



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

SCOUTING SAFELY

SUMMARY

Do you know where to find up-to-the-minute safety information for Scouts and Scouters? The [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org) website. Take time to become familiar with all the safety information under Scouting Safely to help all of us keep Scouts safe.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Check out these sections of the Scouting Safely page:

Guide to Safe Scouting: The Guide to Safe Scouting is an overview of Scouting policies and procedures gleaned from various sources. It is the one source of truth for policies such as [Scouting's Barriers to Abuse](#) and the [Prohibited Activity Listing](#). A valuable resource for unit leaders to review before conducting all activities.

SAFE Checklist: Scouts and their parents expect all Boy Scouts of America activities to be conducted safely. To ensure the safety of participants, the Boy Scouts of America expects leaders to use the four points of SAFE when delivering Scouting programs.

Safety Moments: Safety Moments are precisely what the name implies: opportunities to prepare for an activity, review safety measures, and report incidents correctly. Topics of this series include incident reporting helps, safe use of medication in Scouting, weather-related safety, and many more topics.

Annual Health and Medical Record (AHMR): All participants must complete the AHMR and update it at least annually. Leaders then review it to address any fitness risk factors, including temporary or chronic health conditions that might impact a participant's safety.

Incident Reporting: Timely, clear, concise, and complete incident reports allow for an appropriate response and an opportunity for analysis while promoting continuous improvement of our programs. Please report incidents, near misses, and youth protection/membership infraction incidents immediately to your local council.

Wilderness First Aid (WFA) Training: Before heading into a remote environment where definitive care by a physician or rapid transport to a medical facility is not available the BSA recommends and sometimes requires WFA. BSA has partnered with the [American Red Cross](#) and [Emergency Care and Safety Institute](#) to provide accredited courses to enable your participation in backcountry adventure.

Answers to Your General Health and Safety Questions: Review this page for answers to frequently asked questions ranging from Scouts on zip lines and pets at campouts to the Annual Health and Medical Record and insurance coverage. There are also links to other FAQ pages.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA SCOUTER CODE OF CONDUCT

On my honor, I promise to do my best to comply with this Boy Scouts of America Scouter Code of Conduct while serving in my capacity as an adult leader:

1. I have completed or will complete my registration with the Boy Scouts of America, answering all questions truthfully and honestly.
2. I will do my best to live up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, obey all laws, and hold others in Scouting accountable to those standards. I will exercise sound judgment and demonstrate good leadership and use the Scouting program for its intended purpose consistent with the mission of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. I will make the protection of youth a personal priority. I will complete and remain current with Youth Protection training requirements. I will be familiar with and follow:
 - BSA Youth Protection policies and guidelines, including mandatory reporting: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/
 - *The Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss
 - SAFE: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/
4. When transporting youth, I will obey all laws, comply with Youth Protection guidelines, and follow safe driving practices.
5. I will respect and abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, BSA policies, and BSA-provided training, including but not limited to those relating to:
 - Unauthorized fundraising activities
 - Advocacy on social and political issues, including prohibited use of the BSA uniform and brand
 - Bullying, hazing, harassment, and unlawful discrimination of any kind
6. I will not discuss or engage in any form of sexual conduct while engaged in Scouting activities. I will refer youth with questions regarding these topics to talk to their parents or spiritual advisor.
7. I confirm that I have fully disclosed and will disclose in the future any of the following:
 - Any criminal suspicion, charges, or convictions of a crime or offense involving abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or any misconduct involving minors or juveniles
 - Any investigation or court order involving domestic violence, child abuse, or similar matter
 - Any criminal charges or convictions for offenses involving controlled substances, driving while intoxicated, firearms, or dangerous weapons
8. I will not possess, distribute, transport, consume, or use any of the following items prohibited by law or in violation of any Scouting rules, regulations, and policies:
 - Alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, including marijuana
 - Concealed or unconcealed firearms, fireworks, or explosives
 - Pornography or materials containing words or images inconsistent with Scouting values
9. If I am taking prescription medications with the potential of impairing my functioning or judgment, I will not engage in activities that would put youth at risk, including driving or operating equipment.
10. I will take steps to prevent or report any violation of this code of conduct by others in connection with Scouting activities.

