



# **Guide to Safe Scouting**

## **Table of Contents**

### Preface

#### I. Adult Leadership

- Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings

#### II. Aquatics Safety

- Who Can Instruct Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat Training?
- Safe Swim Defense
- Classification of Swimming Ability
- Pool and Surf Swimming
- Safety Afloat
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)
- Water Clarity
- BSA Lifeguard
- Swimming
- Diving and Elevated Entry
- Scuba (Venturers and older Scouts only)
- Policy on Asthma/Reactive Airway Disease
- Snorkeling, BSA
- Waterskiing
- Boardsailing
- Whitewater Safety Code

#### III. Camping

- Age Guidelines
- Family Camping
- Wilderness Camping
- Trail Safety
- Beware of Lightning
- Pure Drinking Water
- BSA Property Smart
- Hantavirus
- Rabies Prevention

#### IV. Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use and Abuse

##### V. Emergency Preparedness

- Reporting Deaths or Serious Injury
- Emergency Phone Number List

##### VI. First Aid

- First-Aid Kits
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Protection Considerations for Bloodborne Pathogens
- Near-Drowning

##### VII. Fuels and Fire Prevention

- Chemical Fuels
- Guidelines for Safely Using Chemical Stoves and Lanterns
- Flammability Warning
- Extinguishers
- Fireworks

##### VIII. Guns and Firearms

- Cub Scout Standards
- Boy Scout Standards
- Handguns (Venturers only)
- Shotguns
- Muzzle Loaders
- Rifles

##### IX. Sports and Activities

- The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

- Cave Exploring
- Judo, Tai Chi, and Aikido
- Climbing and Rappelling
- Unauthorized and Restricted Activities
- Carbon Tetrachloride
- Knives
- Rope Monkey Bridges
- Parade Floats and Hayrides
- Unit Fund-raisers
- Tractor Safety
- Bike Safety
- Skating Guidelines

#### X. Inspections

- Meeting Room
- Motor Vehicles
- Unit Camping
- Boats

#### XI. Medical Information

- Immunizations
- Life-Threatening Communicable Diseases
- Sun Safety
- Religious Beliefs and Medical Care
- Prescriptions

#### XII. Transportation

- Automobiles
- Campers, Trailers, and Trucks
- Buses
- Trains
- Boats
- Aircraft
- Tour Permits
- Commercial Driver's License Compliance

#### XIII. Winter Activities

- Winter Camping Safety

- Winter Sports Safety

#### XIV. Youth Protection and Child Abuse

- Hazing and Initiations

- Appendix - Forms

- Appendix - Updates

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>

# Guide to Safe Scouting

## A Unit Leader's Guide for Current Policies and Procedures to Safe Activities



The purpose of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is to prepare adult leaders to conduct Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. The policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards that have been identified through eighty-plus years of experience. Limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as stumbling blocks; rather, policies and guidelines are best described as stepping-stones toward safe and enjoyable adventures.

Unit leaders should be aware of state or local government regulations that supersede Boy Scouts of America policies and guidelines.

## Scouting Safety Begins with Leadership

A health and safety course syllabus and video introduce the concept of the "sandwich principle," with emphasis on the importance of qualified supervision and discipline, and features The Risk Zone and *Guide to Safe Scouting*. Each district across the country received a copy of this new training package. Call your [council service center](#) to find out when this course is being delivered in your district.



## BSA Rules and Policies

**Bold type throughout the *Guide to Safe Scouting* denotes BSA rules and policies.**

## Viewing the online Guide

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available here in two formats:

- One for reading [on-line](#) - this version is divided into chapters and includes a search engine.
- Another for reading [off-line](#) - the entire publication is presented in a single interface to facilitate print-out.

A bound hard-copy version (BSA Supply #34416B) is also be available. To obtain a copy, contact your [local council](#) or call 1-800-323-0732 to request an Official Boy Scout Catalog.





# Guide to Safe Scouting

## I - Adult Leadership

Each Cub Scout den and Webelos Scout den and each chartered Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, and Venturing crew shall have one leader, 21 years of age or older, who shall be registered and serve as the unit or den leader. A unit leader may not serve simultaneously in any other position within the same unit. The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit or den leader on the appropriate form.

Primary reference: *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*



### Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings

1. Two-deep leadership:  
**Two registered adult leaders, or one adult and a parent of a participating Scout, one of whom must be at least 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips or outings. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when no adult leadership is required. Coed overnight activities require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older.**
2. During transportation to and from planned Scout outings,
  - a. Meet for departure at a designated area.
  - b. Prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
  - c. Plan a daily destination point.

A common departure site and a daily destination point are a must. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members - *never one on one.*

3. **Safety rule of four:**  
**No fewer than four individuals (always with the minimum of two adults) go on any backcountry expedition or campout.** If an accident occurs, one person stays with the injured, and two go for help. Additional adult leadership requirements must reflect an awareness of such factors as size and skill level of the group, anticipated environmental conditions, and overall degree of challenge.
4. **Male and female leaders require separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.**

5. **Male and female youth participants will not share the same sleeping facility.**
6. **When staying in tents, no youth will stay in the tent of an adult other than his or her parent or guardian.**
7. If separate shower and latrine facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. The buddy system should be used for latrines by having one person wait outside the entrance, or provide Occupied and Unoccupied signs and/or inside door latches.  
Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of youth members in situations where the youth are changing clothes or taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.
8. **Two-deep adult leadership is required for flying activities. *For basic orientation flights, the adult licensed pilot in control of the aircraft is sufficient for the flight while two-deep leadership is maintained on the ground.***

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## II - Aquatics Safety

### Who Can Instruct Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat Training?

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training can be given by any person authorized by the council, including a BSA Aquatics resource person, a unit leader with aquatics skill, or any other person with aquatics knowledge or experience whom the local council has approved.

### Safe Swim Defense

Before a BSA group may engage in swimming activities of any kind, a minimum of one adult leader must complete Safe Swim Defense training, have a commitment card (No. 34243) with them, and agree to use the eight defenses in this plan.

One of the best opportunities for Safe Swim Defense training is in summer camp. The eight defenses are:

#### 1. Qualified Supervision

**All swimming activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth members in his or her care, who is experienced in the water and confident of his or her ability to respond in the event of an emergency, and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of BSA Safe Swim Defense. (It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conduct of all swimming activity.)**

#### 2. Physical Fitness

**Require evidence of fitness for swimming activity with a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian.** The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, the unit leader should require proof of an examination by a physician.

Those with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions are taken.

#### 3. Safe Area

When swimming in areas not regularly maintained and used for swimming activity, have lifeguards and swimmers systematically examine the bottom of the swimming area to determine

Safe Swim Defense

This is to verify that \_\_\_\_\_

has satisfactorily completed specific instruction in Safe Swim Defense and has agreed to use the eight defenses in this plan on every occasion when \_\_\_\_\_ goes swimming. (Unit and No.) \_\_\_\_\_

This card is good for two years from date: \_\_\_\_\_ Council \_\_\_\_\_

Boy Scouts of America

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Aquatics Counselor Approved by Council

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



varying depths, deep holes, rocks, and stumps. **Mark off the area for three groups: not more than 3 1/2 feet deep for nonswimmers; from shallow water to just over the head for beginners; deep water not more than 12 feet for swimmers.** A participant should not be permitted to swim in an area where he cannot readily recover and maintain his footing, or cannot maintain his position on the water, because of swimming ability or water flow. When setting up a safe swimming area in natural waters, use poles stuck in the bottom, or plastic bottles, balloons, or sticks attached to rock anchors with twine for boundary markers. Enclose nonswimmer and beginner areas with buoy lines (twine and floats) between markers. Mark the outer bounds of the swimmer area with floats. Be sure that clear-water depth is at least 7 feet before allowing anyone to dive into the water. Diving is prohibited from any height more than 40 inches above the water surface; feet-first entry is prohibited from more than 60 inches above the water. For any entry from more than 18 inches above the water surface, clear-water depth must be 10 to 12 feet. Only surface swimming is permitted in turbid water. Swimming is not permitted in water over 12 feet deep, in turbid water where poor visibility and depth would interfere with emergency recognition or prompt rescue, or in whitewater, unless all participants wear appropriate personal flotation devices and the supervisor determines that swimming with personal flotation equipment is safe under the circumstances.

#### **4. Lifeguards on Duty**

**Swim only where there are lifeguards on duty. For unit swims in areas where lifeguards are not provided by others, the supervisor should designate two capable swimmers as lifeguards.** Station them ashore, equipped with a lifeline (a 100-foot length of 3/8-inch nylon cord). In an emergency, one carries out the line; the other feeds it out from shore, then pulls in his partner and the person being helped. In addition, if a boat is available, have two people, preferably capable swimmers, take it out - one rowing and the other equipped with a 10-foot pole or extra oar. Provide one guard for every 10 people in the water, and adjust the number and positioning of guards as needed to protect the particular area and activity.

#### **5. Lookout**

Station a lookout on the shore where it is possible to see and hear everything in all areas. The lookout may be the adult in charge of the swim and may give the buddy signals.

#### **6. Ability Groups**

Divide into three ability groups: Nonswimmers, beginners, and swimmers. Keep each group in its own area. Nonswimmers have not passed a swimming test. Beginners must pass this test: jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before and return to the starting place. Swimmers pass this test: jump feet-first into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. **These classification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season.**

#### **7. Buddy System**

**Pair every youth with another in the same ability group.** Buddies check in and out of the swimming area together. Emphasize that each buddy lifeguards his buddy. Check everyone in the water about every 10 minutes, or as needed to keep the buddies together. The adult in charge signals for a buddy check with a single blast of a whistle or ring of a bell and a call of "Buddies!"

The adult counts slowly to 10 while buddies join and raise hands and remain still and silent. Guards check all areas, count the pairs, and compare the total with the number known to be in the water. Signal two blasts or bells to resume swimming. Signal three blasts or bells for checkout.

## 8. Discipline

Be sure everyone understands and agrees that **swimming is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the complete Safe Swim Defense**. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing, and should be reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the swimming activity begins. Scouts should respect and follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor. When people know the reason for rules and procedures they are more likely to follow them. Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

## Classification of Swimming Ability

### *Swimmer Test*

The swimmer test demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming. The various components of the test evaluate the several skills essential to this minimum level of swimming ability:

**Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.**

The test administrator must objectively evaluate the individual performance of the test, and in so doing should keep in mind the purpose of each test element.

1. "Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming. . . ."

The swimmer must be able to make an abrupt entry into deep water and begin swimming without any aids. Walking in from shallow water, easing in from the edge or down a ladder, pushing off from side or bottom, or gaining forward momentum by diving do not satisfy this requirement.

2. ". . . Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; . . ."

The swimmer must be able to cover distance with a strong, confident stroke. The 75 yards must not be the outer limit of the swimmer's ability; completion of the distance should give evidence of sufficient stamina to avoid undue risks. Dog-paddling and strokes repeatedly interrupted and restarted are not sufficient; underwater swimming is not permitted. The itemized strokes are inclusive. Any strong side or breaststroke or any strong overarm stroke (including the back crawl) is acceptable.

3. ". . . swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke . . ."

The swimmer must indicate the ability to execute a restful, free-breathing backstroke that can be used to avoid exhaustion during swimming activity. This element of the test necessarily follows the more strenuous swimming activity to show that the swimmer is, in fact, able to use the backstroke as a relief from exertion. The change of stroke must be accomplished in deep water

without any push-off or other aid. Any variation of the elementary may suffice if it clearly provides opportunity for the swimmer to rest and regain wind.

4. ". . . The 100 yards must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. . . ."

The total distance is to be covered without rest stops. The sharp turn simply demonstrates the swimmer's ability to reverse direction in deep water without assistance or push-off from side or bottom.

5. ". . . After completing the swim, rest by floating."

This critically important component of the test evaluates the swimmer's ability to maintain in the water indefinitely even though exhausted or otherwise unable to continue swimming. Treading water or swimming in place will further tire the swimmer and are therefore unacceptable. The duration of the float test is not significant, except that it must be long enough for the test administrator to determine that the swimmer is, in fact, resting and could likely continue to do so for a prolonged time. The drownproofing technique may be sufficient if clearly restful, but it is not preferred. If the test is completed except for the floating requirement, the swimmer may be retested on the floating only (after instruction) provided that the test administrator is confident that the swimmer can initiate the float when exhausted.

Reference: *Swimming* and *Lifesaving* merit badge pamphlets

### ***Beginner Test***

**Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before, and return to starting place.**

The entry and turn serve the same purpose as in the swimmer test. The swimming can be done with any stroke, but no underwater swimming is permitted. The stop assures that the swimmer can regain a stroke if it is interrupted. The test demonstrates that the beginning swimmer is ready to learn deepwater skills and has the minimum ability required for safe swimming in a confined area in which shallow water, sides, or other support is less than 25 feet from any point in the water.

## **Pool and Surf Swimming**

The Safe Swim Defense applies to swimming at the beach, private or public pool, wilderness pond, stream, lake, or anywhere Scouts swim. Here are some additional points for the pool and the surf.



Pool - If the swimming activity is in a public facility where others are using the pool at the same time, and the pool operator provides guard personnel, there may be no need for additional designation of Scout lifeguards and lookout.

The buddy system is critically important, however, even in a public pool. Remember, even in a crowd, you are alone without protection if no one is attentive to your circumstances.

The rule that people swim only in water suited to their

---

ability and with others of similar ability applies in a pool environment. Most public pools divide shallow and deep water, and this may be sufficient for defining appropriate swimming areas. If not, the supervisor should clearly indicate to the participating Scouts the appropriate areas of the public facility. Although such procedures add a margin of safety, their use may not always be practical when the swim activity is conducted at a public facility where non-Scouts are present. A responsible adult supervisor, who understands his or her responsibility and the elements of safety, can exercise discretion regarding certain procedures while maintaining safety.

Surf - The surf swimming environment of wave action, currents, tides, undertow, runouts, and sea pests like stinging jellyfish requires precautions for safe swimming that aren't necessary in other environments. A swimmer's physical condition is very important and should enable the swimmer to recover footing in waves, swim vigorously for at least five minutes without becoming exhausted, and remain calm and in control when faced with unexpected conditions.

