

Welcome to the shooting sports exploration as part of Scouts BSA. In order to earn your merit badge while attend a shooting sports event at Lafayette Gun Club, we ask that you begin your journey by preparing yourself with a solid understanding of the three fundamental rules of gun safety and some of Virginia's firearms laws and hunting regulations. This prework can be completed at the individual, patrol, or even troop level.

1. Memorize the three primary gun safety rules <https://gunsafetyrules.nra.org/> :
  - a. ALWAYS Keep The Gun Pointed In A Safe Direction
  - b. ALWAYS Keep Your Finger Off The Trigger Until Ready To Shoot
  - c. ALWAYS Keep The Gun Unloaded Until Ready To Use
  
2. Become familiar with The Scout Marksman's Code <https://troopleader.scouting.org/program-features/rifle-shooting/information/>  
A Scout:
  - Always follows the rules for firearms safety.
  - Accepts the responsibility that goes with the use and possession of firearms.
  - Follows the laws that govern the use and possession of firearms in his community
  - Practices wildlife conservation.
  - Follows the spirit and the letter of the game laws.
  - Is especially careful to be a true sportsman when using firearms.
  
3. Watch this video from BSA: <https://youtu.be/LbLwfg8ns4o>
  
4. As part of getting to know Virginia Firearms laws, visit the Virginia State Police Firearms Page <https://vsp.virginia.gov/services/firearms/faq/> and determine how old you have to be in Virginia to purchase a rifle/shotgun or handgun. Also read the rules on underage possession of firearms <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/18.2-308.7/>.
  
5. Visit the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources hunting area <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/> and see if you can determine what license you need to hunt and what animals have hunting seasons in Virginia.
  
6. Visit the LGC Juniors page <https://www.lafayettegunclub.org/juniors/> to see what programs we offer for junior shooters.
  
7. See the new Requirement 3 for both Rifle and Shotgun badges as this is not something that can be completed in a classroom or range setting and will take some independent work by the scout. "Identify how you could apply the skills and knowledge of safe and responsible use of firearms you learned in this merit badge to pursue a career or personal hobby. Research the additional training and experience you would need, expenses you may incur, and the affiliation with organizations that could help you maximize the positive impact and enjoyment you gain from it. **Discuss what you**

**learned with your counselor, and share what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursued this.”**

8. Finally, we highly encourage scouts to read or at least scan the applicable Merit Badge Pamphlet for the badge they are pursuing. Both pamphlets have a lot of information, and the pictures are great references.
  - a. Rifle: <https://www.scouting.org/merit-badges/rifle-shooting/>
  - b. Shotgun: <https://www.scouting.org/merit-badges/shotgun-shooting/>

We're looking forward to sharing your shooting sports journey with you.

LGC Junior Committee