



Target Shooting

Good Practice Guide

Version 1

2018

Target Shooting

For the purposes of this GPG, target shooting includes activities where a participant is firing or launching a projectile at a target and is being directly supervised by a designated leader, guide, instructor or supervisor.

This GPG does not cover the use of firearms that require a Firearms Licence, however information contained in this GPG may be useful these situations.

This GPG also does not cover combat type games such as paintball, where competitors are firing projectiles at each other.

The environmental scope includes both permanent ranges and impromptu or temporary ranges.

The most common activities that are covered by this GPG are the use of air rifles (powered by compressed air) and the GPG has been written largely with these activities in mind. However, less common activities that involve firing or launching a projectile at a target, such as axe throwing, knife throwing, or the use of large dart type projectiles may also find the information in this GPG applicable.

This GPG covers situations where participants are being directly supervised by a designated leader, guide or instructor and does not cover the hire or rental of equipment for unsupervised use.

This guidance is specific to **target shooting** activities and is designed to be used in conjunction with the **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities** and the **Target Shooting Planning Template**.

Potential value of activity

TARGET SHOOTING ACTIVITIES CAN PROVIDE:

- The opportunity to try new activities and have new experiences.
- Development of hand – eye co-ordination and discipline/ control of breathing.
- Sense of achievement / success. Success is easily defined.
- Education about firearm and gun safety.
- Self-Responsibility.
- Opportunity for a real world experience compared with a virtual world or gaming experience.
- An Inclusive activity for a wide range of physical abilities and easily adaptable for students with physical disabilities.
- An opportunity for enhancing and enriching the school curriculum.

Planning Considerations

See the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#)

Participants

Guidance on:

How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.

In addition to the generic participant considerations (see [General Guidance for Organized Outdoor Activities](#)) organisers of target shooting activities should consider:

- Choosing suitable equipment for the age, size and physical strength of participants.
- Assessing participants' ability and confidence before doing the activity by asking questions about their knowledge and prior experience.
- Sequencing and adapting activities to match the participants' skill level. Examples of this would be;
 - Using a variety of targets i.e. balloons, a range of larger to smaller targets, static and/or moving targets.
 - Varying the range length i.e. targets being moveable to suit age and ability level.
- Participants' ability to understand and follow instructions.

Supervision

Guidance on:

The level and style of supervision would typically be required for this activity.

The Arms Act 1983 and Arms Regulations 1992 requires the use of air rifles or airguns to be under the immediate supervision of either a person aged 18 years or older, or the holder of a firearms licence. *Immediate supervision* means that the person providing the supervision is within reach and in control of the person using the airgun and must be able to take control of the firearm or airgun. Supervisors cannot be in possession or control of another airgun. On a shooting range the rules in place for how the range operates, such as a fenced field or the supervision of range officers, may contribute towards supervision, providing supervisors can take quick and easy control of the airgun when required.

Although the requirements of the Arms Act 1983 and Arms Regulations 1992 apply to the use of firearms and airguns, the requirements are a foundation on which to base the supervision of all target shooting activities.

The NZ Police Arms Code, including the 7 Firearms Safety Rules provide a foundation on which to base the supervision of all target shooting activities:

The Seven Firearms Safety Rules

Rule 1: Treat every firearm as loaded.

Rule 2: Always point firearms in a safe direction.

Rule 3: Load a firearm only when ready to fire.

Rule 4: Identify your target beyond all doubt.

Rule 5: Check your firing zone.

Rule 6: Store firearms and ammunition safely.

Rule 7: Avoid both alcohol and drugs when handling firearms.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR TARGET SHOOTING ACTIVITIES:

- There is no one 'ratio' of leaders or supervisors to participants for any given activity. Supervision needs vary according to age and ability of the participants, the activity, the location and environmental conditions and the skill and experience of the leaders and supervisors.
- As required under the Arms Act 1983 and Arms Regulations 1992, the age of the supervisors is an important consideration.
- On ranges consider using two different supervision levels. The person with overall responsibility (sometimes called the range safety officer) and assistant supervisors who assist participants with loading.
- The supervision structure will vary with number of shooting stations used.
- Although supervision would normally be the ability for direct physical intervention to prevent an unsafe act or practice, control can also be by the use of a verbal command such as a "freeze" call.
- Consideration needs to be given to the supervision of participants who are waiting for their turn. Strategies can include; pairing activities so only half a group is involved in a shooting activity at one time, limiting the group size, length of the shooting rotation and having clearly defined areas for participants who are waiting.
- When there is more than one supervisor, clearly defined roles and responsibilities should be delegated. This is particularly important when using assistant leaders, accompanying teachers (who are not the activity leader), student leaders or parent helpers.
- Supervision needs will change if participants have any special needs, behavioral or medical needs.
- Clearly defined shooting zones and safe zones for non-participants, physically marked with a rope or a painted line. The use of a range flag to indicate to non-users that the range is in use. In an open range type environment, the use of a physical barrier such as a rope barrier or fence is recommended.
- Consideration should also be given to keeping animals off range area.
- When not in use, all air rifles, air guns and ammunition should be stored in a secure and safe storage area, which is preferably lockable. This includes at lunchtimes or other student 'free-time'.
- The use of visual reminders or checklists as an aid memoir are helpful for supervisors to refer to.

Restricting the firing zone

- Restricting the firing zone is an important supervision strategy to prevent the unsafe firing of projectiles by limiting the movement possible when loading and firing.
- Some strategies include:
 - The use of firing tubes that participants fire down
 - Benches or stands
 - Partitions
 - Attaching a rifle barrel to a fixed surface.