Designated swimming areas are marked by flags or pennants that are easily seen. Beginners and nonswimmers are positioned inshore from the standing lifeguards equipped with reach poles. Better swimmers are permitted seaward of the lifeguard but must remain shoreward of anchored marker buoys. The lifeguard-to-swimmer ratio should always be 1-to-10, with a rescue team stationed at the beach area and supplied with a rescue tube or torpedo buoy.

## Safety Afloat

Safety Afloat has been developed to promote boating and boating safety and to set standards for safe unit activity afloat. **Before a BSA group may engage in an excursion, expedition, or trip on the water (canoe, raft, sailboat, motorboat, rowboat, tube, or other craft), adult leaders for such activity must complete Safety Afloat Training, No. 34159A, have a commitment card, No. 34242A, with them, and be dedicated to full compliance with all nine points of Safety Afloat.**



### 1. Qualified Supervision

All activity afloat must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children in his or her care, who is experienced and qualified in the particular watercraft skills and equipment involved in the activity, and who is committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. One such supervisor is required for each 10 people, with a minimum of two adults for any one group. At least one supervisor must be age 21 or older, and the remaining supervisors must be age 18 or older. All supervisors must complete BSA Safety Afloat and Safe Swim Defense training and rescue training for the type of watercraft to be used in the activity, and at least one must be trained in CPR. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained as a BSA Lifeguard to assist in the planning and conducting of all activity afloat.

*For Cub Scouts:* The ratio of adult supervisors to participants is one to five.

### 2. Physical Fitness

**All persons must present evidence of fitness assured by a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian.** The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, the adult leader should require proof of an examination by a physician.

Those with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions taken.

### **3. Swimming Ability**

**A person who has not been classified as a "swimmer" may ride as a passenger in a rowboat or motorboat with an adult "swimmer" or in a canoe, raft, or sailboat with an adult certified as a lifeguard or a lifesaver by a recognized agency. In all other circumstances, the person must be a swimmer to participate in an activity afloat. "Swimmers" must pass this test:**

**Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.**

This qualification test should be renewed annually.

### **4. Personal Flotation Equipment**

**Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons engaged in activity on the open water (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, kayaking, and surfboarding). Type II and III PFDs are recommended.**

### **5. Buddy System**

**All activity afloat must adhere to the principles of the buddy system.** The buddy system assures that for every person involved in aquatics activity, at least one other person is always aware of his or her situation and prepared to lend assistance immediately when needed. Not only does every individual have a buddy, but every craft should have a "buddy boat" when on the water.

### **6. Skill Proficiency**

**All participants in activity afloat must be trained and experienced in watercraft handling skills, safety, and emergency procedures. (a) For unit activity on white water, all participants must complete special training by a BSA Aquatics Instructor or qualified whitewater specialist. (b) Powerboat operators must be able to meet requirements for the Motorboating merit badge or equivalent. (c) Except for whitewater and powerboat operation as noted above, either a minimum of three hours' training and supervised practice or meeting requirements for "basic handling tests" is required for all float trips or open-water excursions using unpowered craft.**

***For Cub Scouts:* Canoeing and rafting for Cub Scouts (including Webelos Scouts) is to be limited to council/district events on flat water ponds or controlled lake areas free of powerboats and sailboats. Prior to recreational canoeing, Cub Scouts are to be instructed in basic handling skills and safety practices.**

### **7. Planning**

- a. **Float Plan.** Know exactly where the unit will put in, where the unit will pull out, and precisely what course will be followed. Determine all stopover points in advance. Estimate travel time with ample margins to avoid traveling under time pressures. Obtain accurate and current maps and information on the waterway to be traveled, and discuss the course with others who have made the trip under similar seasonal conditions. (Preferably, an adult member of the group should run the course before the unit trip.)
- b. **Local Rules.** Determine which state and local laws or regulations are applicable. If private property is to be used or crossed, obtain written permission from the owners. All such rules must be strictly observed.
- c. **Notification.** The float plan must be filed with the parents of participants and a member of the unit committee. For any activity using canoes on running water, the float plan must be filed with the local council service center. Notify appropriate authorities, such as Coast Guard, state police, or park personnel, when their jurisdiction is involved. When the unit returns from this activity, persons given the float plan should be so advised.
- d. **Weather.** Check the weather forecast just before setting out, know and understand the seasonal weather pattern for the region, and keep an alert "weather eye." Imminent rough weather should bring all ashore immediately.
- e. **Contingencies.** Planning must anticipate possible emergencies or other circumstances that could force a change in the original plan. Identify and consider all such circumstances in advance so that appropriate contingency plans can be developed.

***For Cub Scouts: Cub Scout canoeing and rafting does not include "trips" or "expeditions" and is not to be conducted on running water (i.e., rivers or streams);*** therefore, some procedures are inapplicable. Suitable weather requires clear skies, no appreciable wind, and warm air and water.

## **8. Equipment**

All equipment must be suited to the craft, to the water conditions, and to the individual; must be in good repair; and must satisfy all state and U.S. Coast Guard requirements. To the extent possible, carry spare equipment. On long trips or when spare equipment is not available, carry repair materials. Have appropriate rescue equipment available for immediate use.

## **9. Discipline**

All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe unit activity afloat. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing, and should be reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the activity begins. When Scouts know and understand the reasons for the rules, they will observe them. When fairly and impartially applied, rules do not interfere with the fun. Rules for safety, plus common sense and good judgment, keep the fun from being interrupted by tragedy.

**Note: For cruising vessels (excluding rowboats, canoes, kayaks, and rafts, but including sailboats and powerboats longer than 20 feet) used in adult-supervised unit activities by a chartered Venturing crew or Sea Scout ship specializing in watercraft operations or used in adult-supervised program activity in connection with any high-adventure program or other activity under the direct control of the National Council, the standards and procedures in a forthcoming Sea Scout manual may be substituted for the "Safety Afloat" standards.**

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

**Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons engaged in activity on the open water (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, and kayaking).**

**Only U.S. Coast Guard-approved equipment (types I, II, or III) is acceptable for use in Scouting aquatics.** Ski belts are not acceptable. Scouts and unit leaders should learn which type is appropriate for each specific circumstance and how to wear and check for proper fit.

## Water Clarity

**Swimming activity in turbid water should be limited to surface swimming. Turbid water exists when a 12-inch white disk at the depth of 3 feet is not visible from above the surface of the water. Underwater swimming, headfirst entry (except for racing dives), and board diving are not permitted in turbid water.** Supervised instruction in lifesaving skills and surface diving may be conducted in confined areas of turbid water not exceeding 8 feet in depth and free of bottom hazards.

**Snorkeling and scuba skills are taught and practiced only in clear water. Clear water exists when a 12-inch disk at a depth of 8 feet is visible from above the surface of the water.**

## BSA Lifeguard

BSA Lifeguard training has been established to provide units (packs, troops, teams, and posts) with qualified individuals within their own membership to give knowledgeable supervision for activities on or in the water. The first standard in the Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat guidelines establishes a need for qualified supervision. An adult currently trained as a BSA Lifeguard or an adult leader assisted by a Scout holding BSA Lifeguard training meets this requirement. To enroll in the BSA Lifeguard course, you must be at least 14 years of age or have completed the eighth grade. The latest requirements for BSA Lifeguard training are included on the application form, No. 34435. Every unit leader is encouraged to become trained or to be certain that at least one youth or adult member of the unit has such training.

## Swimming

Swimming areas should be large enough to avoid crowding (minimum of 40 square feet per swimmer). Note the following in accordance with Safe Swim Defense rules. **Mark off the area for three groups: not more than 3.5 feet deep for nonswimmers; from shallow water to just over the head for beginners; deep water not more than 12 feet for swimmers.**

## Diving and Elevated Entry

**"Diving" refers to any water entry where the feet are not making first contact with the water. "Elevated entry" refers to any water entry from a height more than 18 inches above the water. According to BSA Safe Swim Defense standards, no diving or swimming activity of any kind is done in water with a depth greater than 12 feet.**

**All water entry must be feetfirst where the water has less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth. A leaping entry is recommended where water is at or above head level; a step-down or jump-down entry from a sitting position is recommended for shallower water.**

**No diving is permitted in water with less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth. Diving is permitted in clear water over 7 feet deep from a dock, pier, or platform that is no more than 18 inches above the water surface. For elevated entry from 18 inches high but less than 40 inches above the water surface, clear and unobstructed water depth must be at least 9 feet. The water must be clear enough to enable supervisory and guard personnel to see the diver at the deepest part of the plunge.**

**Board diving is permitted only from boards, mounted on a fixed (not floating) platform or deck, no more than 40 inches (approximately 1 meter) above the water surface. Clear water depth below the board should be 9 to 12 feet. A guard or supervisor should be positioned where the diver can be seen at all times beneath the surface. There should be no other surface or underwater activity or obstruction for at least 15 feet on either side of the board and 25 feet in front of the board. Diving should always be done straight ahead from the board, never to the sides.**

**Any elevated entry from a height greater than 40 inches must be feetfirst and only from a fixed platform or solid footing no more than 60 inches above the water surface. Clear water depth should be 10 to 12 feet. Other protective measures and distances are the same as for board diving.**

## **Scuba (Venturers and older Scouts only)**

**Any person possessing, displaying, or using scuba equipment in connection with any Scouting-related activity must be currently certified by the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) or the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). These two agencies are recognized by the Boy Scouts of America for scuba training and instruction. Alternatively, if PADI or NAUI training and instruction is not available, certification may be accepted from other agencies that comply with Recreational Scuba Training Council (RSTC) guidelines, provided that such acceptance has been expressly approved by the BSA local council in consultation with the BSA national Health and Safety Service.**



**Scuba programs may be a part of Boy Scout or Venturing activities for participants who are 14 years of age or older. Persons meeting the age requirement and properly certified may participate in group dives under the supervision of a responsible adult who is currently certified as a dive master, assistant instructor, or any higher rating from NAUI or PADI. Student divers must be under the supervision of a currently certified NAUI or PADI instructor. No exceptions to the BSA age requirement are permitted, and any NAUI or PADI age requirements for those 14 and older shall be followed in all Scout-related activities. A 14-year-old participant with a junior diver certification may dive only when accompanied by a buddy who is a certified open-water diver at least 18 years old.**



**Because of lack of frequency of diving by most sports divers, it is important that any certified divers be screened and evaluated by a certified diving instructor before participating in BSA-related activities. The skills to be evaluated include the following:**

- . Use of buoyancy control device
- b. Giant stride entry
- c. Removal and replacement of weight belt
- d. Neutral buoyancy
- e. Snorkel to regulator exchange
- f. Removal and replacement of scuba unit under the water
- g. Face mask removal, replacement, and clearing
- h. Emergency swimming ascent
- i. Alternate air source ascent
- j. Pre-dive safety drill
- k. Five-point ascent and descent
- l. Deepwater exits
- m. Simulation of surface procedures

## **BSA Policy on Asthma/Reactive Airway Disease as Related to Scuba Activities**

1. Persons with symptomatic or active asthma/reactive airway disease (commonly known as RAD) should not be allowed to scuba dive. This would include, at a minimum, anyone who:
  - . Is currently taking medication for asthma/RAD
  - b. Has received treatment for bronchospasm in the past five years
  - c. Has exercise induced bronchospasm
  - d. Has cold-induced bronchospasm
2. Persons with asymptomatic asthma/RAD who wish to scuba dive should be referred to a pulmonary medical specialist who is also knowledgeable about diving medicine for a complete medical examination, including exercise and bronchial challenge testing. Any determination of fitness for diving must be made on the basis of such examination and specific testing.

## **Snorkeling, BSA**

The Snorkeling, BSA, requirements have been developed to introduce Scout-age children to the special skills, equipment, and safety precautions associated with snorkeling; to encourage the development of aquatics skills that promote fitness and recreation; and to provide a solid foundation of skills and knowledge for those who later will participate in more advanced underwater activity.

Any trained Aquatics Instructor, BSA, may serve as a counselor. A person recognized and certified as a snorkeling instructor by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), American Red Cross, or the Young Men's Christian

Association (YMCA) also qualifies as a Snorkeling, BSA, counselor.

Instructions must be conducted in clear, confined water with a maximum depth of 12 feet. A swimming pool is recommended. All requirements must be completed as stated on the application form, which is available at your local council service center. The counselor may not omit, vary, or add requirements. The requirements are presented in the order in which they should be taught to the Scout. The completed application should be submitted to the local council service center by the counselor or unit leader.

## **BSA Snorkeling Safety**

Snorkeling Safety is the recommended procedure for conducting group snorkeling at a private or public pool, wilderness pond, stream, or wherever the water looks inviting enough to take a dip.

### **1. Qualified Supervision**

All snorkeling activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth members in his or her care; who is experienced in the water and is confident of his or her ability to respond in the event of an emergency; and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of BSA Snorkeling Safety.

### **2. Physical Fitness**

All persons must present evidence of fitness for snorkeling activity with a complete health history from physician, parent, or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, a medical evaluation by a physician should be required by the adult leader. Those with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and the necessary precautions are taken.

### **3. Safe Area**

Training in the use of snorkeling equipment shall be performed in clear, confined water that is not more than 12 feet deep.

Snorkeling may be done in water outside of a confined area under the direction of the qualified supervisor if the participant has met the BSA snorkeling requirements. The local conditions and ability of those engaged in the snorkeling activity should be considered by the qualified supervisor to determine if any special precautions should be taken.

Snorkeling shall not be done if boat traffic, waves, current, water temperature, or weather conditions in the area are deemed unsafe by the qualified supervisor. Time in the water should be adjusted based on the water temperature.

### **4. Proper Equipment**

- a. The snorkeling equipment shall be properly fitted and in good repair.
- b. The use of snorkeling vests and personal flotation devices is at the discretion of the qualified supervisor based on the local conditions and the ability of the person(s) engaged in the snorkeling activity.
- c. A diver-down flag must be used in accordance with local rules and regulations.

- d. Appropriate lifesaving equipment in good repair is ready and available to the qualified lookout while supervising the snorkeling activity.

## **5. Qualified Lookout**

The qualified lookouts are stationed in a location (either afloat or ashore) where it is possible to see and hear all those engaged in the snorkeling activity. The qualified lookout is a strong swimmer with lifeguard skills (i.e., competent swimmers with basic water-rescue skills serve as both lookouts and lifeguards). A minimum of two qualified lookouts are provided with at least one qualified lookout for every eight snorkelers in the water.

