



IKES ON TARGET



Hosting Recreational Shooting Events During the COVID-19 Era

It's no secret that the coronavirus pandemic was a setback for many Izaak Walton League chapters forcing cancelation of many events planned for the first half of 2020. As restrictions on public gatherings are eased, chapters are opening back up and hosting social events, shooting competitions, fishing derbies and family outings. When searching for public events that will bring people to the chapter, generate new members, and raise the visibility of the chapter locally, consider these two great options:



- **National Shooting Sports Month (August 2020).** During this nationwide effort coordinated by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, League chapters can engage their communities, encourage youth to take up shooting sports, and introduce the public to safe, responsible firearms use.

We want all our chapters with shooting facilities to reap the benefits of hosting a National Shooting Sports Month event in August. You can find tips and tools to get your planning process started at: www.shootingsportsmoonth.org. We also offer to help with event promotions, by registering at: www.iwla.org/outdoor-recreation/shooting-sports.

- **National Hunting and Fishing Day (September 26, 2020).** A chapter can join the celebration recognizing the leadership of hunters and anglers in conserving fish, wildlife and critical habitat.

It's a great way to publicize the conservation contributions of sportsmen and women, while at the same time attract those in the community to learn more about the League. Get started with the National Hunting and Fishing Day toolkit at www.nhfd.org.

During the COVID-19 era, a chapter will need to be a bit more creative when conducting public events. However, success is achievable by taking a commonsense approach, including following health and safety practices (see page 3). Use these strategies and they will help your chapter stay "on target!"

On Target: Featured Chapters

In each issue of *Ikes On Target*, we highlight chapters that promote shooting sports.

Under 500 Members –

Fremont Chapter (Ohio)

Located in Sandusky County in northern Ohio, this chapter has 50-, 100- and 200-yard ranges, a trap shooting range, and indoor pistol and small-bore rifle range.



Covered Range House

In addition to regular trap leagues and monthly black powder and weekly indoor pistol fun shoots, the chapter often host United States Practical Shooting Association sectional competitions and Civilian Marksmanship Program sanctioned Garand-Springfield Matches (GSM).



Indoor Pistol and Small-Bore Rifle Range

Photos courtesy Fremont Chapter IWLA

www.iwla.org/fremontoh
facebook.com/iwlfremont/

Over 500 Members –

Washington County Chapter (Maryland)

With an annual member count of 1,100-plus, this central Maryland chapter offers a wide variety of shooting sports opportunities for its members and guests on a multiple ranges and courses including:

- Indoor and outdoor archery
- 3-D archery
- Indoor rimfire (small-bore)
- 50-yard rimfire and centerfire rifle
- 100- and 200-yard rifle
- Trap
- Still target shotgun
- Pistol
- Sporting clays



Introducing Youth to Shooting Sports Through Archery

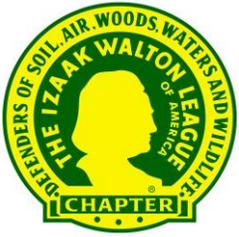


Always in Demand: Sporting Clays

Photo courtesy Washington County Chapter IWLA

www.washcoiwla.com/
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Health and Safety Practices During COVID-19 Era



As coronavirus restrictions on public gatherings are eased and “stay-at-home” orders are lifted, more members are returning to chapters and wanting to pursue their

favorite outdoor pastime. It is also likely that chapters will begin hosting public events associated with shooting sports.

Times have changed on how you maintain and operate shooting ranges, as well as how we conduct ourselves on a range during the COVID-19 era. You’ll need to use a commonsense approach, become more creative about managing range use, and pay much more attention to health and safety details when re-opening and operating ranges.

Success is achievable by adhering to current health and safety guidelines issued by local and state governments. However, you’ll have to move beyond merely requiring face coverings, limiting group sizes, and promoting social distancing.

