

Washington County 4-H Archery Safety Rules

Archery is lots fun, but the fun can quickly turn into tragedy unless every archer observes some common sense rules. Before you even think about using your bow, learn these rules and make up your mind to follow them every time you hold a bow. Remember, most accidents are the result of carelessness and thoughtlessness.

As an archer, you must learn and practice these few simple rules:

1. **Follow the instructions of the range commander.** Give attention and listen to the range commander. Ask questions if you do not understand what is said.
2. **Always use proper safety equipment,** including an arm guard, finger tab or glove. A leader will ask the youth to reposition their safety equipment to prevent injury if the equipment is incorrectly positioned. If still incorrect the leader will ask the youth if the leader can reposition the equipment.
3. **Always use arrows of the proper length for you.** Arrows that are too short can cause injuries.
4. **Always inspect your equipment before shooting,** damaged equipment should be repaired or replaced to avoid injuries. Replace the bowstring whenever it becomes worn.
5. **Wear snug fitting clothes, tie back long hair, remove large earrings, and clear off any pins or remove anything from chest pockets.**
6. **Always aim and shoot only at definite target:** never shoot just for the sake of shooting. Always be sure you know what your target is and that it is safe to shoot. If you're not sure, take a closer look, you are still not sure, do not shoot.
7. **Always be sure the area around and behind your target is clear before you shoot.** Never shoot if there is a chance your arrow may ricochet from the target or another object and hit someone.
8. **POINT, DRAW, and AIM your arrow only in the direction of your target.** The arrow must always be pointed (aimed) in a proper, safe shooting position. A leader will ask the youth to change their shooting position if their stance is incorrect. If it is still incorrect the leader will ask the youth if the leader can reposition the archer.
9. **Never "DRYFIRE" your bow.** Always have an arrow on the string when shooting the now." DRYFIRING", shooting a bow without and arrow, can seriously damage a bow
10. **Always walk, never run, on the archery range.** If you run, you might accidentally cross in front of another archer, step on arrows lying on the ground, or trip and fall into the target and be injured by arrows sticking out of it.
11. **Shoot only with the knowledge and approval of your parents.**
12. **Follow the whistle commands given by the range commander.** If you are not familiar with the whistle commands ask the range commander to give verbal commands with the whistle blasts until you are familiar with them.

WHISTLE: TWO BLASTS

VERBAL: "Archers to the shooting line."

Meaning: Pick up the bow and move into position on the shooting line. Do not pick up the arrows.

WHISTLE: ONE BLAST

VERBAL: "Begin Shooting"

Meaning: Archers may take the arrows out of the quivers and begin shooting.

WHISTLE: THREE BLASTS

VERBAL: "Walk forward and get your arrows,"

Meaning: Archers have completed shooting. All archers have set their bows down and are standing behind the waiting line. They may now go forward to the target line and pull their arrows.

WHISTLE: FIVE OR MORE BLASTS (series of blasts)

VERBAL: "STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP" or CEASE FIRE"

Meaning: Immediately let down and put arrows back in the quiver, and step tack behind the waiting line. There is an emergency on the range.

Remember to follow those unspoken rules in archery that we call Range Etiquette.

Ask your leader for a copy.

References: N.A.A. Rules of Target Shooting; N.A.A. Instructor Manual N.A.A. Junior Olympic Archery Development Program
Archery merit badge pamphlet, Boy Scouts of America Washington County, WISCONSIN Wash Co SS/2014