## **6. Ability**

Beginners and nonswimmers in clear, confined water of the appropriate depth may use masks and fins, separately or together, under close supervision. Training for Snorkeling, BSA is limited to qualified swimmers.

Snorkeling in open water is limited to those classified as swimmers unless the supervisor determines that those in the other ability groups may safely participate while wearing a properly fitted personal flotation device.

A group should not undertake a snorkeling activity in open water unless all participants, including the adult supervisor, have completed basic instruction in the Snorkeling, BSA requirements.

## **7. Buddy System**

All participants in snorkeling activities should be paired as buddies and remain close enough that they are constantly aware of their buddy's location and condition. Generally, buddies should take turns making breath-holding dives. That is, one buddy remains at the surface, floating with his mask in the water while breathing through the snorkel, and keeps an eye on the buddy who is down. When the diver surfaces, both buddies should check their position relative to the rest of the group before moving on or letting the other buddy dive.

It is the combined responsibility of the adult supervisor, the lookout, and the lifeguards to know the number of people in the water at all times, to make periodic checks of that number, and to call for buddy checks when it is necessary to confirm that number.

## **8. Discipline**

Be sure everyone understands and agrees that snorkeling is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the complete BSA Snorkeling Safety. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing, and should be reviewed for all participants at the beginning of the snorkeling activity. Scouts should respect and follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor. When people know the reason for rules and procedures they are likely to follow them. Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

# **Waterskiing**

Safe waterskiing starts with safe equipment; a thorough knowledge of techniques; competent instruction; an efficient, careful towboat operator; and a conscientious observer. A life jacket is a must for all water-skiers. Skis should be in good shape and free from sharp or protruding edges. The boat operator

should be driving solely for the benefit, satisfaction, and safety of the skier. The boat and skier should stay away from docks, swimmers, boaters, people who are fishing, and other objects.

The Water-Skier's Safety Code and Boat Driver's Safety Code are found in the *Waterskiing* merit badge pamphlet. These are guidelines to be followed by all those involved in the sport of waterskiing.

Reference: *Waterskiing* merit badge pamphlet

## Boardsailing

The BSA boardsailing program has been developed to introduce Scout-age children to basic boardsailing skills, equipment, and safety precautions, to encourage development of skills that promote fitness and safe aquatics recreation, and to lay a skill and knowledge foundation for those who will later participate in more advanced and demanding activities on the water.

Any person recognized and certified as an instructor by Windsurfer International or the U.S. Board Sailing Association may serve as a counselor for the Boardsailing Award with the approval of the local council service center. Any person trained and experienced in boardsailing skills and safety may serve as a counselor for this award in a Scout summer camp program under the direction and supervision of a currently trained BSA Aquatics Instructor.

Instruction in recreational activity must be conducted according to the BSA guidelines for boardsailing. The Boardsailing Award is now available for inclusion in Scouting programs.

Reference: Boardsailing BSA Award Application, No. 19-935

## Whitewater Safety Code

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) Safety Code includes ten recommendations for river safety:

1. Be a competent swimmer.
2. Wear a PFD.
3. Keep your canoe or raft under control, always!
4. Be aware of river hazards and avoid them.
5. Boating alone is not recommended; preferred minimum is three to a craft.
6. Be suitably equipped.
  - a. Wear shoes (tennis shoes or special canoeing shoes are best).
  - b. Tie your glasses on.
  - c. Carry a knife and waterproof matches (also compass and map).
  - d. Don't wear bulky clothing that will waterlog.
  - e. Wear a crash helmet where upsets are likely.
  - f. Carry an extra paddle and canoe-repair tape.



- g. Open canoes should have bow and stern lines (painters) securely attached. Use at least 15 feet of 1/4- or 3/8-inh rope. Secure them to the canoe so that they are readily available but will not entangle feet and legs in case of a spill.
  7. Swim on your back in fast water, keeping your feet and legs downstream and high. Keep watching ahead.
  8. When you start to spill, keep the upstream gunwale high.
  9. If you do spill, hang on to your canoe and get to the upstream end. (Note: If you are heading into rough rapids and quick rescue is not expected, or if water is numbing cold, then swim for shore or a rock where you can climb out of the water.)
  10. When you are with a group:
    - a. Organize the group to even out canoeing ability
    - b. Keep the group compact for mutual support.
    - c. Don't crowd rapids! Let each canoe complete the run before the next canoe enters.
    - d. Each canoe is responsible for the canoe immediately behind it.
- 

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>

# Guide to Safe Scouting

## III - Camping



### Age Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America has established the following guidelines for its members' participation in camping activities:

- **Overnight camping by second- and third-grade Cub Scout dens or Cub Scout packs (other than at an approved local council resident camping facility) is not approved, and certificates of liability insurance will not be provided by the Boy Scouts of America.**
- **Cub Scouts (second- and third-graders) and Webelos Scouts (fourth- and fifth-graders) may participate in a resident overnight camping program covering at least two nights and operating under certified leadership in an established Scout camp operated by the council during the normal camping season.**

**A Webelos Scout may participate in overnight den camping when supervised by his mother or father. If a parent cannot attend, arrangements must be made by the boy's family for another youth's parent (but not the Webelos leader) or another adult relative or friend to be a substitute at the campout. No parent should be responsible for more than one boy other than his or her own.**

**It is essential that each Webelos Scout be under the supervision of an adult. Joint Webelos den-troop campouts are encouraged for dens of fifth-grade Webelos Scouts with their parents to strengthen ties between the pack and troop. Den leaders, pack leaders, and parents are expected to accompany the boys on approved trips.**

**Tiger Cubs are limited to boy-parent excursions or program-managed family camping designed for the entire family.**

### Family Camping

**Family camping: an outdoor camping experience, other than resident camping, that involves Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, or Venturing program elements in overnight settings with two or more family members, including at least one BSA member of that family. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children, and Youth Protection guidelines apply.**

#### Recreational family camping

**Recreational family camping: when Scouting families camp as a family unit outside of an organized program. It is a nonstructured camping experience, but is conducted within a Scouting framework on local council-owned or -managed property. Local councils may have family camping grounds**



available for rental at reasonable rates. Other resources may include equipment, information, and training.



## **Program-managed family camping**

**The local council or unit provides all of the elements of the outdoor experience on one or more days, with major program areas staffed. Many times this includes food service, housing, and complete program schedule. Cub Scout unit family programs must have local council approval. These events must be held on council-owned or -managed property or, at the local council's option, in council-approved city, county, state, or federal parks.**

Model A: typically a weekend experience for the Scout member and an adult member of his family. Examples: dad-and-lad, mom-and-me, and parent-and-pal.

Model B: an outdoor experience of one or more days at a set BSA-owned or -managed camping location where the Scout's entire family is encouraged to participate.

- **All Scouts registered in Boy Scout troops are eligible to participate in troop or patrol overnight campouts, camporees, and resident camps.**
- **Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts 12 through 17 are eligible to participate in national jamborees. Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts 13 through 17 are also eligible to participate in world jamborees and high-adventure programs.**
- **All youth registered in Venturing are eligible to participate in crew, district, council, and national Venturing activities. Venturers are eligible to participate in national high-adventure programs, and on a limited basis, world jamborees. Venturers are eligible to participate in Boy Scout Resident Camp if registered and attending with a troop.**

If a well-meaning leader brings along a child who does not meet these age guidelines, disservice is done to the unit because of distractions often caused by younger children. A disservice is done to the child, who is not trained to participate in such an activity and who, as a nonmember of the group, may be ignored by the older campers.



## **Wilderness Camping**

Anything can happen in the wild outdoors, and you should take measures designed to prevent accidents and injuries from occurring. Ask the question: "What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_ occurred?" Once you have identified possible problems, devise a plan to minimize the risks and to manage a crisis if one occurs. Involve the entire crew in this process so that everyone becomes aware of potential dangers and how to avoid them.

Obviously, the best way to stay safe in the wilderness is to not get into trouble in the first place. This requires planning, leadership, and good judgment. To help be prepared for the challenges of a wilderness trek and camping experience, read *Passport to High Adventure*, No. 4310.

## Trail Safety

Alertness and care in all that is done on the trail and performing within the group's known capabilities are among the best preventive measures against accidents. Most common outdoor injuries are blisters, cuts, sprains, strains, bruises, and fractures. Hikers also may become lost or get caught in storms, and they often panic as a result. Avoidable tragedies may occur if campers and leaders lack the skills and knowledge to deal with the problems encountered. Leaders must alert youth members to the dangers of unusual environment with proper instructions on fire safety, orienteering, and safe travel.



Leaders must instruct those in their groups to *stay together* on well-established trails, avoid loose rocks (especially on descent), and avoid dangerous ledges, cliffs, and areas where a fall might occur. Accidents can occur when hikers kick and roll boulders down steep hills. Wilderness trails have no caution signs for loose rocks, nor do they have guardrails on cliffs.

It is strongly recommended that at least one person in the group be currently certified in first aid through the American Red Cross or any recognized agency.

Trail safety is a matter of common sense. The response of individual members of a group in doing the right thing is important. When they understand the reason for rules of safety, they obey them more willingly.

The Boy Scouts of America has an abundance of literature related to proper procedures and guidelines for a group on a trail.

References: *Boy Scout Handbook*; *Backpacking, Camping, and Hiking* merit badge pamphlets; *Cub Scout Leader Book*; *Scoutmaster Handbook*; *Fieldbook*

## Beware of Lightning

The summits of mountains, crests of ridges, slopes above timberline, and large meadows are extremely hazardous places to be during lightning storms. If you are caught in such an exposed place, quickly descend to a lower elevation, away from the direction of the approaching storm, and squat down, keeping your head low. A dense forest located in a depression provides the best protection. Avoid taking shelter under isolated trees or trees much taller than adjacent trees. Stay away from water, metal objects, and other substances that will conduct electricity long distances.

By squatting with your feet close together, you have minimal contact with the ground, thus reducing danger from ground currents. If the threat of lightning strikes is great, your group should not huddle together but spread out at least 15 feet apart. If one member of your group is jolted, the rest of you can tend to him. Whenever lightning is nearby, take off backpacks with either external or internal metal



frames. In tents, stay at least a few inches from metal tent poles.

## **Lightning Safety Rules**

- Stay away from open doors and windows, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks, and plug-in electrical appliances.
- Don't use hair dryers, electric toothbrushes, or electric razors.
- Don't use the telephone; lightning may strike telephone wires outside.
- Don't take laundry off the clothesline.
- Don't work on fences, telephone lines, power lines, pipelines, or structural steel fabrications.
- Don't handle flammable materials in open containers.
- Don't use metal objects, such as fishing rods and golf clubs. Golfers wearing cleated shoes are particularly good lightning rods.
- Stop tractor work, especially when the tractor is pulling metal equipment, and dismount. Tractors and other implements in metallic contact with the ground are often struck by lightning.
- Get out of the water and off small boats.
- Stay in the car if you are traveling. Automobiles offer excellent lightning protection.
- When no shelter is available, avoid the highest object in the area. If only isolated trees are nearby, the best protection is to crouch in the open, keeping twice as far away from isolated trees as the trees are high.
- Avoid hilltops, open spaces, wire fences, metal clotheslines, exposed sheds, and any electrically conducted elevated objects.

## **Pure Drinking Water**

A constant supply of pure drinking water is essential. Serious illness can result from drinking unpurified water. Protect your health. Don't take a chance on using water that you are not sure of. Thermos jugs, plastic water containers, and canteens are all satisfactory for carrying water. Be sure water is dispensed into each person's own drinking cup.

## **Treatment of Questionable Water**

In addition to having a bad odor or taste, water from questionable sources may be contaminated by microorganisms, such as *Giardia*, that can cause a variety of diseases. All water of uncertain purity should be purified before use. Don't take a chance on using water that you are not sure of. To purify water, follow these steps:

1. Filter the water to remove as many solids as possible.
2. Bring it to a rolling boil and boil it for a full minute.
3. Let it cool at least 30 minutes.
4. Add eight drops of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of cool water. (Use common household bleach; 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite should be the only active ingredient; there should not be any added soap or fragrances). Water must be cool or chlorine will dissipate and be rendered useless.

5. Let the water stand 30 minutes.
6. If it smells of chlorine, you can use it. If it does not smell of chlorine, add eight more drops of bleach and let it stand another 30 minutes. Smell it again. You can use it if it smells of chlorine. If it doesn't, discard it and find another water source.
7. The only accepted measurement of chlorine (or water treatment agents) is the drop. A drop is specifically measurable. Other measures such as "capful" or "scant teaspoon" are not uniformly measurable and should not be used.

In addition to common household bleach, several other types of chemical means to disinfect water are available, such as iodine tablets, iodide crystals, and halazone tablets. All of these are acceptable, but some people have an allergic reaction to iodine products. Follow the instructions on the package for proper use.

To treat cold water you must lengthen the contact (sitting) time depending on the water temperature to destroy *Giardia* that may be present. Very cold water may take as long as four times the normal contact time.

Several types of water purification filters are available at camp stores. The Boy Scouts of America recommends that if you use a water filter, you also chemically treat and/or boil the water and carry extra filter cartridges and spare parts. Among the best water filters are PUR, MSR, Katadyn, First Need, and Sweet Water.

## BSA Property Smart



Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers are often privileged to use the land and property of others for hiking, camping, and other activities. This privilege carries important responsibilities regarding care, courtesy and cleanliness.

Carelessness is regrettable and must be avoided at all times. On the other hand, deliberate vandalism is a criminal act and is forbidden. Every Scout and Scouter has an obligation to do his or her best to care for and protect every property that he or she visits.

All youth and leaders should follow these guidelines:

1. Every group that plans to use a site must obtain permission from the owner before entering the land. The best plan is for one or two of the leaders to visit the owner several weeks before the trip to get permission; if this is not possible, the owner should be contacted by letter or telephone.

If there is any uncertainty about permission (for instance, permission has been granted in the past, but you received no response to your recent request), check in when you arrive for the trip. In this case, one or two members of the group should find the owner while other members wait. Don't assume that permission is automatic and begin unloading equipment. If you find that the owner is not available and you don't have prior permission, you must go elsewhere.