Social Distancing

You can reduce the potential of person-to-person spread of coronavirus by:

- Minimizing crowd size at any one time, whether on the rifle-pistol range and an archery course or shooting trap or skeet.
- Limiting the number of shooting benches and pistol lanes and shotgunning positions available for use.
- Establishing a reservation system in order to stagger access to the range and start times.
- Spacing out shooters on the firing line and in staging areas and instructional classrooms.

Keep It Clean

You can further protect range users by:

- Ensuring that shooters and member volunteers, such as range safety officers

(RSO), use personal protective equipment, including masks or face coverings.

- Keeping people safe, not only with required eye and ear protection, but by having a supply of hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, and face masks available.
- Using disinfectant wipes to clean shared firearms, bows, and other equipment as well as hard surfaces that are touched frequently.
- Keeping a supply of cleaning solution visible for all to see and making it available for regular use. For example, every time a shooter leaves a shooting bench sanitizing it is in order.
- Covering shooting benches and pistol tables with a layer of heavy-ply plastic for ease of cleaning – regardless if it has wood, concrete, or metal surface. Frequently clean and disinfect these surfaces.
- Maintaining adequate trash cans for disposing used gloves and disinfectant wipes and emptying the waste contents often.
- Allowing only a volunteer to pick up the spent brass and empty shotgun shells off the trap, skeet, and sporting clays courses while wearing gloves and thoroughly washing their hands afterwards.

Other Hygiene Tips

- While monitoring the firing line, an RSO and firearms instructor will need to maintain safe distancing and reduce their hands-on contact with shooters whenever possible.
- Consider installing sneeze guard barriers (i.e., plexi-glass) between shooting benches, especially between pistol shooter positions, and in front of registration and sales counters.
- Limit access to restrooms and keep them clean and disinfected often.
- While all ranges should prohibit smoking, consider prohibiting use of smokeless tobacco, thus eliminating spitting.
- Close off water fountains and encourage range users to bring their own water.

- If a sign-in sheet is required, have several ink pens that are kept wiped with a disinfectant solution after use.
- Clean loaner equipment such as a shooting sleds, spotting scopes, sandbags, and staplers after use.

Communications

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of clear communications to your members and the public about abiding by health and safety measures:

- Keep your members and the public informed by promoting these health and safety practices using the chapter's newsletter, social media, and website.
- Communicate your range user hygiene and safety rules with reminder posters and warning signs located not just at the ranges, but throughout the chapter grounds and in the chapterhouse.
- Review these practices during shooter orientation and by having RSOs remind those on the firing line. While wearing face covering, remember to speak up when giving instructions and voice commands.

Liability

Regardless if its shooting ranges, fishing ponds, campsites or hiking trails, chapters that offer members and the public access to outdoor recreation facilities should require a signed liability release form. Consider:

- Amending your existing form to include a reference, warning and acknowledgment of potential exposure to COVID-19 while engaging in activities at the chapter.
- Contacting your chapter's insurance agent to review your liability insurance policy.
- Being aware of a member's vulnerability such as older age, pre-existing conditions and current health issues. If this person is serving as an RSO or other range volunteer, and is feeling ill, have them stay home.
- Actively enforcing your range and health and safety rules.

Another Resource



The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) offers a series of free COVID-19 safety posters that are available online to League chapters at: https://nssf.force.com/CPBase__store?site=a0d1500000BFszkAAD.

The NSSF has been compiling strategies and tactics that shooting ranges can safely re-open and operate. "The Outdoor Range Models of Success During the COVID-19 Era" webinar is available for your viewing on their educational forum, SHOT University Online. To view this recorded session, check out: <https://www.pathlms.com/nssf/courses/>.

Editor's Note: As you work to responsibly open and maintain your shooting ranges and welcome back shooting sports enthusiasts, implement these health and safety practices at the chapter to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

You can download a PDF of these strategies to share with others at the chapter at: www.iwla.org/shootingresources#safety.

Ikes On Target is a publication developed for IWLA chapter presidents and shooting sports coordinators.

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