BSA SAFETY MOMENT

USING A SAFETY MOMENT IN SCOUTING ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

Safety Moments are opportunities to reinforce that the safety of Scouts and Scouters in the Boy Scouts of America is the top priority. A Safety Moment focuses the unit, volunteers, or staff on safety and how to achieve it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Who can deliver a Safety Moment?

- Everyone can deliver Safety Moments in Scouting. Any adult leader, Scout, or employee can step up with little preparation to make a [SAFE](#) difference to everyone participating.

What makes an excellent Safety Moment topic?

- Any topic that focuses on improving the safety of Scouting. The BSA regularly publishes [Safety Moments](#) on a variety of topics. Other topics could include the use of the [SAFE Checklist](#) or the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#). They could be general safety topics on locating a fire extinguisher or knowing evacuation routes. Pick a topic that is relevant to all participants. If you have accurate information on injuries or incidents during a recent outing, share your experience.

When and where should a Safety Moment be delivered?

- Safety Moments are best used at the beginning of meetings or before a Scouting activity. They are essential in activities with a high-risk profile, like ATV programs or shooting sports.

How should the Safety Moment be delivered?

- Safety Moments are on a clear and concise single topic, optimally no more than 2 minutes. All Safety Moments need to be fact-based and age-appropriate for the audience. If you have time, provide a demonstration of safe practices.

RESOURCES

- Scouting Safely: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/
- Safety Moments: www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/Safety_Moments.aspx
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx
- SAFE Checklist: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

PRE-EVENT MEDICAL SCREENING

SUMMARY

Preparing for a campout or other event takes a lot of planning. One way to make sure everyone has fun and stays healthy while participating is to use the Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist before getting in those vehicles. Helping to prevent the spread of communicable diseases should be included as part of your preparation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Why should you add one more thing to your to-do list? Checking to make sure everyone is well enough to attend before heading to the event makes sense. The Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist can help you do just that very quickly and easily. It is a tool to find out if someone is ill before you hit the road. Use it for everyone attending the event—adults and youth alike.

Before leaving, you should do a quick health check for every participant. This includes:

- Reviewing each participant's Annual Health and Medical Record (AHMR) with them. Make sure all sections are completed and identify any potential medical issues.
- Checking to make sure participants have enough medication for the entire length of the trip including all emergency medications, such as asthma rescue inhalers and EpiPens, if needed.
- Determining if everyone is healthy enough to travel and attend the event. Use the Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist as a fast way to do a medical check. Eight quick questions can help to stop the spread of common communicable diseases to others in attendance. If someone responds "yes" to a question, the checklist provides guidance on what to do.

If you are traveling long distances, it may be a good idea to use the checklist upon arrival at the event too. Symptoms can pop up on the way, and by identifying an illness early you can potentially help prevent transmission to others in your group as well as to the others in attendance.

The Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist is not meant to be printed and saved. Do not keep it as a part of the AHMR. In fact, you can use just one copy or an electronic version during your health check before leaving. No need to fill it out. Just ask each person the questions. That's all there is to it!

RESOURCES

- Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist—www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-102_PreEventChklist.pdf
- Annual Health and Medical Record—www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/
- Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Scouting: Recommendations for Unit and Council Event Leaders—[https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103\(18\)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103(18)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf)

Medication Use in Scouting

The following guidance from the Boy Scouts of America on medication use in BSA-related activities has been developed for youth, parents or guardians, and adult leaders. Planning and preparation are key components.

The BSA's guiding principles for the safe use of medications include:

- All medication is the responsibility of either the individual taking the medication or that individual's parent or guardian.
- An adult leader, after obtaining all the necessary information and permission, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a youth takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but the BSA does not mandate or necessarily encourage the leader to do so.
- BSA council camps may have their own standards and policies regarding the administration of medications.
- State or local laws that are more limiting than camp policies supersede any BSA guidance and must be followed.

Guidance—Eight Elements of Safe Medication Use

1. Annual Health and Medical Record

- All participants in the BSA are required to complete an [Annual Health and Medical Record \(AHMR\)](#).
- Participants must be candid when listing their medications in the Health History section in Part B of the AHMR. No medications should be kept secret.
- A parent or guardian completing the form may authorize the administration of over-the-counter (nonprescription) medications.
- In addition to the parent or guardian signature, some Scouting areas may require a signature from your health-care provider to permit over-the-counter medications to be given. Check with the camp you are attending for its requirements.