2. Many camp and activity sites, such as those found in state parks, national forests, and national

parks, are owned by government entities or municipalities. Many of these have strict access policies and/or permits that need to be secured in advance. Be sure to follow the rules, which can be explained by a property official or ranger.

3. Ask where it will be convenient to park cars. Don't block traffic lanes and driveways.
4. Never write, mark, or paint on walls, ceilings, rocks, or structures. Occasionally, it may be necessary to mark a confusing trail or road. For this purpose, carry small signs with arrows drawn on them. Place the markers in suitable locations as the group enters, and collect them on the way out. Don't cut live branches or trees.
5. You might need to cross someone's property to reach a campsite or activity area. Obtain permission to do so, and remember that a landowner's income might depend on his or her crops and livestock. Don't climb fences that might break under your weight. Always leave gates exactly as you found them. Open gates can result in extensive loss to the owner.
6. Don't tease or chase livestock. Take special care not to startle flocks of poultry. Disregard for the owner's animals can result in injury to you and/or the animals.
7. Be conscious of any actions that will disturb or inconvenience the owner. Keep noise to a minimum, especially late at night. Pick up trash, even that left by previous visitors. Don't build a fire except in cleared fire sites and with the owner's permission. It's best to use a backpacking stove. Fires must be completely out before you leave the area.
8. Don't leave behind any trace of your visit. Leave every natural thing and manmade structure exactly as it was before you entered, and remove everything you brought to the site. Put trash in suitable containers, such as plastic bags, and then take all trash home; never dump it on the ground.
9. If it is not too late at night, stop as you leave to tell the owner that you are leaving. If it is late, write a note. Remember that the owner's schedule might not be the same as yours. If the home is dark, regardless of the hour, don't disturb the owner. In either case, thank the owner when you leave. Send a follow-up letter that includes, if possible, pictures taken in the area.
10. When obtaining permission to enter a property, never underestimate the length of time you might spend there. If you specify an exit time to the owner, leave at that time. You can plan longer trips for the future. Missing an exit time could cause unnecessary concern or inconvenience for the owner.
11. When planning camps and activities, don't frequent the same well-known sites. Heavy traffic causes damage and puts a strain on owner relations (commercial or public sites excepted). In the backcountry, limit camping at one location to no more than three days to help preserve the natural environment.
12. All Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturers, and leaders should demonstrate their interest in the property of others and their appreciation by participating in or organizing an occasional cleanup to remove trash and repair damage left by thoughtless visitors, as well as to remove writing on walls and rocks. With the owner's permission, you might even carry out conservation projects such as erosion control or wildlife habitat improvement. This makes an excellent group project and teaches



conservation of and respect for the natural environment and property of others.

Often, people forget that camps, trails, and activity sites belong to the landowner and that they must depend on his or her goodwill. In recent years, use of natural areas has increased tremendously. Owners of popular sites are besieged by people seeking entrance, and the result has been that many owners are becoming alienated. The rudeness and thoughtlessness of a few people can cause property owners to exclude everyone from a site.

The above rules boil down to a simple statement: Use common sense and treat the owner as you would like to be treated. If outdoor activity is to continue in this country, everyone must do all they can to make themselves welcome at each site they visit.

## **Hantavirus**

Hantavirus is a deadly virus that was first recognized as a unique health hazard in 1993. Outbreaks have been principally limited to the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. There are four different strains of hantavirus, and cases have been reported in 26 different states. The virus is most active when the temperature is between 45 and 72 degrees (F).

Hantavirus is spread through the urine and feces of infected rodents. It is an airborne virus. A person is infected by breathing in particles released into the air when infected rodents, their nests, or their droppings are disturbed. This can happen when a person is handling rodents, disturbing rodent nests or burrows, cleaning buildings where rodents have made a home, or working outdoors. The virus will die quickly when exposed to sunlight.

Symptoms of hantavirus include fever, chills, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and a dry, nonproductive cough. If you suspect that someone has been infected, consult a physician immediately.

## **Rabies Prevention**

Rabies has become increasingly prevalent in the United States in recent years, with more than 7,000 animals, most of which are wild, found to have the disease each year, according to statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This viral infection is often found in bats, foxes, raccoons, and skunks. Rabies can be transmitted by warm-blooded animals, including domestic dogs and cats.

Although rabies in humans is rare in the United States, the CDC reports that more than 22,000 people in this country require vaccination each year after being exposed to rabid or potentially rabid animals. States with the highest number of reported cases include New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Mexico, Texas, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Maryland, and parts of northern California.

Scout leaders can help prevent exposures by reminding Scouts to steer clear of wild animals and domestic animals that they don't know. If someone is scratched or bitten by a potentially rabid animal, Scout leaders should

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water

- Call a doctor or a hospital emergency room
- Get a description of the animal

Notify local animal control office, police department, or board of health.

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>

# Guide to Safe Scouting

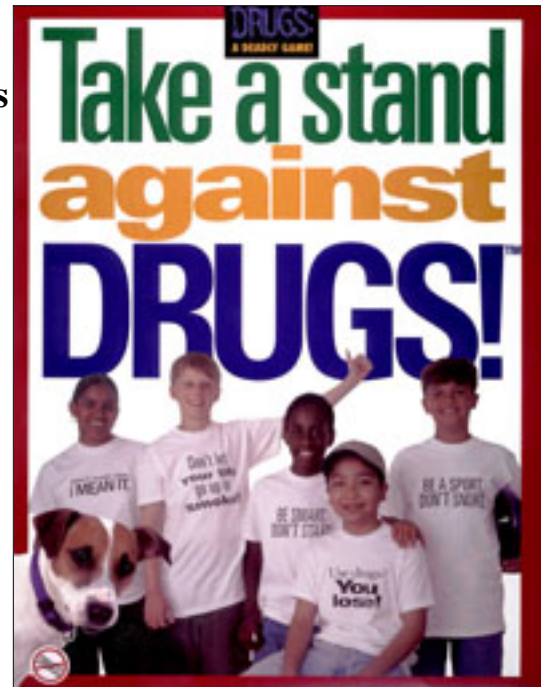
## IV - Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use and Abuse



The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances at encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by the Boy Scouts of America, or at any activity involving participation of youth members.

Adult leaders should support the attitude that young adults are better off without tobacco and **may not allow the use of tobacco products at any BSA activity involving youth participants.**

All Scouting functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants.



[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>

# Guide to Safe Scouting



## V - Emergency Preparedness

Perhaps the most critical test of your preparedness will be in time of emergency. Developing and rehearsing an emergency action plan will add precious time needed for response to a crisis. This is true on a day hike, overnight or longer troop camp, and all other activities. A plan should include:

1. The person in charge
2. Action to be taken
3. Alternatives
4. People and agencies to notify
5. Location of law enforcement
6. Fire and health facilities
7. Evacuation procedures

Skilled planners "live" the experience in advance by thinking their way through every detail of an activity or event. This practice helps eliminate surprises. If an emergency occurs, panic is replaced by self-confident quickness.

Whenever an emergency occurs in which a person needs medical care beyond simple first aid (for example, going to a medical clinic or emergency room at a hospital), leaders should immediately notify the parent or next of kin. In case of a missing Scout or a fatality, notify the council Scout executive after notifying local authorities and emergency medical services.

Prepare an emergency phone number list, like the one below, for out-of-town trips. This list and an ample supply of coins should be kept with your first-aid kit.

### Reporting Deaths or Serious Injury

Adult leaders are responsible for informing their council Scout executive or designee, as soon as possible, of a death or serious injury or illness. A serious injury or illness is defined as:

1. Any period of unconsciousness;
2. Any hospital inpatient admission; or
3. Any surgical intervention other than suturing of the skin or setting of simple fractures.

Leaders should be prepared to give specific facts of:

**WHO?**

Name of subject, age; name and complete address of parent(s) or next of kin.

**WHEN?**

Date, time of day.

**WHERE?**

Location and community.

## WHAT?

Nature of illness or accident.

## HOW?

If known, e.g., swimming, boating, hiking.

Prompt and accurate reporting to the news media is most important. The local council has a crisis communications plan, and the Scout Executive will designate one spokesperson in order to avoid conflicting reports. Parents or next of kin will be informed by personal contact before any release is made to the public.

Nonserious injuries need not be reported. It is recommended that a report be prepared regarding each such incident and maintained by the unit for future reference.

## Emergency Phone Number List

- Location of trip or expedition
- Location of nearest town(s), city(ies), or phone(s)
- Name and phone number of nearest doctor, hospital, or medical facility
- Name and phone number of nearest county sheriff's department
- Name and phone number of nearest state or federal park station
- Phone number of Highway Patrol
- Phone number of BSA local council service center:

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## VI - First Aid



First aid is the first help or immediate care given someone who has suddenly sickened or been hurt in an accident. First-aid training continues through the program of the Boy Scouts of America as concrete evidence that we are prepared to help others in need.

It is important that one person in each touring group be trained in the principles of first aid, know how and when to put this knowledge to the best use, and thoroughly understand the limitations of this knowledge.

It is strongly recommended that adult leaders in Scouting avail themselves of CPR and first-aid training by the American Red Cross or any recognized agency to be aware of the latest techniques and procedures. However, some of the first-aid techniques found in BSA literature are not the same as those professed by the American Red Cross. Frequently, modifications depend on the Scout's age - this could be a factor in the Scout's judgment and physical dexterity.

### First-Aid Kits

A first-aid kit well stocked with the basic essentials is indispensable. Choose one sturdy and lightweight, yet large enough to hold the contents so that they are readily visible and so that any one item may be taken out without unpacking the whole kit. Keep a list of contents readily available for easy refilling. Keep the kit in a convenient location. Make one person responsible for keeping the kit filled and available when needed. Quantities of suggested items for your first-aid kit depend on the size of your group and local conditions.

### Suggested First-Aid Kit Contents

- Bar of soap
- 2-inch roller bandage
- 1-inch roller bandage
- 1-inch adhesive
- 3-by-3-inch sterile pads
- Triangular bandage
- Assorted gauze pads
- Adhesive strips
- Clinical oral thermometer
- Scissors
- Tweezers



- Sunburn lotion
- Lip salve
- Poison-ivy lotion
- Small flashlight (with extra batteries and bulb)
- Absorbent cotton
- Water purification tablets (iodine)
- Safety pins
- Needles
- Paper cups
- Foot powder
- Instant ice packs

Because of the possibility of exposure to communicable diseases, first-aid kits should include **latex or vinyl gloves, plastic goggles or other eye protection**, and **antiseptic** to be used when giving first aid to bleeding victims, as protection against possible exposure. **Mouth barrier devices** should be available for use with CPR.

## Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

This specialized skill to endeavor to revive victims of cardiac arrest (no breathing-no pulse) may be taught to Boy Scouts and Venturers by an instructor currently trained by the American Red Cross or American Heart Association. Teaching this skill to Cub Scouts is not recommended.

Preliminary skills related to CPR are found in the *Boy Scout Handbook* and the *First Aid* merit badge pamphlet (rescue breathing, choking, and steps to take for CPR).

## Protection Considerations for Bloodborne Pathogens

Many people are concerned about the rapid spread of HIV (the AIDS virus) and try to avoid exposing themselves to this hazard. Health professionals and amateur first-aiders like those of us in Scouting may find ourselves faced with special concerns in this regard. Therefore, we must know how to act and how to instruct the youth we lead. Try to maintain the BSA's tradition of rendering first aid to those in need. Recognize that often the victims we treat with first aid are friends and family members whose health we are familiar with. Therefore, in such cases, except when we know they have infectious diseases, we should not hesitate to treat them.

### *The Boy Scouts of America Recommends*

Treat all blood as if it were contaminated with bloodborne viruses. Do not use bare hands to stop bleeding; always use a protective barrier. Always wash exposed skin area with hot water and soap immediately after treating the victim. The following equipment is to be included in all first-aid kits and used when rendering first aid to those in need:

- Latex or vinyl gloves, to be used when stopping bleeding or dressing wounds

- A mouth-barrier device for rendering rescue breathing or CPR
- Plastic goggles or other eye protection to prevent a victim's blood from getting into the rescuer's eyes in the event of serious arterial bleeding
- Antiseptic, for sterilizing or cleaning exposed skin area, particularly if there is no soap or water available.

Individuals (medicine, fire rescue, and law enforcement Venturing crew members; volunteer first-aiders at camporees, Scouting shows, and similar events) who might have been exposed to another's blood and body fluids should know the following:

1. The chartered organization and its leaders should always explain and make clear the possible degree of exposure to blood or body fluids as a result of Scouting activities.
2. As a precaution, adult volunteers or youth members should consider a hepatitis B vaccination. The cost of the shots will not be borne by BSA, nor is the chartered organization required to underwrite the cost.
3. The chartered organization may arrange to have shots given at a reduced rate or free of charge.
4. If vaccination is recommended, any adult volunteers and youth members who decline the shots, either at full cost to them or at a reduced rate, or free, should sign a refusal waiver that should be retained by the council for five years.

## Near-Drowning

Near-drowning is a term used to describe a fatality that occurs several hours after resuscitation or revival of a drowning victim. Near-drowning accidents are usually witnessed and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is delivered at the scene. Lung rupture can occur during the submersion or consequent to the resuscitation efforts. Pneumonia is a later complication in the injured lung. To ensure that water-accident victims do not become near-drownings, they need to be admitted to a hospital with a respiratory intensive care unit and monitored for at least 24 hours to watch for complications. The hypothermic victim requires special attention.

