



Range & Target Activities Overview

From Cub Scouts to Venturers, Range & Target Activities (RATA) are some of the most popular parts of the Scouting program!

RATA activities teach archery, firearms, and throwing sports safety while introducing Scouts to a variety of fun, interactive program experiences and advancement opportunities. RATA activities are developed and implemented through safe, well-planned, and carefully supervised age-appropriate programs.

IMPORTANT: Scouting America's requirements for RATA activities have recently changed. **This handout is a simplified overview, so please check all current requirements!**

Your best resource for RATA information is the NCAC RATA Committee, including your District reps to the committee. Detailed requirements are in the 2024 Scouting America RATA Manual (available at the websites below) and 2025 Merit Badge Books.

All Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts unit and district RATA events must be approved in advance by the council. The NCAC approval form is available on the NCAC website, below. Contact your district RATA committee member for assistance completing and submitting the activity approval form.

Age-Appropriate Activities

Cub Scouts may do archery, BB gun shooting, and slingshot shooting, but only at approved district and council events, *never* at a den or pack activity.

Scouts BSA and older Scout programs may do archery; BB, air rifle and .22 rifle shooting; shotgun shooting; and throwing sports including tomahawks, knives, and slingshots. These may be done at approved unit, district, council and national events.

Qualified Supervision

All RATA activities *must* be supervised by qualified adults who hold required current certifications. Some activities require at least two certified adults. There are minimum instructor ratios for each activity. **Merit Badge activities** must also be conducted under the supervision of certified adults.

Scouts BSA and older USA Archery instructor certification for archery, and NRA Instructor/RSO certification for firearms or air rifles are required.

Cub Scouts: Council-trained and certified Range-masters or USAA/NRA Instructors are required.

The instructor must hold a Scouting America-approved pre-range briefing for all participants. Recommended briefing presentations are available on the Scouting America website.

Permitted Activities and Equipment

- **Archery** recurve or compound bows with size and draw weight appropriate for the archer; target point arrows only. Arm guards and finger tabs/gloves required.

- **Rifle** (Scouts BSA+) BB/air rifle, .22 rimfire bolt action rifle, black powder muzzleloading percussion rifle. Eye and ear protection required.

- **Shotgun** (Scouts BSA+) Modern cartridge shotgun, or black powder percussion or inline muzzleloading shotgun, 12GA or smaller. Barrel length appropriate for clay sports. Eye and ear protection required.

- **Tomahawk/knife throwing** (Scouts BSA+) French or Blackhawk-style commercial throwing tomahawk, purpose-designed commercial throwing knives, appropriate size for thrower. Eye protection required.

- **Slingshots** Appropriate pull slingshots or wrist rockets; no hard ammo or ball bearings. Eye Protection required.

- **Catapults** Permitted only with equipment and projectiles meeting Scouting America specifications.

- **Additional activities** such as NRA First Steps Pistol Orientation, cowboy action shooting, and sporting arrows may be permitted at authorized national and council camps and events.

- **Prohibited activities** If it is not expressly permitted, it is prohibited!

Safe Location

All activities must be conducted only at safe, approved locations.

- **Archery/BBs/Slingshots/Tomahawks/Knives:** any safe location that can be set up to meet Scouting America range design guidelines.

- **Firearms/Air rifles:** Authorized Scout camp or commercial ranges only.

For More Information

NCAC RATA Resources:

<https://ncacscouting.org/outdoor-adventures/range-and-target/>

Scouting America RATA Resources:

<https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/range-activities/>