2. Plan

- Parents are cautioned against using a BSA event as a "drug holiday" by suspending administration of medications taken regularly by their youth member unless there are specific instructions from a health-care provider.
- Before the event and before an adult leader becomes involved in medication management for any youth member, the youth, the parent or guardian, and the adult leader should have a pre-event discussion that includes the reason for use and specifies the medication(s) that will be self-administered or kept by the youth member.
- Plans may be simple or more complex based on the length of the outing, the maturity of the youth, and the complexity of the medications being taken.
- Plans may include agreement on the participant's competency to self-administer; how the medicine will be accounted for; the quantity, labeling, and storage of the medication; and the protocol for emergency situations.
- All information on administration, including any specialized equipment or medication (e.g., insulin injections, insulin pumps, and emergency medications) should be provided to leaders.
- Special arrangements may be needed for events such as Order of the Arrow weekends, jamborees, Scouting contingents, and other events not unit-based.

3. Supervision of Medication Administration

- Based on agreement that includes the degree of the individual's capacity for self-care, a decision is made on who is responsible for supervising the administration of the medication.
- The youth participant with the agreed-upon capacity for self-care may be the best person to manage their own medication.
- For the youth participant who is self-administering medication, there should be agreement on the method of supervision.
- A parent or guardian who is present should assume responsibility.
- If a parent or guardian isn't available during the event, a willing adult leader may take responsibility for medication administration to any youth who cannot self-administer the medication.
- The identified leader must be informed by the youth and the parent or guardian about any special circumstances.
- Special care must be given by the responsible adult to correctly identify the youth with assurance that the right medication is being administered at the right time in the right amount.
- A process should be developed for the possibility of having to hand off the responsibility to another adult (e.g., a leader rotates home or must leave due to an emergency).
- No adult leader should assume the responsibility unwillingly.

4. Labeling

- Medication sent on an outing should preferably be in its original container and labeled with the name of the participant, medication, dose and strength, prescribing health-care provider's name, date of prescription, current instructions for use, special storage, etc.
- If a prescription label is missing or placed on an external package, the internal item (such as a tube or inhaler) should be, at a minimum, labeled with the participant's name, name of the medication, and directions for use.

5. Storage

- Medications must be stored securely, either under lock and key (e.g., a locking bank bag) or direct observation.
- Security is especially important for controlled substances.
- Most medications should be kept by an adult with some or full control of the process. (See "6. Emergency Medication" below for an exception for the youth participant.)
- Special medication storage requirements by the manufacturer, such as protection from light or the need for refrigeration, should be discussed during the planning stage. Storage containers or coolers should be provided by the parent or guardian if possible.
- To protect the medications, be sensitive to providing storage for medications in a controlled environment, e.g., avoiding a hot car or an environment where liquid medications might freeze.

6. Emergency Medication

- Medications that may be needed for an emergency or on an urgent basis may be carried by the youth participant. A buddy or the responsible adult should be sure the youth has the emergency medication.
- The youth participant must notify the adult leader immediately upon self-administering the emergency medication.
- In many cases, an evaluation or further treatment by a health-care provider may be needed after the use of some emergency medications, e.g., epinephrine, even if the youth member feels OK. It may also be necessary to obtain an additional supply if no additional doses are available.
- Planning should address how emergency medication will be administered and include how to develop the adult leader's comfort in assisting the youth if necessary.
- The parent or guardian should be notified of the use of an emergency medication.

7. Nonprescription/Over-the-Counter Medication

- Those nonprescription medications taken routinely or authorized for giving should be listed on the AHMR.
- Nonprescription medications may be kept by youth with the capacity to self-medicate.
- Limited supplies of similar medication (use approved by parent) may be kept by the adult leader.

8. Accountability

- The pre-event discussion should include an agreement between the parent or guardian, leader, and participant on some method of keeping track of medication administration.
- Accountability could range from none—although this may not be the best practice—to the use of the Routine Drug Administration Record form (see "Resources" below).
- No specific form or process is mandated, but some approach is encouraged.