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

# Guide to Safe Scouting

## VII - Fuels and Fire Prevention

### Chemical Fuels

Knowledgeable adult supervision must be provided when Scouts are involved in the storage of chemical fuels, the handling of chemical fuels in the filling of stoves or lanterns, or the lighting of chemical fuels. **The use of liquid fuels for starting any type of fire is prohibited.**

### Guidelines for Safely Using Chemical Stoves and Lanterns

1. Use compressed- or liquid-gas stoves or lanterns only with knowledgeable adult supervision and in Scout facilities only where and when permitted.
2. Operate and maintain according to manufacturer's instructions included with the stove or lantern.
3. Both gasoline and kerosene shall be kept in well-marked, approved containers (never in a glass container) and stored in a ventilated, locked box at a safe distance (a minimum of 20 feet) from buildings and tents. Keep all chemical fuel containers away from hot stoves and campfires, and store below 100 degrees (F).
4. Let hot stoves and lanterns cool before changing cylinders of compressed gases or refilling from containers of liquid gas.
5. Refill liquid-gas stoves and lanterns a safe distance from any flames, including other stoves, campfires, and personal smoking substances. A commercial camp stove fuel should be used for safety and performance. Pour through a filter funnel. Recap both the device and the fuel container before igniting.
6. **Never fuel a stove, heater, or lantern inside a cabin; always do this outdoors. Do not operate a stove, lantern, or charcoal grill in an unventilated structure. Provide at least two ventilation openings, one high and one low, to provide oxygen and exhaust for lethal gases. Never fuel (example: all liquid fuels, charcoal. etc.), ignite, or operate a stove, heater, or lantern in a tent.**
7. Place the stove on a level, secure surface before operating. On snow, place insulated support under the stove to prevent melting and tipping.
8. Periodically check fittings on compressed-gas stoves and on pressurized liquid-gas stoves for leakage, using soap solution before lighting.
9. To avoid possible fires, locate gas tanks, stoves, etc., below any tents since heavy leakage of gas will flow downhill the same as water.



10. When lighting a stove, keep fuel containers and extra cannisters well away. Do not hover over the stove when lighting it. Keep your head and body to one side. Open the stove valve quickly for two full turns and light carefully, with head, fingers, and hands to the side of the burner. Then adjust down.
11. Do not leave a lighted stove or lantern unattended.
12. Do not overload the stovetop with heavy pots or large frying pans. If pots over 2 quarts are necessary, set up a separate grill with legs to hold the pot, and place the stove under the grill.
13. Bring empty fuel containers home for disposal. Do not place in or near fires. Empty fuel containers will explode if heated and should never be put in fireplaces or with burnable trash.

## Flammability Warning

No tent material is completely fireproof. It can burn when exposed to continued, intense heat or fire. The most important safeguard is to keep flames away from canvas materials. For this reason, the following safety precautions are emphasized:

1. Only flashlights and electric lanterns are permitted in tents. ***No flames in tents is a rule that must be enforced.***
2. **Never use liquid-fuel stoves, heaters, lanterns, lighted candles, matches, and other flame sources in or near tents.**
3. Do not pitch tents near an open fire.
4. Do not use flammable chemicals near tents - charcoal lighter or spray cans of paint, bug killer, or repellent.
5. Be careful when using electricity and lighting in tents.
6. Always extinguish cooking campfires promptly.
7. **Obey all fire laws, ordinances, and regulations.**

## Extinguishers

If fire breaks out, it must be quickly and properly suppressed. To do this, you must know the three classes of fires and how to combat them:

### Class A

Fires that involve normally combustible materials such as paper, wood, fabrics, rubber, and many plastics. These fires can be quenched with water or insulated with tri-class (ABC) chemical or foam extinguishers.

### Class B

Fires that involve gasoline, oil, grease, tars, paints, lacquers, or flammable gases. The oxygen that supports this type of fire must be cut off by tri-class (ABC), regular dry chemical, foam, or carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) extinguishers. Water is dangerous, as it spreads the fire.

### Class C

Electrical fires involving heated wire and arcing. These fires must be suppressed with tri-class (ABC) dry chemicals or CO<sub>2</sub> - never water, which is a conductor.

Fires in any one class may involve materials of other classes, so more than one type of extinguisher should be available. Because of the danger of lethal fumes, carbon tetrachloride (CCl<sub>4</sub>) extinguishers must not be used. Dispose of these extinguishers as recommended by fire officials.

Extinguishers should normally be mounted near a doorway and approximately at shoulder level.

In a camp setting, the unit leader is responsible for training Scouts in fire prevention, fire detection and reporting, and fire fighting. All youth members and adult leaders should have unit fireguard plan training.

Reference: *Unit Fireguard*, No. 33691

## Fireworks

**The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the securing, use, and display of fireworks in conjunction with programs and activities except where the fireworks display is conducted under the auspices of a certified or licensed fireworks control expert.**

**Local councils may not authorize any group or chartered unit activity for or on behalf of its members, units, or district to sell fireworks as a fund-raising or money-earning activity.**

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## VIII - Guns and Firearms

The Boy Scouts of America adheres to its longstanding policy of teaching its youth and adult members the safe, responsible, intelligent handling, care, and use of firearms, airguns, and BB guns in planned, carefully managed, and supervised programs.

**Except for law enforcement officers required to carry firearms within their jurisdiction, firearms shall not be brought on camping, hiking, backpacking, or other Scouting activities except those specifically planned for target shooting under the supervision of a certified BSA or National Rifle Association firearms instructor.**

### Cub Scout Standards

**Gun-shooting sports are not an approved part of the Cub Scout program except at a council-approved Cub Scout day camp, Cub Scout resident camp, or Cub Scout family camp. At camp, Cub Scouts may have an opportunity to take part in a BB-gun (rifle) safety and marksmanship program under the direction of a certified BB-gun range officer.**

**Cub Scouts are not permitted to use any other type of handgun or firearm.**

### Boy Scout Standards

**Boy Scouts are permitted to fire .22-caliber bolt-action, single-shot rifles, air rifles, shotguns, and muzzle-loading long guns under the direction of a certified instructor, 21 years of age or older, within the standards outlined in current Scouting literature and bulletins. BSA policy does not permit the use of handguns in the Boy Scouting program.**



### Handguns (Venturers only)

The following guidelines relate to the use of handguns within the program of the Boy Scouts of America.

- 1. Handgun use is limited to the Venturing program only.**
- 2. All training and shooting activities must be under the supervision of an NRA-certified instructor or the firearms instructor of a local, state, or federal agency.**
- 3. All participants must complete a basic pistol marksmanship course prior to range firing. The NRA basic pistol marksmanship course (or equivalent training course) conducted by a law enforcement agency, a civilian gun club, or a U.S. military department is acceptable.**
- 4. With the approval of the local council, handgun shooting may be conducted on BSA camp**

**ranges, provided the shooting is done under the auspices of an NRA-certified instructor or firearms instructor of a local, state, or federal agency.**

5. Care must be taken to comply with federal, state, and local laws.

## Shotguns

The following standards are established for shotguns to be used by Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or Venturers:

1. **It is recommended that either 20-, 16-, or 12-gauge semiautomatic shotguns be used. Gas operated shotguns are recommended.**
2. **Ammunition containing No. 8 shot or smaller is recommended on ranges with a protected down range of 600 feet. Additional down range distance of 150 feet (total 750) is required for No. 6 shot size. Shot larger than No. 6 is not to be used.**
3. **Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn on shotgun ranges.**
4. **All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified shotgun instructor or coach who is 21 years of age or older.**

Primary reference: *Camp Program and Property Management* (Shooting Sports, Section V)

## Muzzle Loaders

The following standards for muzzle-loading long guns are to be used by members of the BSA:

1. **Muzzle-loading rifles must be recently manufactured, percussion only. BSA recommends those that are .45- or .50-caliber. Rifles made from kits must be checked by an expert gunsmith.**
2. **Recommended loads of .FFFg blackpowder are not to exceed 1 grain per caliber. One-half of this amount is frequently sufficient for target shooting.**
3. **Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn.**
4. **All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently certified NRA/NMLRA muzzle-loading rifle instructor who is at least 21 years of age.**
5. **Each pupil must have one instructor or adult coach under instructor supervision when loading and firing.**

Primary reference: *Camp Program and Property Management* (Shooting Sports, Section V)

## Rifles

The following standards are established for rifle use in Boy Scout and Varsity Scout activities activities:

1. **Breech-loading rifles will be single-shot, bolt-action of the .22-caliber rim-fire type only. They may be chambered for the .22-short or .22-long rifle, but not for the .22-WRF rifle (which**





uses a more powerful cartridge). Air rifles are also permitted.



2. **Semiautomatic rifles will not be permitted.**
3. **Repeating rifles having a tubular magazine will not be permitted.**
4. **Repeating rifles having a removable clip-type magazine will be permitted but must be used as single-loaders.**
5. **All rifles used in BSA shooting sports shall have a trigger pull in excess of 3 pounds, and shall be tested with a 3-pound weight or scale at least once a week while in use. If the trigger mechanism is activated by the 3-pound pull, the rifle should be immediately removed from service.**
6. **Shooting safety glasses and ear protectors must be worn on the range.**
7. **All training and shooting activities must be supervised by a currently NRA-certified rifle instructor or coach who is 21 years of age or older.**

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## IX - Sports and Activities

### The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

These 16 safety points, which embody good judgment and common sense, are applicable to all activities:

1. **Qualified Supervision.** Every BSA activity should be supervised by a conscientious adult who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children and youth in his or her care. The supervisor should be sufficiently trained, experienced, and skilled in the activity to be confident of his or her ability to lead and teach the necessary skills and to respond effectively in the event of an emergency. Field knowledge of all applicable BSA standards and a commitment to implement and follow BSA policy and procedures are essential parts of the supervisor's qualifications.
2. **Physical Fitness.** For youth participants in any potentially strenuous activity, the supervisor should receive a complete health history from a health-care professional, parent, or guardian. Adult participants and youth involved in higher-risk activities (e.g., scuba diving) may have to undergo professional evaluation in addition to completing the health history. The supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate potential risks associated with individual health conditions. Neither youth nor adults should participate in activities for which they are unfit. To do so would place both the individual and others at risk.
3. **Buddy System.** The long history of the "buddy system" in Scouting has shown that it is always best to have at least one other person with you and aware at all times of your circumstances and what you are doing in any outdoor or strenuous activity.
4. **Safe Area or Course.** A key part of the supervisors' responsibility is to know the area or course for the activity and to determine that it is well-suited and free of hazards.
5. **Equipment Selection and Maintenance.** Most activity requires some specialized equipment. The equipment should be selected to suit the participants and the activity and to include appropriate safety and program features. The supervisor should also check equipment to determine whether it is in good condition for the activity and make sure it is kept properly maintained while in use.
6. **Personal Safety Equipment.** The supervisor must assure that every participant has and uses the appropriate personal safety equipment. For example, activity afloat requires that each participant properly wear a personal flotation device (PFD); bikers, horseback riders, and whitewater kayakers need helmets for certain activities; skaters need protective gear; and all need to be dressed for warmth and utility as the circumstances require.
7. **Safety Procedures and Policies.** For most activities, common-sense procedures and standards can greatly reduce any risk. These should be known and appreciated by all participants, and the supervisor must assure compliance.
8. **Skill Level Limits.** Every activity has a minimum skill level, and the supervisor must identify and recognize this level and be sure that participants are not put at risk by attempting any activity

beyond their abilities. A good example of skill levels in Scouting is the swim test, which defines conditions for safe swimming on the basis of individual ability.

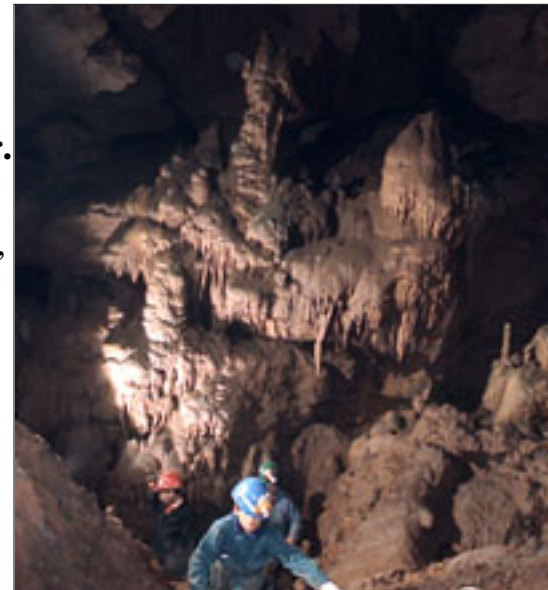
9. **Weather Check.** The risks of many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. Potential weather hazards and the appropriate responses should be understood and anticipated.
10. **Planning.** Safe activity follows a plan that has been conscientiously developed by the experienced supervisor or other competent source. Good planning minimizes risks and also anticipates contingencies that may require an emergency response or a change of plan.
11. **Communications.** The supervisor needs to be able to communicate effectively with participants as needed during the activity. Emergency communications also need to be considered in advance for any foreseeable contingencies.
12. **Permits and Notices.** BSA tour permits, council office registration, government or landowner authorization, and any similar formalities are the supervisor's responsibility when such are required. Appropriate notification should be directed to parents, enforcement authorities, landowners, and others as needed, before and after the activity.
13. **First-Aid Resources.** The supervisor should determine what first-aid supplies to include among the activity equipment. The level of first-aid training and skill appropriate for the activity should also be considered. An extended trek over remote terrain obviously may require more first-aid resources and capabilities than an afternoon activity in a local community. Whatever is determined to be needed should be available.
14. **Applicable Laws.** BSA safety policies generally parallel or go beyond legal mandates, but the supervisor should confirm and assure compliance with all applicable regulations or statutes.
15. **CPR Resource.** Any strenuous activity or remote trek could present a cardiac emergency. Aquatic programs may involve cardiopulmonary emergencies. BSA strongly recommends that a person (preferably an adult) trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be part of the leadership for any BSA program. This person should be available for strenuous outdoor activity.
16. **Discipline.** No supervisor is effective if he or she cannot control the activity and individual participants. Youth must respect their leaders and follow their directions.

## Cave Exploring

These minimum safety requirements apply:

1. **Cave exploring, other than simple novice activities, should be limited to Scouts and Venturers 14 years of age or older.**
2. Group leaders qualify through training and experience in cave exploring and through knowing established practices of safety, conservation, and cave courtesy.
3. Leader and group must understand and agree to follow the basic practices and policies of caving approved by the National Speleological Society and the Boy Scouts of America.

References: Venture activity pamphlet, *Caving*, No. 33446A, and *Ranger Guidebook*, No. 3128



## Judo, Tai Chi, and Aikido



If Scouts and Venturers practice defensive judo, Tai Chi, or aikido, it should be done with proper mats and with qualified instructors related to YMCAs, colleges, or athletic clubs whose objectives and coaching methods are compatible with the principles of the Boy Scouts of America.

