with sufficient space behind and to the sides to protect spectators from stray shots. All equipment will be thoroughly checked by the instructor before use. Any faulty equipment will be removed from service, clearly labelled with the defect, and either repaired or destroyed. Targets will be inspected regularly. Defective equipment will be kept separate from functioning equipment and clearly labelled as such.

## Participant Briefing and Handling Procedures

Before handling any equipment, all users will be instructed in safety procedures and the safe handling of rifles. The instructor will ensure that everyone understands these procedures prior to commencing shooting.

## Environmental and Personal Precautions

Care will be taken at all times to avoid slips and trips in the woodland environment. To prevent sunburn, suitable headgear, clothing, or sunscreen should be used (for minors, parental permission is required for sunscreen application). The area surrounding the range will be checked for unauthorised individuals before shooting begins. The instructor will confirm all participants are behind the shooting line and will only commence shooting after giving a clear instruction.

## Shooting Protocols and Conduct

- Guns must never be pointed anywhere except at the targets.
- The safety curtain will be checked regularly if used.
- People awaiting their turn should remain seated in the designated area or on benches.
- Loading of rifles is only permitted at the shooting line, facing the targets.
- Guns must not be aimed into the air under any circumstances.
- If any danger is observed, participants must shout 'STOP' to alert others and inform the instructor. Upon hearing 'STOP', all shooting must cease immediately, rifles put down, and shooters step away.
- No running or horseplay is permitted on the shooting range. Individuals not adhering to safety rules will be asked to leave.
- Participants with medical conditions that could be aggravated by light exercise should inform the instructor.

## Post-Activity Procedures

Upon completion of the activity, all equipment must be made safe and returned to the gun store, where it will be checked for both quantity and condition. Any broken equipment will be withdrawn from use and either repaired or disposed of. All firearms will be stored in an approved gun locker. If the equipment is to be used by another group, it will remain under the control of the instructor.

Efforts must be made to thoroughly clean the range at the end of each session, including sweeping the floor and emptying targets of spent pellets. The ground area should be checked for hazards before each session, and targets must be secured. The range must always comply with NSRA standards, and activities will be cancelled in adverse weather conditions. Participants are encouraged to ask if they do not understand any aspect of the procedures.

## Risk Assessment Table

Risk scores: Up to 5 = acceptable (lower if possible); 6 to 10 = reduce risk if possible; over 12 = unacceptable risk.

Describe Hazard & Possible Harm	Persons at Risk	Existing Safety Measures	Likelihood	Severity	Initial Risk Rating	Additional Controls Required	New Risk Rating
Slip, trip and fall hazard due to uneven ground, causing sprains, strains, or broken bones in hands/arms	Participants, staff, visitors	Instructor checks and clears area of debris; set up on level ground where possible	2	2	$2 \times 2 = 4$	Constant monitoring of area	$1 \times 2 = 2$ (LOW)
Slip hazard due to wet floors/grass, causing sprains and strains to wrists, knees	Participants, staff, visitors	Senior instructor monitors area; activity stops or relocates if unsafe	3	2	$3 \times 2 = 6$	Constant area monitoring; consult senior instructor if in doubt; stop activity until safe to resume	
Injury to fingers by trapping in barrel when closing the gun, causing cuts to fingers, thumb, or hand	Participants, staff	Rules explained; careful supervision during loading/closing; constant reminders about hand placement	3	2	$3 \times 2 = 6$ (LOW)		$1 \times 2 = 2$ (LOW)
Puncture injury to face/eyes and body	Participants, staff	Safety glasses required unless wearing spectacles	3	2	$3 \times 2 = 6$ (MED)	Trained first aiders First aid kit available	$2 \times 2 = 4$ (LOW)
Persons entering range hit by pellet, causing wounds	Participants, staff, onlookers	One entry/exit; max four shooters on the line; range away from public; backstop and fencing; entrance gate closed/manned; warning signs	1	5	$1 \times 5 = 5$ (LOW)		

ranging from minor grazes to fatal injuries							
Equipment failure causing cuts, minor injuries, or muscular problems (arms/shoulders)	Participants, staff	Training: equipment checked at start/end; damaged equipment removed immediately	3	2	3 x 2 = 6 (MED)	Maintain vigilance; ensure sufficient spares; reinforce importance of reporting faults	1 x 2 = 2 (LOW)
Minor injuries caused by horseplay	Participants, staff, onlookers	Training; vigilance; no horseplay; first aid kit and trained first aiders on site	3	2	3 x 2 = 5 (LOW)		
Deliberate injury by misuse of equipment (e.g., poking, hitting others)	Participants, staff, onlookers	Sufficient trained instructors; constant vigilance	1	4	1 x 4 = 4 (LOW)	Remove offenders; report to Staff; senior instructor to inform parent/carer/leader	

### Amendments

Any changes to these procedures should be recorded below.

### Sign-Off

Signed: Wolf 11/11/25