Risk assessment – Air Rifle Shooting

Activity provider	Lincoln District Scouts Air Rifle Activity Team	Date of risk assessment	2 Oct 2026	Responsible lead	Activity Team Lead / Range Officer
		Date of next review	2 Oct 2027		

LINCOLN DISTRICT SCOUTS – AIR RIFLE SHOOTING RISK ASSESSMENT

What could go wrong?\nWhat hazard have you identified?\nWhat are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it?\nHow are the risks already controlled?\nWhat extra controls are needed?\nHow will they be communicated?	Review & revise\nWhat has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm that may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, range officers and visitors.	Controls reduce the risk by removing the hazard or making the activity safer. Brief everyone on the controls before the activity and reinforce them throughout.	Keep checking throughout the activity. Record changes, incidents or additional controls here.
Inexperience or unsafe handling\nAccidental discharge, injury from pellets, misuse of rifle	Participants, leaders, range officers, visitors	Only trained/authorised range officers supervise. Give a safety briefing and demonstrate handling before any rifle is loaded. Follow range commands immediately. Never point a rifle at a person, whether loaded or not. Stop the session if instructions are ignored or the group cannot be safely supervised.	
Rifle or equipment fault\nMechanical failure, injury, unsafe firing	Participants, range officers	Check rifles and range equipment before each session. Maintain equipment through a competent person and at planned intervals. Remove damaged or suspect equipment from use immediately, label/segregate it and do not return it until checked and cleared. Keep rifles secured when not in use.	
Pellets and storage\nUnauthorised access, ingestion, misuse or lead contamination	Participants, volunteers, visitors	Store rifles securely and pellets in a separate secure location. Keep pellets under the control of the range officer and issue only when required. Do not leave equipment unattended. Participants wash hands thoroughly after the activity; no eating or drinking on the firing line.	
Range layout and firing line\nPellet leaving the safe area, ricochet, injury to bystanders	Everyone at or near the range	Use only the designated range area and approved targets/backstop. Establish a clear firing line and controlled spectator area behind it. Confirm the range is clear before firing. Only the permitted number of shooters fire at one time (maximum four). Keep all muzzles directed downrange.	
Moving rifles and equipment\nTrips, manual handling injury, collision or unsafe carriage	Range officers, volunteers	Transport rifles unloaded and broken/open, under the control of an authorised adult/range officer. Do not carry rifles through crowds. Move equipment carefully and only carry a manageable load. Keep access routes clear.	
Unsupervised access or disruption\nTheft, handling by unauthorised people, accidental injury	Participants, visitors, volunteers	Never leave participants alone with rifles. Secure rifles whenever not actively in use and remove pellets from the range area when closing. Keep the activity area controlled and stop shooting if anyone enters the range or behaves unsafely.	
Participant suitability and consent\ Injury or distress; unmet support	Young people, adult participants	Confirm age eligibility, booking details and required parental consent before the session. Check relevant support, medical and accessibility needs in advance and agree reasonable adjustments. Give instructions in an accessible way and maintain appropriate	

You can find more information in the Safety checklist for leaders and at scouts.org.uk/safety

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or access needs		adult supervision.	
Incident, injury or emergency\ Delayed treatment or escalation of harm	Everyone present	A designated first aider and suitable first-aid kit must be available. Confirm emergency communications and site access arrangements before starting. Stop firing, make the range safe and follow the emergency procedure; contact emergency services when required and notify the appropriate Scout contact/parent or carer through the agreed process.	

Never be afraid to stop an activity if it is becoming unsafe!

Don't forget, as part of your programme planning, you should have contingency activities in reserve just in case you can't do what was planned or you need to stop half way through. Make sure this is shared with those involved, so everyone knows how to respond. You should have risk assessed contingency activities prior to them taking place and communicated key information to those involved as with all activities.

Scope: Air rifle shooting sessions delivered by Lincoln District Scouts at Altham Terrace Scout Campsite. This assessment should be used alongside current Scouts guidance, the approved range operating procedure, activity-specific briefing and emergency arrangements.