

Sample Constitution

Each 4-H club should develop and adopt its own operating rules in the form of a club constitution. The following is a default, which the 4-H club will operate under until they are able to develop their own. The members and leaders of a 4-H club will cooperatively develop, discuss and adopt a constitution that fits their own club and community. It may or may not be similar to this constitution.

If you would like an electronic copy of this constitution to work with, download a copy from the 4-H web site at www.4h.ab.ca.

Article I

A. Name

1. The name of this club is _____.
2. Changes to the club name must be decided by a majority vote of all 4-H members in the club.
3. The 4-H name, emblem, pledge and motto are protected by trademark and copyright. Alterations, additions, or deletions are expressly forbidden.

B. Membership

1. Eligibility
Youth who have reached their ninth birthday and have not reached their twenty-first birthday by January 1 of the current club year can join this club. Youth who are younger or older than the official 4-H age limits cannot be members.
2. Basic member expectations
A 4-H member must meet all the following requirements to receive credit for a club year:
 - a) Complete project records and have them signed by the club or project leader.
 - b) Attend a minimum of 70% of the club activities.
 - c) Prepare and present to a group, a communication activity that is at least three minutes long.
 - d) Participate in the club's achievement event. If the member's project is unavailable (for example, a calf dies), the member is still expected to have some part in the achievement event.
3. A 4-H member who lives away from home will be allowed to remain active in this club if the member:
 - a) meets all the basic member expectations
 - b) has the approval of all the committees responsible for events, shows and competitions that he or she wants to participate in.

C. Registration

1. The member's registration fee must be paid before the member will receive any project supplies or can participate in any club, district, regional, provincial or national 4-H programs.
2. This club will submit an accurate and complete club registration form by December 1 of each year.

D. Adult Volunteer Leaders

1. All 4-H leaders in this club must:
 - a) be at least 18 years of age.
 - b) be elected by the members each year.
 - c) new and recertifying leaders will be screened by the regional screening committee. All leaders will be registered on the club's registration form.
2. A person cannot be registered as both a leader and a member in this club.
3. This club will have one general leader whose duties are to:
 - a) be responsible for the administration of the club
 - b) support the members in the organization and operation of the club

- c) ensure that the club provides opportunities for members to develop effective project and personal skills.
 - d) ensure that the club is represented on the district 4-H council and assist with district 4-H events
 - e) ensure that information is communicated to the members, other leaders and parents.
4. Other leaders will be recruited as needed. These could include:
- a) one or more assistant leaders whose duties are to assist the club leader.
 - b) a project leader for each project offered. A project leader's duties are to:
 - i. help members to develop their project skills.
 - ii. be aware of achievement day requirements and help members prepare for achievement day.
5. The general, assistant and project leaders make up the adult advisory committee.

E. Meetings

- 1. This club will hold a minimum of six meetings during the club year.

F. Quorum

- 1. At least one-half of members shall constitute a quorum for club meetings.

Article II - Purpose and Objectives

This 4-H club was formed to advance the following purpose and objectives and to provide service to the community.

A. Mission

- 1. To develop youth as self-reliant contributing individuals with marketable skills in today's society.

B. Objectives

- 1. The 4-H program offers the opportunity for members to:
 - a) Acquire knowledge and skills in specific project areas.
 - b) Learn effective communication skills.
 - c) Increase their self-esteem.
 - d) Develop and use effective leadership skills.
 - e) Work in teams with other youth and adults in this community. Meet new people across Alberta and Canada.

Article III

A. Election and Voting Procedure

- 1. Voting on routine matters, not involving persons present, will be done by a show of hands, unless any objection is voiced.
- 2. Election of leaders and the executive will be by nomination and secret ballot at the first or second meeting of the club year.
- 3. Leaders and the executive will be elected for a period of one year and voted upon by all members except for the acting chairman.
- 4. No member will hold any one executive position for more than two years.

B. The Executive

- 1. This club will elect a president, vice president, parliamentarian, secretary, treasurer, news reporter and historian. These officers form the executive committee. It is their duty to carry out the wishes of the total club membership and to represent the total club membership without allowing personal or minority group opinions to influence their action.

C. Duties of the Executive

1. President
 - a) Conduct orderly and efficient meetings according to parliamentary procedure.
 - b) Prepare an agenda before each meeting.
2. Vice President
 - a) In the absence of the president, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the president.
 - b) Assist the president as required.
 - c) Should the president have to leave the club, the vice president will automatically become the new president.
3. Parliamentarian
 - a) Knows parliamentary procedure and assists members to run effective meetings.
 - b) Knows the club constitution and ensures it is followed.
 - c) Reviews constitution annually and recommends any changes.
4. Secretary
 - a) Help the president prepare the agenda.
 - b) Handle all club correspondence and read pertinent items at meetings.
 - c) Record the minutes of each meeting.
5. Treasurer
 - a) Keep an accurate, up-to-date record of club finances and report to the club at meetings.
 - b) Administer the club finances, issue co-signed cheques, and receive and pay bills.
6. News Reporter
 - a) Inform radio, newspaper and other news outlets of club activities.
7. Historian
 - a) Organize and make available the club's written materials to all members.

D. District Council Representatives

1. This club will elect two representatives to attend all district council meetings. An alternate will be elected to represent the club if one of the representatives is unavailable.

E. Committees

1. The club can appoint and dissolve committees as needed to carry out a specific matter of business, which does not fall under the jurisdiction of the leaders or executive.
2. The committee chair is responsible for the direction of the work of the committee and will arrange any necessary meetings. He or she will report to the entire club when required.

Article IV - Livestock Project Replacement (for livestock clubs only)

A majority vote of approval by the total club will be required before an original project animal can be replaced by another animal. Grounds for replacement must be either loss or extreme ill health of the original project livestock.

Article V

A. 4-H Club Files

1. All members of the 4-H club executive and the adult advisory committee will have immediate access to all club records and files.
2. The secretary's and treasurer's records will be turned over to the historian at the end of the club year and retained in the club's library for future reference.
3. Retiring club leaders, who are no longer involved with the club, will turn all supplied leadership material over to their successor.
4. Personal information of members and leaders will be protected and only be released to those outside the club with permission of the individual (or parents if under age 18).

B. Review of Club Financial Records

The accounts and records of the treasurer will be reviewed by a designated adult at the end of the club year. The reviewer will submit a report to the club.

C. Banking Powers

The treasurer and the president, or in his absence the vice president, will sign all cheques.

Article VI

A. Distribution of Constitution

1. Each new 4-H family will receive a copy of the latest revision of this constitution upon entering the 4-H club.
2. A copy of this constitution and all subsequent revisions will be retained in the 4-H club's library.

B. Amendment of Constitution

1. This constitution will be reviewed by the club each year.
2. Amendments may be made at a selected regular club meeting. A three-quarters majority is required to approve any amendment to this constitution

Article VII

A. Splitting Of The Club

If this 4-H club decides, by a majority secret ballot vote, to split into two or more separate clubs, the club which retains the former meeting location will also keep the original club name and accumulated years of club operation. If both clubs remain at the same location, the club with the largest membership during the first year of operation will keep the former name.

B. The Dissolution Of The Club

Upon a decision, by majority secret ballot vote, to dissolve this 4-H club, all funds in the club's account will be retained for a two-year period. At the end of two years, if the club has not reorganized, all funds will be transferred to the 4-H Foundation of Alberta.