Retrieval of targets

- Retrieval of targets must only happen when it is safe to do so and all firing has ceased.
- Rifles should be either placed on the ground or on a firing bench and rifles unloaded and the barrels broken and non-one is allowed up to the firing station while retrieval of projectiles or targets is happening.

Example of a basic session outline and progression:

Introduction of the activity.

Safety and group management briefing, which includes identifying boundaries, safe zones, firing zones and safety commands/signals.

Gear brief and demonstration, including safe use and care of equipment.

Warm up or practice round where a participant's first attempt is highly supervised.

Progression of the session so participants become more independent as their skill and confidence increases.

Assessing an Activity Provider's Competence

IN THE SITUATION WHERE AN EXTERNAL OPERATOR IS BEING CONTRACTED TO PROVIDE THE ACTIVITY, IT IS APPROPRIATE TO ASK FOR EVIDENCE OF:

- The safety management system the operator has for the activities being provided e.g. standard operating procedures (SOPs), risk assessment, staff training records, and gear and equipment maintenance records.

Setting Up A Range

Setting up a range involves specific skills and knowledge beyond that required to run a target shooting activity on a permanent range. Information about setting up a range can be found in the Target Shooting NZ Range Manual and the NZ Police Range Manual, links to which are included in the Further Support section of this GPG.

Leader competence

The experience and knowledge required by those running the activity, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies. What competence other assistant leaders need should also be considered (e.g. where parents or other adults are helping the person running the activity).

Skills and knowledge

The simplest way to evaluate competence is to look at the qualifications they hold. Asking questions of potential leaders and having them provide examples of training or experience as part of their answer allows you to assess their experience and knowledge. It is also appropriate to ask for references to confirm the information they provide.

SPECIFIC LEADER COMPETENCIES RELEVANT TO THE ACTIVITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS COVERED IN THIS GPG INCLUDE:

- Appreciation of the seriousness of, and understanding the risks involved in target shooting activities.
- Knowledge of the equipment and how it is used.
- Previous experience with shooting and handling firearms/ air rifles.
- Confident and able to be assertive with participants.
- Effective management of the group, including non-participants or participants waiting.
- Knowledge of how to get assistance in an emergency situation.

IF USING ASSISTANT LEADERS, THE MINIMUM COMPETENCIES FOR THESE WOULD BE:

- Ability to assist the Leader in the management of the group and activity.

Relevant qualifications

The following qualifications are relevant for the activity (including but not limited to):

- A First Aid certificate
- A Firearms Licence

“Competent leaders are one of the mainstays of ensuring safety”



Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to run the activity safely. The participants may be required to bring this, or it may be provided to them.

Participant

What each participant would need to bring to the activity.

- Clothing and footwear appropriate for the activity, location and time of year i.e. sunhat, sunscreen, warm hat and jacket.
- Any personal medication that could be needed during the activity i.e. EpiPen, asthma inhaler.

Group

Equipment that will be provided to the participants for the activity. All equipment should be in good condition and suitable for the intended use.

Air rifles/ air guns

- All equipment should be in good condition and suitable for the intended use.
- Air rifles are predominately used, the use of pistols not recommended without specialist instruction.
- Air rifles should be an appropriate size for the participants. Junior size air rifles are available for children.
- The power of the air rifle should be appropriate for the targets being shot. High-powered air rifles are not suitable for beginners or introductory sessions.

Pre-use checks

- Check the barrel for obstructions. Regular lubrication of the barrels prevents obstructions.
- Check screws and nuts are not loose.
- Trigger weight – should require a squeeze and not a *hair trigger*.

- Ideally air rifles used should have a safety mechanism and this should be checked to ensure it is working correctly.
- Sights are correctly adjusted.

Projectiles

- Use target type pellets with a flat head that are specific for the calibre of air rifle.
- Care with handling lead pellets is recommended, including washing hands before eating, to minimize the chance of lead poisoning.
- Pellets are recommended to be stored separately from the air rifles.

Eye Protection

- Safety glasses are recommended in situations where the risk of a ricocheted pellet exists.

Targets

- Consideration needs to be given to what is **behind** the target. Absorbent material such as an earth bank is ideal. If a solid backstop is used this should be angled to minimize the risk of a ricocheted pellet.
- A variety of targets can be used – paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, tin cans or steel targets.
- Solid targets should be set to absorb the energy of the shot to avoid ricochet, i.e. set so they are knocked down with a successful shot.

Leader

Equipment that should be carried by the leader or that the leader should have easy access to.

- Access to a First Aid Kit.
- Communications device to get assistance with minimal delay.
- Protective case or bag for air rifles, ammunition to be carry to/ from the range.

Further support

Places to gain more information from, e.g. specialist websites, industry bodies or clubs.

Ministry of Education documents, Firearms in Schools Guidelines and Firearms in Schools Tools and Resources:

www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Firearms-in-Schools-Guidelines-March2018.pdf

www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/Firearms-in-Schools-Tools-and-Resources-March2018.pdf

Target Shooting New Zealand and NZ Police Range Manuals:

www.nzsssc.org.nz/asset/downloadasset?id=a65a51d0-eb57-4b08-a792-d30f88197a6d

www.police.govt.nz/service/firearms/range-manual.pdf

NZ Police Arms Code:

www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/the-arms-code-2013.pdf

Risk assessment and management

Target Shooting Planning template

Overarching Risk Management Guidance