Resources

- BSA Annual Health and Medical Record: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/
- Scouting Safely: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/
- Routine Drug Administration Record: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/forms/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY

Many of us have had practice or training when it comes to deciding the best methods in dealing with an emergency. Far too often when those fight-or-flight situations arise, it's difficult for us to recall everything we need to know. Luckily, there are written procedures with maps and guides on how to effectively address emergency situations, assuming they have been prepared and reviewed in advance at your office/event location.

GENERAL INFORMATION

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) can be found at your camp and local council office, and it's a good idea to develop one for your regular meeting place or campout location. As part of the program hazard analysis for your camp, activity-specific EAPs are most effective when they are developed, approved, and practiced on a regular basis.

Some major components of an EAP include:

- Evacuation routes and escape plans with instructions that can be posted in designated areas throughout your local council, camp location, and meeting place
- Maps indicating:
 - Emergency exits
 - Primary and secondary evacuation routes
 - Locations of fire extinguishers
 - Locations of fire alarm pull stations
 - Assembly points
- Emergency contacts that include a hierarchy of:
 - Your designated Scout leaders and local council contacts
 - Local hospitals; fire, police, or sheriff's offices; and reminders about calling 911 (or the appropriate emergency telephone number)
- Scenario-specific response plans:
 - Sheltering in place against environmental threats such as chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants
 - Severe weather, including weather reports that are specific to your location and, if applicable, a mass notification system plan
 - Active shooter situations, with information on how to respond and where to go or stay, including:
 - Nearest facility exits
 - Stationary response
 - Close confines response
- Others:
 - Where to go in an emergency when you are on a hiking trail or camping
 - Site-specific information (locations and contact information) for outdoor adventure camps, day camps, council offices, etc.

RESOURCES

- Scouting.org—Emergency Preparedness merit badge requirements: www.scouting.org/filestore/merit_badge_reqandres/emergency_preparedness.pdf
- Scouting.org—Emergency Preparedness Award: www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/emergency-preparedness/
- Scouting.org—Policies, Guidelines, and Model Plans: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies/
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)—Emergency Action Plan: www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/eap.html
- National Alliance for Youth Sports—Emergency Action Plans: www.nays.org/resources/more/emergency-action-plans/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

SUMMARY

As Scouts and leaders, we all know that the motto of Scouting is “Be Prepared.” But just how prepared are we when an emergency strikes and we are alone or we come upon someone who is unable to communicate? The BSA has multiple safety programs within the BSA to keep our Scouts and Scouters safe, but let’s look at other ideas that can enhance that ability and be passed to our friends, families, and people outside of Scouting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A movement started in 2004 to have mobile phone manufacturers create a common “In Case of Emergency” app. It actually took 10 years for this to occur. But now this cellphone app is credited with saving lives every day. Let’s look at some “In Case of Emergency” tips.

- In your phone contacts, designate two or three individuals as “In Case of Emergency (ICE)” contacts. This is really simple to do. Open your contacts, select the person you want to identify as an emergency contact, and simply type **ICE** in front of their name. Note that if you lock your phone, others may not be able to access it to provide assistance to you.
- Use your phone’s screen saver to identify emergency contacts. The ability to add text to your screen saver is part of the Android system. It takes some creativity with an iPhone as the text has to be added to the photo you are using before you set it as your locked screen.
- For the iPhone, use the Medical ID app to set your ICE contacts.
 1. Open the app store and locate the Health App (comes standard on iPhones and is denoted by a white icon with a pink heart in the top right corner). You will see four options at the bottom: Dashboard, Health Data, Sources, and Medical ID. Tap **Medical ID**.
 2. From this page, you can add your birthday/age, known medical conditions, allergies and medications, spouse, mother’s and father’s phone numbers, blood type, whether you are an organ donor, and your approximate height.*
 3. To view Medical ID information on a locked iPhone: Slide right to access the unlock pattern/digits. Select **Emergency** from the bottom left corner. Select **Medical ID** from the bottom left corner. And voilà!—the ICE information appears!
- To set up Medical ID on (most) Android phones:
 1. Open your contacts list. Tap **Groups** in the top right corner. There should be a group called “integrated groups” (for example, favorites, co-workers, etc.). Tap **ICE – Emergency Contacts**. Tap **Add**, and add up to four emergency contacts. You can import these from your existing contacts or you can add new ones.
 2. To view Medical ID information on a locked Android phone: Tap **Backup Password**. Tap **Emergency Call**. A touch pad for dialing 911 should appear, along with four circles with plus signs (+) in them. Click on each (+) and pick a contact from the pre-saved ICE group set.
- Other apps that can be downloaded to provide emergency information are iMedAlert, MyID, and ICE: In Case of Emergency.

