

BSA Reminders for Outings

The following points are to remind those planning an outing about the major needs to assure high standards of health and safety are met. Review this list and decide who will be responsible for each of them.

PRIOR TO THE EVENT

1. Each member attending the outing must have a current [BSA Health Form](#). This is necessary to be aware of any special medical needs and to be prepared to deal with them.

- Part A: Informed Consent, Release Agreement, and Authorization
- Part B: General Information/Health History (attach a photocopy of the participant's insurance card)
- Part C: Pre-Participation Physical

2. If you are planning a High Adventure trip, download the associated Risk Advisory or required information.

3. Recommend that each participant have adequate health and accident insurance coverage. Encourage unit accident coverage. A photocopy of the participant's insurance card should be attached to Part B of the [BSA Health Form](#).

4. Training:

- All leaders need to be current on their Youth Protection Training (valid for two years).
- Arrange for all adults and Boy Scout-age youth to take Hazardous Weather Training on line at my.scouting.org.
- Have leaders take [Safe Swim Defense](#), [Safety Afloat](#), and/or [Climb on Safely](#) as needed for planned activities.
- Arrange for survival training for all participants, including seven priorities: (1) STOP- Stop, Think, Observe, Plan, (2) Shelter, (3) Fire, (4) Rest, (5) Signaling, (6) Water, (7) Food. Resource: Wilderness Survival Merit Badge.
- One or more adults need to have first aid training (including hypothermia, hyperthermia, heat problems, blisters, frostbite, hyperventilation, acute altitude sickness, insect stings), and CPR and AED. Contact your council for opportunities for Wilderness First Aid (WFA) courses; these can be taken by adults and youth over age
- Conduct pre-fitness training to get everyone in physical shape for the trip.

5. Plan for adequate leadership- A minimum of two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a participating Scout's parent, or another adult is

required for all trips and outings. One of these adults must be 21 years of age or older.

Adult Supervision/Coed Activities: Male and female adult leaders must be present for all overnight coed Scouting trips and outings, even those including parent and child. Both male and female adult leaders must be 21 years of age or older, and one must be a registered member of the BSA.

Consider the number of youth participants, their age, their training and experience with the type of activity being undertaken, and the degree of difficulty of the outing. Maintain a minimum ration of one adult per 10 youths (and for Cub Scouts, one adult per five youths). Each group must have at least two adults. Observe the Safety Rule of Four: No fewer than four individuals (always with a minimum of two adults) go on any backcountry expedition or campout.

6. Get written [Consent Form and Approval by Parent or Legal Guardian](#) for each youth participant. Be sure parents understand what the risks are and what precautions are being taken.

7. Research and know the area in advance, or plan to travel with a guide.

8. Develop an activity program geared to the abilities and experience of the group. See the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *BSA Fieldbook*, *Venturing Leader Manual*, or *Cub Scout Leader Book*.

9. Emergency Procedures

- Be alert to weather conditions. Establish procedures for weather emergencies—high winds, heavy snow, excessive rain, lightning, and flooding. Refer to Hazardous Weather training.
- Develop an emergency plan for missing person(s). Search only the immediate area for missing persons and then contact the appropriate authorities if a more excessive search is needed.

10. Proper food, water, and clothing- Plan adequate and nutritious menu items and safe water sources. Make sure every person is properly clothed, especially footwear and headgear, for all possible weather conditions.

11. Develop lines of communication- Let parents know where you are going, when you will leave, where you will leave vehicles, when you expect to return, and whom to contact for emergencies. Establish an

emergency contact with a responsible adult in the group's home community and specify times when an adult on the outing will check in.

For high adventure activities such as a whitewater trip or caving expedition, appoint someone whom the group leader will call once "off trail" so that parents feel comfortable, and as a safety precaution.

12. What not to bring – Leave pets at home. Fireworks are never permitted.

ON THE TRAIL

1. Keep the group together. Use the rule of four. No fewer than four hike or canoe together. If one person becomes ill or injured, one administers first aid while two go for help.

2. Avoid hiking along highways, but if you must, hike against the traffic in single file well off the pavement. Wear highly visible clothing.

3. Always use the buddy system- while traveling, on the trail, and in boats or canoes, to keep track of everyone. Hold periodic buddy checks.

4. Know the trip course/know the limits of your group-. Recognize the difference between difficult and dangerous areas and bypass the dangerous completely. Attempt activities with a degree of risk only if equipment, ability, training, and accessibility to the area are commensurate with the degree of difficulty and qualified instructors are present. Carefully check an entire whitewater course before attempting it. Portage canoes if unsure. Know the limits of your group and when to turn back.

5. Keep hydrated. See that everyone maintains an adequate intake of liquids and food.

6. Avoid hazards. Avoid lightning, swollen streams, rapids, traveling at night, etc. Stay away from peaks and ridges. Avoid ravens that might fill with flashflood waters from rain falling in higher areas. Stay away from open fields when backpacking. Stay near shorelines when boating or canoeing.

IN CAMP

1. Select campsites that are protected from high winds, lightning, flashfloods, cliffs, falling rock, dead limbs or trees, and areas that are free of poisonous plants. Take adequate measures to avoid insects (flies, ants, wasps, mosquitoes, ticks, etc.).

2. No flames in a tent – Do not permit a flame of any kind to be used inside or near any type of a tent whether flame-resistant or otherwise. Pitch tents at least 30 feet from any fire.

3. Use of liquid fuel stoves and lanterns requires supervision by an experienced adult with proper safeguards for transportation and refueling.

4. Have a unit fireguard plan and use if a fire occurs. Appoint guards and rotate this duty daily. Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure extinguished fires are dead out. Use the "cold out" test by running a bare hand through the extinguished coals and ashes.

5. Provide a means for keeping all perishable foods cold.

6. Scrape all pots, dishes, and utensils clean of food debris. Wash thoroughly in warm soapy water, and rinsed in hot water with a sanitizing agent added.

7. If toilet facilities are not available, use a cat-hole or straddle trench located at least 200 feet from any water source. Cover fecal matter with dirt after each use and completely close hole before departing. If the administrating agency requires, pack out all fecal matter.

8. Encourage personal cleanliness. If showers are not available, participants should take a periodic sponge bath. Encourage everyone to brush teeth daily and wash/sanitize hands before handling food and eating.

9. Use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming, Safety Afloat for all outings when watercraft are used, and Climb on Safely for all climbing activities.

10. Plan activities that avoid horseplay, which reduces injuries related to carelessness. Report any serious accident to your council service center. Schedule 9 to 10 hours of sleep between taps and reveille and see that quiet is maintained during this time.

11. Show respect for the outdoors. Apply the principles of Leave No Trace and Outdoor Ethics.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE OUTING – ARRIVAL HOME

1. Check in when returning; let the contact person know you have returned.

2. Remove, store, or distribute food packages.

3. Clean and/or dry equipment and store properly.

4. Have at least two adults stay at the pickup point until all youth have been picked up.