## Climbing and Rappelling

### 1. Qualified Supervision

All climbing and rappelling must be supervised by a mature, conscientious adult at least 21 years of age who understands the risks inherent to these activities. This person knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in his or her care. This adult supervisor is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of the Boy Scouts of America's Climb On Safely procedure. One additional adult who is at least 18 years of age must also accompany the unit. Units with more than 10 youths in the same climbing/rappelling session must have an additional adult leader at least 18 years of age for each 10 additional youth participants. In other words, a group of 11 to 20 youths requires at least three adult leaders; a group of 21 to 30 youths would require four adult leaders, and so on.

The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently certified in American Red Cross Standard First Aid and CPR (a 6 1/2-hour course). In addition, the two-hour module "First Aid—When Help Is Delayed" is recommended. A course of equivalent length and content from another nationally recognized organization can be substituted. A higher level of certification such as emergency medical technician (EMT), licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), and licensed health-care practitioner is also acceptable. The ARC's Emergency Response, a 43 1/2-hour course that includes CPR, is highly recommended.

### 2. Qualified Instructors

A qualified rock climbing instructor who is at least 21 years of age must supervise all BSA climbing/rappelling activities. The climbing instructor has successfully completed a minimum of 10 hours of instructor training for climbing/rappelling from a nationally or regionally recognized organization, a climbing school, a college-level climbing/rappelling course, or is a qualified BSA climbing instructor.

The BSA offers a section of National Camping School for climbing directors who in turn can train climbing instructors. (A Project COPE director or instructor fulfills this requirement until January 1, 2002.) Every instructor must have prior experiences in teaching climbing/rappelling to youth and must agree to adhere to Climb On Safely and the guidelines set in *Topping Out*.

**NOTE:** Any adult Scouter who successfully completes training in Climb On Safely is entitled to wear the temporary patch, No. 8631. A Climb On Safely Training Outline, No. 20-101, is available from your local council service center.

### 3. Physical Fitness

Require evidence of fitness for the climbing/rappelling activity with at least a current BSA Personal Health and Medical Record—Class 1, No. 34414. The adult supervisor should adapt all supervision, discipline, and precautions to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual

health conditions. If a significant health condition is present, an examination by a licensed health-care practitioner should be required by the adult supervisor before permitting participation in climbing or rappelling. The adult supervisor should inform the climbing instructor about each participant's medical conditions.

#### **4. Safe Area**

All BSA climbing/rappelling activities must be conducted using an established or developed climbing/rappelling site or facility. A qualified climbing instructor should survey the site in advance of the activity to identify and evaluate possible hazards and to determine whether the site is suitable for the age, maturity, and skill level of the participants. The instructor should also verify that the site is sufficient to safely and comfortably accommodate the number of participants in the activity within the available time. An emergency evacuation route must be identified in advance.

#### **5. Equipment**

The climbing instructor should verify that the proper equipment is available for the size and ability level of participants. Helmets, rope, and climbing hardware must be approved by the UIAA (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme), CEN (European Community Norm), or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials). All equipment must be acquired new or furnished by the instructor.

Records must be kept on the use and stresses (the number of hard falls) on each item of equipment, which must be specifically designed for climbing and rappelling. Outside providers should be asked if they are aware of any stresses that have been put on their equipment. Any rope or webbing that has been subjected to more than three hard falls or that is four years old (whatever its use) must not be used. Refer to *Topping Out* concerning records that must be kept.

#### **6. Planning**

When planning, remember the following:

- Obtain written parental consent to participate in climbing/rappelling activities for each participant.
- In case severe weather or other problems might occur, share the climbing/rappelling plan and an alternate plan with parents and the unit committee.
- Secure the necessary permits or written permission for using private or public lands.
- Enlist the help of a qualified climbing instructor.
- Be sure the instructor has a topographic map for the area being used and obtains a current weather report for the area before the group's departure.

It is suggested that at least one of the adult leaders has an electronic means of communication in case of an emergency.

#### **7. Environmental Conditions**

The instructor assumes responsibility for monitoring potentially dangerous environmental conditions that may include loose, crumbly rock; poisonous plants; wildlife; and inclement weather. Use the buddy system to monitor concerns such as dehydration, hypothermia, and an unusually high degree of fear or apprehension. The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the group leaves no trace of its presence at the site.

#### **8. Discipline**

Each participant knows, understands, and respects the rules and procedures for safely climbing and rappelling and has been oriented in Climb On Safely. All BSA members should respect and follow all instructions and rules of the climbing instructor. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed for all participants before climbing or rappelling begins. When participants know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. The climbing instructor must be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

A UIAA- or ASTM-approved climbing helmet must be worn during all BSA climbing/rappelling activities when the participant's feet are six feet or more above ground level. When using a climbing gym, the climbing facility's procedures apply.

## **Unauthorized and Restricted Activities**

**The following activities have been declared unauthorized and restricted by the Boy Scouts of America:**

- **All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are banned from program use. ATVs are defined as motorized recreational cycles with three or four large, soft tires, designed for off-road use on a variety of terrains.**
- **Boxing, karate, and related martial arts - except judo, aikido, and Tai Chi - are not authorized activities.**
- **Chainsaws and mechanical log splitters may be authorized for use only by trained individuals over the age of 18, using proper protective gear in accordance with local laws.**
- **Exploration of abandoned mines is an unauthorized activity.**
- **Varsity football teams and interscholastic or club football competition and activities are unauthorized activities.**
- **Fireworks secured, used, or displayed in conjunction with program and activities is unauthorized except where the fireworks display is conducted under the auspices of a certified or licensed fireworks control expert.**
- **The selling of fireworks as a fund-raising or money-earning activity by any group acting for or on behalf of members, units, or districts may not be authorized by councils.**
- **Flying in hang gliders, ultralights, experimental class aircraft, or hot-air balloons (whether or not they are tethered); parachuting; and flying in aircraft as part of a search and rescue mission are unauthorized activities.**
- **Motorized go-carts and motorbike activities are unauthorized for Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs. All motorized speed events, including motorcycles, boats, drag racing, demolition derbies, and related events, are not authorized activities for any program level.**
- **Participation in amateur or professional rodeo events and council or district sponsorship of rodeos are not authorized.**
- **The activity commonly referred to as "War Game" - in which individuals shoot paint or dye at one another - is an unauthorized activity.**
- **Hunting is not an authorized Cub Scout or Boy Scout activity, although hunting safety is part of the program curriculum.**

**(The purpose of this policy is to restrict chartered packs, troops, and teams from conducting**

hunting trips. However, this policy does not restrict Venturing crews from conducting hunting trips or special adult hunting expeditions provided that adequate safety procedures are followed and that all participants have obtained necessary permits and/or licenses from either state or federal agencies. While hunter safety education might not be required prior to obtaining a hunting license, successful completion of the respective state voluntary program is required before participating in the activity.) Reference: *Ranger Guidebook*, No. 3128

- Motorized personal watercraft, such as jet-skis, are not authorized for use in Scouting aquatics, and their use should not be permitted in or near BSA program areas.
- Except for (1) law enforcement officers required to carry firearms within their jurisdiction, and (2) circumstances within the scope of the BSA hunting policy statement, firearms should not be in the possession of any person engaged in camping, hiking, backpacking, or any other Scouting activity other than those specifically planned for target shooting under the supervision of a certified firearms instructor. (Among the purposes of this policy is to prohibit adult leaders from bringing firearms on BSA camping and hiking activities or to unit meetings.)
- Parasailing, or any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, or other device towed by a motorboat or by any other means, is unauthorized.
- All activities related to bungee cord jumping (sometimes called shock cord jumping) are unauthorized.

## Carbon Tetrachloride

Carbon tetrachloride must never be used in any way in the Scouting program. Even in small quantities, this poison has proved to be so deadly that it must be ruled out as a cleaning fluid, a fire extinguisher, a poison for insect killing, and a watermark detector for stamp collecting.

## Knives



A sharp pocketknife with a can opener on it is an invaluable backcountry tool. Keep it clean, sharp, and handy. *Avoid large sheath knives.* They are heavy and awkward to carry, and unnecessary for most camp chores except for cleaning fish. Since its inception, Boy Scouting has relied heavily on an outdoor program to achieve its objectives. This program meets more of the purposes of Scouting than any other single feature. We believe we have a duty to instill in our members, youth and adult, the knowledge of how to use, handle, and store legally owned knives with the highest concern for safety and responsibility.

References: *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, *Bear Cub Scout Book*, and *Wolf Cub Scout Book*

## Rope Monkey Bridges

When constructing monkey bridges, observe the following safety rules:

1. Always follow the steps for constructing monkey bridges outlined in the *Pioneering* merit badge pamphlet.
2. Before beginning the project, inspect your rope, looking at both the inside fibers and inner strands. Know the size and strength of the type of rope you are using, and its safe working load.
3. Monkey bridges should not be constructed higher than 5 feet above flat-surfaced ground nor longer than 40 feet. Initially, beginners should not span more than 25 feet.
4. Know the effect the knots will have in reducing rope strength and the proper care that rope requires.
5. Rope, especially rope carrying a load, should be checked each day before using. Rope carrying a load and left in place tends to become slack from fatigue and will break under stress. Tighten rope as necessary to maintain the integrity of the original construction.
6. Exercise special care when members of the public are allowed to use these monkey bridges. Establish controls when monkey bridges are constructed outside the camp environment. Station Scouts at each end to control access to the bridge. Allow only one adult at a time on the bridge. Never allow unaccompanied children on the bridge. Shut down the bridge when any repairs are being made and do not reopen until the adult leader has approved the repairs.
7. Any activity on rope swings, monkey bridges, slide-for-life, or similar devices that are located over water must comply with Safe Swim Defense.



Reference: *Pioneering* merit badge pamphlet

## Parade Floats and Hayrides

The BSA rule prohibiting the transportation of passengers in the backs of trucks or on trailers may be tempered for parade floats or hayrides, provided that the following points are strictly followed to prevent injuries:

1. Transportation to and from the parade or hayride site is not allowed on the truck or trailer.
2. Those persons riding, whether seated or standing, must be able to hold on to something stationary.
3. Legs should not hang over the side.
4. Flashing lights must illuminate a vehicle used for a hayride after dark, or the vehicle must be followed by a vehicle with flashing lights.



## Unit Fund-raisers

Include these safety considerations when planning a unit fund-raiser:

1. Money-earning projects should be suited to the ages and abilities of youth participants.
2. Proper adult supervision should be provided.
3. Youth should engage in money-earning projects only in neighborhoods that are safe and familiar and should use the buddy system.
4. Leaders must train youth members to never enter the home of a stranger and to know whom to contact in case of an emergency.
5. Youth participants should be familiar with safe pedestrian practices and participate during daylight hours only.
6. Compliance requirements:
  - a. Check local statutes regarding solicitation rules and permits.
  - b. A Unit Fund-raising Permit must be obtained from the local council service center.

## Tractor Safety

- 1. All farm-class tractors used by BSA members or employees in conjunction with any BSA activity or on BSA property must be equipped with seat belts and rollover protection (rollbars, reinforced cab, or equivalent protection). If the tractor does not have this equipment, refer to Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) regulations for interim compliance requirements. As of January 1, 1993, the use of any farm-class tractor not equipped with seat belts and rollover protection is unauthorized.**
- 2. No BSA member or employee may operate a farm-class tractor in conjunction with any BSA activity or on BSA property unless such member or employee is at least 18 years of age and has completed BSA National Camping School ranger certification, or has been specifically trained in operations and safety procedures for tractors and their attached implements by a currently certified ranger, and is directly supervised by a currently certified ranger.**

## Bike Safety

The following guidelines and procedures apply to all BSA units, councils, and national program activities involving bicycling.

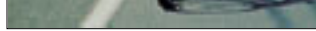
### 1. *Qualified Supervision*

All unit, district, council, and national event activities must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult at least age 21 who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the safety of children in his or her care, who is experienced with the skills and equipment involved in the activity, and who is committed to compliance with these BSA safety guidelines.

### 2. *Physical Fitness*

Biking is strenuous. Long treks and hill climbing should not be attempted without training and preparation. For Scouting activities, all participants must



present evidence of fitness assured by a complete health history from a  physician, parent, or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. In the event of any significant health conditions, proof of an examination by a physician should be required by the adult leader.

### 3. *Helmets and Clothing*

All cyclists must wear a properly sized and fitted helmet approved by either the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. Layer your clothing for warmth on cool days so you can avoid chilling or overheating. Cover up for sun protection on clear days.

### 4. *Buddy-Up*

When the program activity is a bicycle expedition or trek, the buddy system must be used. When there is program activity emphasizing individual performance skills, one buddy observes while the other takes his turn. In competitive activity where the buddy concept cannot be practically applied, all activity must be directly observed by the adult supervisor. (Youth members should be taught that biking with a buddy is best. When biking alone, apart from Scouting activities, youth members should be encouraged to tell someone their route, schedule, and destination before departing.)

### 5. *Keep Right*

Ride with the traffic flow, as far to the right as possible. Avoid curbs, storm drains, soft or loose gravel on shoulders, and other hazards.

### 6. *Be Smart*

Obey all traffic laws, signs, signals, and street markings. Watch for changes in road conditions. Ride only one to a bike. Do not ride after dark. No stunts - trick riding is only for professionals who use special equipment. Yield to motor vehicles even if you think you have the right-of-way. Never hitch a ride on another vehicle. Keep your head and ears open and do not wear headphones while riding.

### 7. *Turns and Intersections*

Look left, right, back, and ahead before turning. Stop and search all directions when entering a street from a driveway, parking area, sidewalk, or an alley. Signal all turns using universal hand signals. Walk your bike through or across busy intersections.

### 8. *Right Bike*

Ride only a bike that fits you. Select a bike that permits you to put both feet on the ground while sitting on the seat. The handgrips should be no higher than your shoulder or lower than your seat.

### 9. *Accessories*

Every bike needs a horn or bell and reflectors (front, back, and sides). Items should be carried only in baskets, saddlebags, or on a rear carrier rack. If you must ride in traffic, a bike- or helmet-mounted mirror is recommended. For long trips, a bike-mounted container for drinking water is recommended.

### 10. *Maintenance*

Keep your bike clean and well-maintained - especially the brakes and drive chain.

## 11. *Race Right*

Open street racing is dangerous. Race only with supervision on marked courses that have been set up to exclude other vehicle or pedestrian traffic, to eliminate fall hazards and minimize collision risks, and to define clearly "start" and "finish" points.