*It is important to note that information included on Medical ID can be accessed by anyone who has your phone. Always be cautious when filling in your personal information for anything. Your medical information is private, and only information that may be useful or necessary in an emergency situation should be entered.



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

IS IT SCOUTING?

SUMMARY

What is an official Scouting activity? An official Scouting activity is consistent with the values, charter and bylaws, rules and regulations, operations manuals, and applicable literature of the Boy Scouts of America.

So, what is the program of the BSA? Collectively, it is all the books, literature, training, materials, policies, and guidelines provided by the BSA. The program is not something you create and call Scouting but something that can be found in the resources provided by the BSA. It develops leadership, character, and physical and mental fitness when executed properly.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What are three questions you can ask yourself when deciding if your activity is within the scope and guidelines of the Scouting program?

1. Is it age appropriate? Age- and rank-appropriate guidelines have been developed based on many factors.
2. If you are planning activities that fall outside of program materials or handbooks, ask this question: Is the activity appropriate for the age and appropriate for Scouting? Not every activity needs to be conducted.
3. Which book are you in, and what page are you on? The Scouting program is designed to be intrinsically safe. There are handbooks, guidance, and training resources for both professionals and volunteers.

RESOURCES

- Unauthorized & Restricted Activities Safety Moment: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/unauthorized-restricted-activities/
- Activity Planning and Risk Assessment: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss07/
- Age-Appropriate Guidelines: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf>
- Guide to Safe Scouting: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

HIKING

SUMMARY

Hiking is a great way to spend your time in the outdoors. It's also a good way to get your heart pumping for some exercise or to test your limits. Some hikes are just a few hundred feet while others are many miles, but all can pose potential hazards if not carefully considered. Take some time to research your destination and its terrain so you can better prepare to have a memorable experience and fun while exploring.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Not all hikes are the same. Some pose rough terrain while others are more scenic and less physically demanding. Hiking may seem like one of the easiest things you can do in Scouting, but regardless, you should always be prepared for the same risks. Here are a few points to consider when prepping for your hike:

- **Tools**—A clean, sharp, and discreet tool can come in handy, so consider carrying a pocketknife. LED flashlights and fire starters (strike-anywhere matches) are also very useful and should be kept dry.
- **Clothing**—Ponchos or parkas can protect you from rain showers, whether expected or unexpected, as well as block the wind to keep you warm. Comfortable and appropriate footwear will prevent any slips or falls while changing terrain or elevation. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather expected during your hike. Weather can change quickly, however, so be prepared for adverse conditions.
- **Trail food**—Snacks like granola, dried fruits, and trail bars can give you the energy you need to complete your hike.
- **First-aid kit**—While a youth or adult leader will bring a group first-aid kit along, keeping your personal supplies with you is a good idea. Also, if your hike is going to take you above 6,000 feet in elevation, someone in the group should be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of high-altitude illnesses.
- **Sun protection**—Use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Broad-brimmed hats, synthetic fabrics, long-sleeved shirts, sunglasses, and lip balm with SPF are also effective in protecting you from the sun's UV rays.
- **Map and compass**—In unfamiliar areas, a map and a compass can help you. Learning how to use them through practice will ensure a safe hike as well as a safe hike home.
- **Water bottle**—Drinking plenty of water while hiking can help to prevent dehydration.
- **Supplies**—Consider writing down the supplies you need and what supplies you think you need. Staying organized with a checklist will provide a safeguard when Scouting and help you to become aware of risks you may not have thought about.
- **Buddy system**—Buddy checks help to remind participants of their obligation to monitor their buddies so no one is left behind or is traveling too far ahead.

