



University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development 4-H Name & Emblem Authorization Fact Sheet

The 4-H Youth Development program is the youth outreach from the Land Grant Universities, Cooperative Extension Services and the United States Department of Agriculture. The 4-H Name & Emblem is intended to represent the ideals of the program with its focus on Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Today, it is one of the best known and most valued images emblematic of a century of 4-H achievement. The 4-H Name & Emblem are very important to us as an organization because it represents who we are.

What is the 4-H Name & Emblem?

The 4-H Name and Emblem are respected and revered by millions of people around the world who have been impacted by the 4-H Youth Development program. The use of the 4-H Name and Emblem is very important to us as an organization because it represents who we are. By saying “4-H emblem” we are referring to the four-leafed clover with four letter H’s on the leaves. The 4-H Name and Emblem are unique because they are protected by an act of the U.S. Congress and there is a set of guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture governing use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. For more information about the basic guidelines for use of the 4-H Name and Emblem, please see the 4-H National Headquarters website at http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/emblem/4h_name.htm.

The official 4-H emblem is a clover with four leaves and an “H” on each leaf. The clover’s stem must point to the right as you look at the image. The 4-H emblem is not a plain four-leaf clover. The 4-H emblem should appear in specific colors and in its entirety. The 4-H Name & Emblem belongs to the 4-H Youth Development program, under the authority of USDA and anyone wishing to use it must obtain permission to use it ahead of time.

How Do I Get Permission to Use the 4-H Name and Emblem?



It depends on who you are and for what reason you wish to use the 4-H Name & Emblem: 4-H Club or program member or volunteer leader? Commercial vendor? Event, activity, or program affiliated with 4-H? Private, non-profit organization?

If you are a 4-H member or volunteer, you are permitted to use the 4-H Name & Emblem once your program is chartered with the official 4-H Charter (issued by University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development) from 4-H National Headquarters within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

If you are a commercial vendor, private organization, or any other entity, you will need to contact either the local University of Idaho Extension county office or the University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development state office to determine what steps you will need to take for your use of the 4-H Name & Emblem.

In all private and commercial use of the 4-H emblem, the statement “18 USC 707” must legibly appear either to the right of the base of the stem or below the lower right leaf of the clover. In use internal to the Cooperative Extension System (all 4-H Youth Development programs and clubs duly given authorization to use the 4-H Name & Emblem) use of the statement is at the discretion of the State 4-H Program Director.

Whoever uses such emblem or any sign, insignia, or symbol in colorable imitation thereof, of the words “4-H Club” or “4-H Clubs” or any combination of these or other words or characters in colorable imitation thereof, without being duly authorized, shall be fined not more than \$5000 for individuals and \$10,000 for groups, or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.

Authorization for Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem

Authorizing others (those who are not official Extension employees) to use the 4-H Name and Emblem is an important process described by USDA authorization guidelines. Authorization should be obtained in context to awards, books, booklets, posters, calendars, displays, banners, t-shirts, etc. produced by people and organizations who are not Extension employees.

If the person requesting authorization will distribute a product at a county level, then the county 4-H professional gives the authorization for use of the 4-H Name and Emblem. Once distribution for an item crosses county lines, then authorization from the University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development state office is required. If distribution crosses state lines, authorization is required by USDA at www.national4-hheadquarters.gov.

On rare occasions, individuals or companies surface who are seeking to profit off of the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem on a product or service without the appropriate authorization. If you are aware of such a case, please notify the University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development state office immediately.

The majority of 4-H emblem misuse and authorization problems occur out of ignorance, not out of malice. In the majority of the cases, we are able to resolve misuse and authorization in a friendly and beneficial manner. We have incidents every year where a company or individual uses the 4-H emblem without authorization on a product or service offer and attempts to market it to 4-H clubs, and the company finds out that it did not appropriately follow the authorization and receives a letter from us saying that they are not allowed to do this. Individuals and companies distributing products and services should carefully follow the guidelines.

In situations where a resolution cannot be reached, the Director of Extension has authority to issue a “cease and desist use of the 4-H Name and Emblem” letter. This is a rare occurrence but it can and does happen.



Did You Know?

The 4-H Name & Emblem is a highly valued mark within our country's history. As such, it was granted a very unique and special status: it is in a category similar to the Presidential Seal and the Olympic Emblem. This federal protection makes it a mark into and of itself with protection that supersedes the limited authorities of both a trademark and a copyright. As a result, responsibility and stewardship for the 4-H Name & Emblem were not given to the U.S. Patent Office but were given to a higher level of the federal government, a member of the Cabinet-the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary has responsibility for the 4-H Name and Emblem, at the direct request of Congress. The “18 USC 707” is the statement in the United States Code that outlines the protection of the 4-H Name & Emblem.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Charlotte V. Eberlein, Director of University of Idaho Extension, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83844. The University of Idaho provides equal opportunity in education and employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran, as required by state and federal laws.