## 12. *Planning*

Plan both the route and timing of bike trips to avoid heavy traffic and hazardous conditions. Biking is unsafe on wet pavement and on windy days. Plan for at least hourly rest stops and a maximum of approximately six hours on the bike per day.

## 13. *Discipline*

All participants should know, understand, and follow the rules and procedures for safe biking, and all participants should conscientiously and carefully follow all directions from the adult supervisor.

# Skating Guidelines

Skateboarding and roller-skating (including in-line skating) present safety concerns, primarily risks of falls and collisions. Recent data show that injuries are largely the results of collisions - especially with moving vehicles. These guidelines emphasize prevention, and are meant to cover all BSA skating programs. Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers should always practice safety and courtesy and obey all local or rink rules.

1. BSA skating at any level shall be supervised by an adult at least 21 years of age, experienced in the use of skates and skateboards, willing to conscientiously accept responsibility for the safety of all participants, and committed to compliance with BSA safety guidelines and local laws.
  2. In-line skating, hockey, racing, or similar activities are to be held only in areas free of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and hazardous fixed objects. No skating activity is authorized on streets that have not been blocked off to traffic.
  3. Pathways and skating surfaces must be free of defects or features unsuited to skating. Evaluation of the area by the supervisor should precede any BSA activities.
  4. Before permitting equipment to be used in a BSA activity, the supervisor should determine that all skates and skateboards are well maintained and in good repair consistent with the manufacturer's recommendations. Actual maintenance and repair are the responsibility of the owner.
  5. For all street or pavement skating activities, participants should wear properly fitted helmets that meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards; padded gloves; wrist supports; and elbow and knee pads. No street or pavement skating is authorized without helmets.
  6. Skaters must NEVER "hitch a ride" on any vehicle.
  7. Parents or legal guardians must be informed and must consent to youth participation in a BSA skating activity.
  8. The adult supervisor must be sure that all participants understand and agree that skating is allowed only with proper supervision and in compliance with the safety guidelines. Youth members should respect and follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor. When people know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. Supervisors should be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.
-

The Boy Scouts of America  <http://www.bsa.scouting.org>

# Guide to Safe Scouting



## X - Inspections

### Meeting Room

Periodically, once or twice a year, the unit meeting place should be inspected for health and safety hazards. The Meeting Place Inspection checklist is included in the [appendix](#).

### Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles transporting passengers or carrying equipment should meet state inspection standards, if applicable, or use the vehicle checklist included in the [appendix](#) as a guide.

### Unit Camping

Essentially, three occasions in unit camping require inspection: (1) after camp is set up, (2) after camp is taken down, and (3) periodically between. Your main interest in these inspections is to ensure a safe, livable camp and an unblemished site after you leave.

### Boats

Upon request, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will conduct a Courtesy Marine Examination of any craft over 16 feet in length. The officer will analyze the vessel and advise you of any deficiencies within state or federal regulations.

References: *Handbook for Skippers* and *Safe Boating Instructor's Guide*

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## XI - Medical Information

It is recommended that all members of the Boy Scouts of America have periodic medical evaluations by a licensed health-care practitioner.\* In recent years, in an effort to provide better care to those who may become ill or injured and to provide youth members and adult leaders a better understanding of their physical capabilities, the Boy Scouts of America established minimum standards for providing medical information prior to participating in various activities. They are classified as follows:

### Class 1:

**Includes any event that *does not exceed 72 consecutive hours*, where the level of activity is similar to that normally expended at home or at school, and where medical care is readily available. Examples: day camp, day hike, swimming party, or an overnight camp. Medical information required is a *current health history signed by parents or guardian*. The health history form currently found on the back of the BSA individual applications or the Class I Personal Health and Medical Summary found on page 3 of form No. 34414 (Personal Health and Medical Record) meets this requirement. Den leaders, Scoutmasters, team coaches, and crew Advisors should review these and become knowledgeable about the medical needs of the youth members in their unit. Forms must be updated annually. They are filled out by participants and kept on file for easy reference.**

### Class 2:

**Includes any event that *exceeds 72 consecutive hours*, where the level of activity is similar to that normally expended at home or at school, and where medical care is readily available. Examples: resident camping, tour camping, and hiking in relatively populated areas. Medical data required is *an annual health history signed by parents or guardian supported by a medical evaluation completed within the past 36 months by a licensed health-care practitioner*. The Personal Health and Medical Record - Class 2, No. 34414, is designed primarily for resident Cub Scout and Boy Scout summer camp but could be used for any Class 2 activity. Youth members and adult participants under 40 years of age use this form. (See Camp Health and Safety for additional information on Class 2 application.)**

### Class 3:

**Includes any event involving strenuous activity such as backpacking, high altitude, extreme weather conditions, cold water, exposure, fatigue, athletic competition, adventure challenge, or remote conditions where readily available medical care cannot be assured. Examples: high-adventure activities, jamborees, Wood Badge, and extended backpacking trips in remote areas. Medical information required includes *current health history supported by a medical evaluation within the past 12 months performed by a licensed health-care practitioner*. Form 34412 is to be used by youth for Class 3 activities. Adults age 40 or older will use this form for Class 2 and Class 3 activities. See form No. 34414, Personal Health and Medical Record, for more information.**

Pilmont Scout Ranch and Florida Sea Base require the use of their special medical form by all youth and adults because of the strenuous nature of the activities taking place there.

It is recommended that unit leaders have a complete medical history and permission slip for every participant attending each Scouting activity. The medical history form and permission slip, in most cases, will allow emergency medical treatment to a youth member in case of injury or illness when a parent or guardian cannot be contacted.

\* Examinations conducted by licensed health-care practitioners, other than physicians, will be recognized for BSA purposes in those states where such practitioners may perform physical examinations within their legally prescribed scope of practice.

## Immunizations

Verification of the following protections is strongly recommended before participation in activities conducted by the Boy Scouts of America:

1. Tetanus and diphtheria toxoid within the past 10 years
2. Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) since first birthday
3. Trivalent oral polio vaccine (TOPV); four doses since birth

## Life-Threatening Communicable Diseases

Local Scouting units and their chartered organizations traditionally determine their own membership, absent any legal constraints. Accordingly, units and sponsoring institutions should determine the feasibility or desirability of allowing youth or adult members who have or are suspected of having a life-threatening communicable disease to participate in Scouting activities. A youth member who is unable to attend meetings may continue to pursue Scouting through the Lone Scout program.

## Sun Safety

The American Academy of Dermatology advises the following protection tips against damaging rays:

- Limit exposure to sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Generously apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and reapply every two hour when outdoors, even on cloudy days.
- Wear protective, tightly woven clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt and pants.
- Wear a 4-inch-wide broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protective lenses.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible.
- Avoid reflective surfaces, which can reflect up to 85 percent of the sun's damaging rays.

## Religious Beliefs and Medical Care

The following is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America regarding medical requirements:

- **Medical examinations for camp attendance are required of all campers for the protection of the entire camp group. The immunization requirement is waived for persons with religious**

**beliefs against immunization.**

- **All Scouts and Scout leaders need to learn first aid, not for their own use, but for service to others who may require it. A Scout or leader may ask to be excused from first-aid instruction, but no advancement requirement will be waived except as indicated.**
- **Requirements 1 and 5 for the Personal Fitness merit badge call for examinations by a physician and a dentist with appropriate follow-up recommendations. This may be set aside on presentation of a certificate by the Scout's parents and a proper church official that a definite violation of religious conviction is involved.**

## **Prescriptions**

The taking of prescription medication is the responsibility of the individual taking the medication and/or that individual's parent or guardian. A Scout leader, after obtaining all the necessary information, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if your state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## XII - Transportation



Established public carriers - trains, buses, and commercial airlines - are the safest and most comfortable way for groups to travel. Chartered buses usually are the most economical transportation for groups of 20 or more. It may be necessary for small groups to travel in private automobiles; however, the use of chartered equipment from established rail, bus, and airline companies is strongly recommended. The advantages are many. These companies have excellent safety records because of their periodic inspections and approved health and safety procedures.

References: *Cub Scout Leader Book*, *Scoutmaster Handbook*, *Troop Committee Guidebook*, *Exploring Reference Book*, and *Tours and Expeditions*

### Automobiles

It is essential that adequate, safe, and responsible transportation be used for all Scouting activities. Because most accidents occur within a short distance from home, safety precautions are necessary, even on short trips.

General guidelines are as follows:

1. **Seat belts are required for all occupants.**
2. **All drivers must have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason. If the vehicle to be used is designed to carry more than 15 persons, including the driver (more than 10 persons, including the driver, in California), the driver must have a commercial driver's license (CDL).**
3. **An adult leader (at least 21 years of age) must be in charge and accompany the group.**
4. **The driver must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age. Youth member exception: When traveling to an area, regional, or national Boy Scout activity or any Venturing event under the leadership of an adult (at least 21 years of age) tour leader, a youth member at least 16 years of age may be a driver, subject to the following conditions:**
  - a. **Six months' driving experience as a licensed driver (time on a learner's permit or equivalent is not to be counted)**
  - b. **No record of accidents or moving violations**
  - c. **Parental permission granted to the leader, driver, and riders**
5. **Passenger cars or station wagons may be used for transporting passengers, but passengers should not ride on the rear deck of station wagons.**
6. **Trucks may not be used for transporting passengers except in the cab.**
7. **All driving, except short trips, should be done in daylight.**



8. **All vehicles must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed requirements of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. It is recommended that coverage limits are at least \$50,000/\$100,000/\$50,000. Any vehicle designed to carry 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of \$100,000/\$500,000/\$100,000.**
9. **Do not exceed the speed limit.**
10. **Do not travel in convoy (see "[Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings](#)," No. 2).**
11. **Driving time is limited to a maximum of 10 hours and must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and recreation stops. If there is only one driver, the driving time should be reduced and stops should be made more frequently.**

## **Campers, Trailers, and Trucks**

Trucks are designed and constructed to transport materials and equipment, not people. **The beds of trucks or trailers must never be used for carrying passengers.** Tour permits will not be issued for any trip that involves carrying passengers in a truck except in the cab. This includes vehicles converted for that use unless they are licensed as buses and meet all requirements for buses.

Use caution in towing trailers or campers, as a vehicle's performance, steering, and braking abilities will be altered. Consider these safety tips:

1. Get the correct trailer for the car and the correct hitch for the trailer. Distribute and anchor the load.
2. Allow extra time to brake. Changing lanes while braking can jackknife the trailer.
3. Add safety equipment as dictated by common sense and state laws (mirrors, lights, safety chains, brakes for heavy trailers, etc.).
4. Park in designated areas.

## **Buses**

**A driver of a bus or any vehicle designed to carry more than 15 persons (including driver) is required to have a commercial driver's license.** Possession of a license, however, does not mean that a person is capable of driving a bus safely. It is essential that unit leaders and volunteers be thoroughly familiar with the bus they will be driving, including knowing the location of emergency exits and fire extinguishers and how to operate them. A driver must be prepared to handle and brake a full bus, which weighs significantly more than an empty bus. Other safety tips are:

1. Regular and thorough maintenance program
2. No more passengers than there are seating locations
3. Luggage and equipment fastened securely to prevent being thrown around in case of sudden stop
4. Emergency exits clear of people or things
5. Pretrip inspection of critical systems (signals, fuel, tires, windshield wipers, horn, etc.)

The safety rules for automobiles apply to bus travel, with the exception of seat belts. In special cases, chartered buses may travel more than nine hours a day. On certain occasions, night travel by public carrier bus is appropriate - it should be considered permissible when conditions are such that rest and

sleep for passengers are possible with a reasonable degree of comfort. However, night travel on buses should not be planned for two successive nights.

## Trains

Observe these safety guidelines for train travel:

1. Don't lean out of windows or doors.
2. When changing trains, don't cross railroad tracks without permission.
3. Stay out of vestibules. Keep the railroad car door closed.
4. In case of illness or accident, see a train official who can arrange for medical help.
5. On overnight trips, one leader should be on watch duty at all times.

## Boats

In national parks and some other areas of the country, special boat and canoe regulations are in force, and special boat permits are required for cruising or recreation. Follow these safety precautions:

1. **All tour leaders must have current training in the BSA Safety Afloat program (see [Chapter II, "Aquatics Safety"](#)).**
2. **U.S. Coast Guard recommends and BSA regulations require that an approved USCG personal flotation device (PFD) be worn by each participant using watercraft in an aquatics activity. Types II and III are recommended for Scout activity afloat.**



A capsized boat is never anticipated, so always be prepared. Be sure each individual wears a PFD.

3. **Rowboats or canoes carrying passengers should not be towed behind motorboats or sailboats.**
4. **Use of canoes should be restricted to swimmers who have satisfactorily demonstrated their ability in launching, landing, and paddling a canoe and in handling a swamped canoe. Canoeists should be taught the proper procedure for staying afloat if the canoe capsizes or is swamped.**
5. **Small boats, whether under sail or power, used for pleasure or ferry purposes, must have a minimum capacity of 10 cubic feet per person.**

**Boats propelled by hand power - such as rowboats - and used for pleasure purposes only must provide a minimum of 7 cubic feet per person. (Lifeboats on passenger-carrying vessels propelled by power must comply with the 10-cubic-foot law.)**

6. **Provision also should be made by all boats under sail or power for a sufficient quantity or supply of oars and rowlocks or paddles to be used in case of emergency. Fire-fighting equipment and lights must also be carried aboard.**
7. **Bilges of gasoline-powered boats should be kept free from gasoline and oil at all times.**

**Thorough ventilation, either natural or by blower, is necessary to dispel gasoline vapor.**

- 8. Motorized personal watercraft, such as jet-skis, are not authorized for use in Scouting activities, and their use should not be permitted in or near BSA program areas.**
- 9. To prevent ignition by static electricity during refueling, establish complete metallic contact between the nozzle of the filling hose and the tank opening or filling pipe, and maintain contact until gasoline has ceased to flow. If a funnel is used, establish contact with the funnel and the opening in the tank. All passengers should be ashore during refueling.**

For regulations that govern cruises by private powerboat or sailboat, refer to Motorboat Regulations, published by the U.S. Coast Guard.

## **Aircraft**

Air travel is permitted as follows:

- 1. On any flight scheduled by a commercial airline.**
- 2. The BSA Flight Permit, No. 23-672 (see sample in [appendix](#)), is required for all BSA flying activities except for commercial flights. *The local council reviews and approves the flight permit just as it would a tour permit.* **The Parent/Guardian Consent Form, No. 23-673 (see sample in [appendix](#)), is also required.** Units should attach the signed consent forms to the BSA Flying Permit Application and keep a copy of the signed consent forms in their files.**
- 3. Flying in hang gliders, ultralights, experimental class aircraft, and hot-air balloons (whether or not they are tethered); parachuting, and flying in aircraft as part of a search and rescue mission are unauthorized activities.**
- 4. Airplane travelers are cautioned about what they pack in their luggage. In flight, variations in temperature and air pressure can cause some hazardous materials to leak or ignite. Included in the category of hazardous materials that should not be packed in luggage are matches or lighters; flammable liquids and gases; signal flares and other explosives; bleaches, aerosols, mercury, and solvents containing dangerous chemicals that can cause toxic fumes and corrosion.**

## **Tour Permits**

**If a unit plans a trip within 500 miles of the home base, it is important that the unit obtain a local tour permit. A national tour permit is required for trips in excess of 500 miles from home or outside the continental United States. (See samples of both in the [appendix](#).)**

Tour permits have become recognized by national parks, military institutions, and other organizations as proof that a unit activity has been well planned and organized and is under capable and qualified leadership. These organizations may require the tour permit for entry.

**Most short, in-town den trips of a few hours do not require a tour permit; however, it is recommended that dens obtain permission slips from parents.**

# Commercial Driver's License Compliance

The following questions and answers may help you understand how Scouting drivers fall into a category of private motor carriers that are subject to the commercial driver's license (CDL) rules:

1. *What is a "private motor carrier of passengers"?*

A private motor carrier of passengers does not offer transportation services for hire but (a) transports passengers in interstate (some state regulations apply to intrastate) commerce, and (b) uses a vehicle designed to carry more than 15 passengers, which includes the driver, or a vehicle that has a gross vehicular weight greater than 10,000 pounds.

2. *What are some examples of usage of a private motor carrier of passengers in Scouting?*

- Scouting units that use vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers, such as buses, is one example. The driver in this case is often a volunteer driver of a "Scout bus" that is owned or leased. This category is referred to as *nonbusiness private motor carrier of passengers* and is probably the most frequent Scouting usage subject to the rule.
- Councils that operate camps and include transportation fees in their program are subject to the rule when using buses or other vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers or that have a gross vehicular weight of more than 10,000 pounds.

Neither of these examples would be considered a private motor carrier of passengers if the transportation were extended beyond Scouting participants to the general public, because in that case it is considered transportation for hire and is subject to federal motor carrier safety regulations.

3. *What about Scouting use of school buses?*

In most states, Scouting units or councils that contract with schools to use buses fall into the for-hire category, and the school is subject to the federal safety regulations. Since public school transportation vehicles are not subject to CDL rules when transporting students, the school may not realize that the for-hire regulations apply. The consequence could have a ruinous effect on a planned Scouting activity.

4. *How will the rule be enforced?*

The primary enforcement activity of both categories, business and nonbusiness, is the driver/vehicle inspection. Inspections can be performed anywhere on the road or at destination points such as parks, sporting complexes, etc. Only the business category is subject to compliance reviews and record keeping, but if serious safety problems are identified in either category of vehicle usage, the operation of the vehicle is subject to being discontinued.

5. *Are Scouting operations subject to the drug and alcohol testing portion of the rule?*

As of January 1, 1996, all operators of vehicles who are required to have a commercial driver's license are subject to drug and alcohol testing. There are no exemptions for the nonbusiness private motor carrier of passengers category, which includes Scouting volunteer drivers. Local councils should establish guidelines for volunteer drivers based on the requirements of the state where located.

6. *How do Scouting officials obtain the Department of Transportation identification number required for all vehicles that are subject to the CDL rule?*

Form MCS-150 should be requested from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Office of Motor Carriers, in the council's state. The completed form would be sent to the FHWA's office in

Washington, D.C., where a DOT number will be assigned. This number, as well as name, city, and state, should be displayed on the side of the vehicle. An education and technical assistance (ETA) package can be obtained from the local FHWA office.

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America  <http://www.bsa.scouting.org>



# Guide to Safe Scouting

## XIII - Winter Activities

### Winter Camping Safety

There is magic to camping in winter. It is one of the most advanced and challenging of outdoor adventures. Special considerations for winter camping include the following:

1. *Leadership* - In no other camp is the type of leadership as important as in the winter camp. It is vital that a leader be an experienced camper with a strong character.
2. *Equipment* - Do not attempt to camp unless completely outfitted. Even if equipment for winter camp is more expensive than for summer camp, Scouts must be adequately clothed, and leaders should ensure that blankets and other equipment are of suitable quality and weight.
3. *Physical Condition* - A physician's certificate as to physical ability must be obtained by each Scout before preliminary training begins.



### Tips for your next winter camping trip:

1. Use the buddy system for winter outings. Buddies can check each other for frostbite, make sure no one becomes lost, and boost the morale of the entire group.
2. Plan to cover no more than 5 miles per day on a winter trek on snowshoes. An experienced group can cover 10 to 12 miles on cross-country skis.
3. Always allow ample time to make camp in winter, especially if you plan to build snow shelters.
4. Fatigue encourages accidents. Rest occasionally when building a snow shelter; taking part in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing; or participating in other active winter sports. Periodic rests also help avoid overheating.
5. Pulling a load over the snow on a sled or toboggan is generally easier than carrying it in a backpack.
6. Snow is a terrific insulator. Snow shelters are much warmer than tents because they retain heat and keep out the cold wind. If you have adequate time for building snow shelters, you will spend a much more comfortable night sleeping in them than in a tent.
7. Snow is the greatest thief in winter, swallowing up small dropped items. Tie or tape a piece of brightly colored cord to small items so they can be seen in snow. Some items, such as mittens, can

be tied to larger items, such as a parka, to prevent them from being dropped and lost.

8. Melting snow in a pot to get water may cause the pot to burn through or may scorch the snow, giving the water a disagreeable taste. Prevent this by adding a cup or two of water in the bottom of the pot before putting in the snow to melt.
9. Punch a hole in the top of your ice chisel and string a stout cord through it. Before trying to chisel a hole in ice, anchor the cord to something large or too heavy to be pulled through the hole so you will not lose your chisel in freezing water when the ice is penetrated.
10. Always test the thickness of ice before venturing any distance from the shore. Ice should be at least 3 inches thick for a small group; 4 inches of ice is safe for a crowd. Since ice thickness can vary considerably, it is best to stay near the shoreline of large lakes.
11. Use alkaline batteries in flashlights. Standard batteries deteriorate quickly in cold weather. Tape the switch of your flashlight in the "off" position until you are ready to use it. This will prevent it from being turned on accidentally while in your pack or on your sled.
12. Encourage everyone in your group to wear brightly colored outer clothing so that each person will be more visible, especially during severe weather.
13. Small liquid-fuel stoves are much better for cooking in winter than fires, which are difficult to build with wet wood. Gathering wood that is frozen to the ground also can be difficult, if not impossible. A pressure/pump-type stove is essential in winter.
14. Always use a funnel to refuel a stove so you won't frostbite your fingers by accidentally pouring fuel on them. Fuel evaporates at a high rate of speed and quickly removes heat from anything it touches.
15. Place a stove or fire on a platform of logs or rocks so it will not melt through the snow.
16. Never light or use a stove inside a tent or snow shelter. A tent may catch fire, and a snow shelter may help lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Neither of these potential mishaps is worth the risk.
17. A windscreen is essential for using a stove in the winter. Even a slight breeze will direct the heat away from its intended mark.

References: *Okpik: Cold Weather Camping*, *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Scoutmaster Handbook*, and *Camping Sparklers*

## Winter Sports Safety

Beyond camping, a number of cold-weather activities present challenges to the Scout and leader, such as cross-country skiing, ice skating, sledding, snowmobiling, ice fishing, and snowshoeing. Essential ingredients for fun include skill training and an awareness of the hazards unique to these activities. Snow conditions, hazardous terrain, special clothing needs, and emergency survival are important issues for a safe and successful experience.

Be sure your winter outdoor activity always follows these guidelines:





1. All winter activities must be supervised by mature and conscientious adults (at least one of whom must be age 21 or older) who understand and knowingly accept responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in their care, who are experienced and qualified in the particular skills and equipment involved in the activity, and who are committed to compliance with the seven points of BSA Winter Sports Safety. Direct supervision should be maintained at all times by two or more adults when Scouts are "in the field." The appropriate number of supervisors will increase depending on the number of participants, the type of activity, and environmental conditions.
2. Winter sports activities embody intrinsic hazards that vary from sport to sport. Participants should be aware of the potential hazards of any winter sport before engaging in it. Leaders should emphasize preventing accidents through adherence to safety measures and proper technique.
3. Suitable clothing for the activity and environment should be worn at all times, and equipment should include gloves and helmets when appropriate.
4. Winter sports activities often place greater demands on a participant's cardiopulmonary system, and people with underlying medical conditions (especially if the heart or lungs are involved) should not participate without medical consultation and direction. For participants without underlying medical conditions, the annual health history and physical examination by a licensed health-care practitioner every three years are sufficient. The adult leader should be familiar with the physical circumstances of each youth participant and make appropriate adjustments in the activity or protection as warranted by individual health or physical conditions. Adults participating in strenuous outdoor winter activity should have an annual physical examination. It is recommended that the medical assessment be performed by a licensed health-care practitioner knowledgeable of the sport and the particular physical demands the activity will place on the individual.
5. For winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, etc. that utilize specialized equipment, it is essential that all equipment fit and function properly.
6. When youth are engaging in downhill activities such as sledding, tobogganing, or snow tubing, minimize the likelihood of collision with immobile obstacles. Use only designated areas where rocks, tree stumps, and other potential obstacles have been identified and marked, cleared away, shielded, or buffered in some way.
7. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe winter activity. The applicable rules should be presented and learned before the outing, and all participants should review them just before the activity begins. When Scouts know and understand the reasons for the rules, they will observe them. When fairly and impartially applied, rules do not interfere with fun. Rules for safety, plus common sense and good judgment, keep the fun from being interrupted by tragedy.



---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---





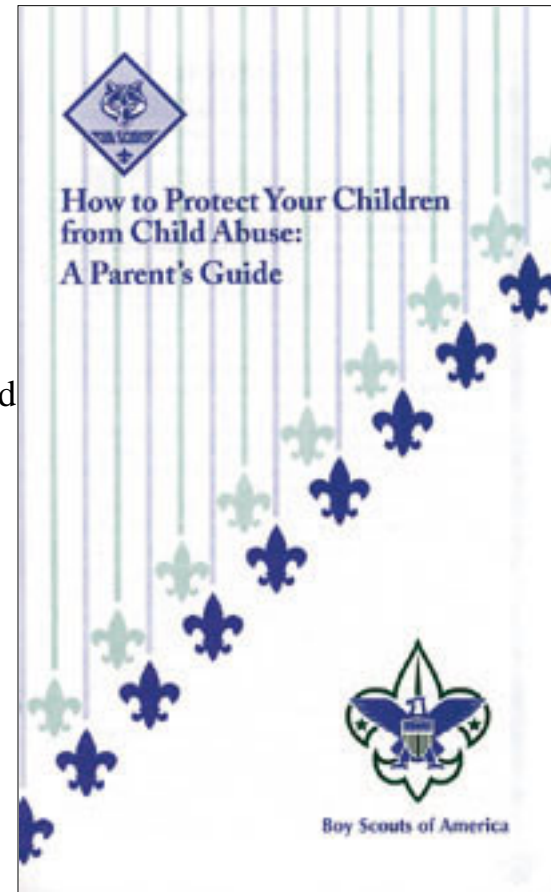
# Guide to Safe Scouting

## XIV - Youth Protection and Child Abuse

Because of the great concern the Boy Scouts of America has for the problem of child abuse in our society, the Youth Protection program has been developed to help safeguard both our youth and adult members. Published and videotaped materials have been prepared to give professionals and volunteers information on the resources available for educating our membership about child abuse - how to avoid it, how to identify it, and how to deal with it. These materials and local council training programs are designed to give parents and their children basic information that will increase their awareness and sense of personal power to assist in their own self-protection.

Unit leaders can learn more from these materials:

- *Youth Protection Training for Adult Leaders*, No. AV-09V001A. This is a comprehensive youth protection training program for all BSA professionals and volunteers. This 1994 updated videotape and supporting materials cover recognizing and reporting child abuse.
- *Youth Protection: Boy Scout and Cub Scout Leader Training Module*, No. AV-09V010. This is an abbreviated version of the 90-minute *Youth Protection Training* course released in 1988, with materials specifically tailored for leaders working with Cub Scout-age and Boy Scout-age youth.
- *A Time to Tell*, No. AV-09V004. This award-winning youth protection program dramatizes three abuse situations and what to do about them. It was designed to be viewed by 11- to 14-year-old boys and can be used by non-Scout groups and organizations.
- *It Happened to Me*, No. AV-09V011. This training program has been developed for the 6- to 9-year-old male audience. It is designed to educate this age group, through five scenarios, on the issue of sexual abuse and the "trickery" involved in luring young victims.
- *Youth Protection: Personal Safety Awareness* No. AV09V027. A presentation for any young person in the 14-20 age range. It is made up of vignettes dealing with the issues of acquaintance rape, Internet safety, stalking, and fraternization. Each scenario is followed by instruction for local group discussions and a teen panel with pertinent advice regarding each situation.
- *Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Adult Venturing Leaders* No. AF-03V14. This training for Venturing leaders provides an overview of the developmental transitions experienced by young people of Venturing age and how those transitions relate to the personal safety concerns of the Venturing program.



All persons responsible for youth safety must understand and appreciate Scouting's position of zero

tolerance for child abuse or victimization in any form. **Unit leaders should report any suspected abuse to the local council Scout executive.**

## **Hazing and Initiations**

**All forms of hazing, initiations, ridicule, or inappropriate teasing are prohibited and should not be allowed.**

---

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

---

The Boy Scouts of America



<http://www.bsa.scouting.org>