RESOURCES

- Campout Safety Checklist: www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/campout_checklist.pdf



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

POISONOUS PLANTS

SUMMARY

It's a far-too-typical scene. You return from a weekend camping trip or outing, and late in the evening Saturday or Sunday—under that layer of dirt—you find a rash. Chances are, you're one of the millions of Americans—many of them Scouts and Scouters—who are affected by poisonous plants each year. Almost all of us have heard “leaflets three, let it be.” Despite training to identify them on sight and efforts to avoid them, we all have stumbled through a patch of poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac, or one of several other plants that can cause an uncomfortable itch, a rash, and perhaps blisters.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Few escape the effects of urushiol, an oil in poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac that is the principal cause of the rash. Up to 85 percent of us are considered “allergic” and a few are seriously allergic. And if that's not bad enough, the plants grow in all 48 of the continental U.S. states.

As with many things, avoidance is the best action. Take a careful look where you camp or picnic and be sure to point out the plants to those who are not familiar with them. If you've walked through the plants, avoid contact with your shoes and pants, as the oil can rub off of materials and onto you. Don't use wood with hairy vines attached in campfires. Smoke from these plants can spread the oil and even create rashes in airways and the eyes.

If you think you've been exposed, you have a limited time to wash off the urushiol before it affects you. Use soap and water or a specially designed product (like Zanfel®, Ivy Wash®, or Tecnu®) that has been formulated to more fully remove the urushiol, especially when used within a few hours of exposure.

If you're not successful in removing the urushiol, a rash can develop wherever you've come in contact with it. The rash isn't contagious and can't be spread by the oozing of a blister.

Both hydrocortisone cream and calamine lotion work well to reduce the itching, as does cool water or even a swim. Antihistamine creams or lotions are not recommended, but oral antihistamines (like Benadryl®) may help ease itchiness. Scouts and Scouters should seek medical attention if the rash covers more than 10 percent of the body, if signs of an infection appear, or if the rash gets into the eyes.

RESOURCES

- *Fieldbook* (available at scoutshop.org)

BSA SAFETY MOMENT

HOMESICKNESS

SUMMARY

Many of us can feel a bit out of sorts when away from familiar surroundings, and Scouts are no different. Many Scouts experience some symptoms of homesickness during campouts, and identifying these symptoms early and addressing them can help make the event a great experience for everyone.

GENERAL INFORMATION

According to the American Camp Association, most campers report at least some homesick feelings during one day of their camp stay. Common symptoms include mild depression, anxiety, withdrawn behavior, somatic—or physical—complaints, and misbehavior.

Homesickness Risk Factors

Younger Scouts usually are those affected the most. Those who experience homesickness typically have little experience with separation, are anxious or depressed before camp, and may feel they have little control over their situation. They may have no camping experience, feel forced to attend, have insecurities at home, or have overheard their parents express anxiety about them leaving.

Helpful Pre-Camp and Camp Strategies

Adult leaders can mitigate many of the potential problems of homesickness by planning ahead and taking the following steps:

- Take campers for a visit prior to camp starting. If not possible, show them material from the camp so that they can become more familiar.
- Make sure all Scouts are included in the planning phase, and discuss what camp life will be like.
- Address any fears of hazing or bullying.
- Make everyone feel a part of the group.

Once everyone is in camp, there are additional steps that can help minimize feelings of homesickness:

- Immediately get everyone integrated into the camp routine and inform them of what to expect.
- Provide social support to normalize their experience, e.g., asking an older Scout to help mentor a younger Scout who exhibits homesickness and to empathize with their feelings.
- Promote an appropriate connection with home, e.g., have them write a letter home.
- Assess the Scouts' needs and provide positive coping outlets. Some of these strategies might be to get them involved in fun activities, encouraging them to talk with other Scouts or a leader about their feelings, reminding them of the fun things that they have done or will do at camp, and providing special fun tasks to do each day.
- Encourage them and follow up regularly.

RESOURCES

- Camp Spirit: drchristhurber.com/
- American Academy of Pediatrics—Help Your Child Avoid Homesickness at Camp with These Tips: www.aappublications.org/content/33/6/26.6



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

NAP ON SAFELY

SUMMARY

What can you do in 26 minutes to be more alert, make better decisions, and increase your performance?

Hint: “It’s free, it’s nontoxic, and it has no dangerous effects,” say the authors of *Take a Nap! Change Your Life* (Workman Publishing Company, 2006). The answer is in that title: Take a nap!

GENERAL INFORMATION

“Nap on Safely” isn’t the only way to nap, but it sure makes napping simple if you follow the plan:

1. How long do you have to nap?
 - a. Six minutes will enhance memory, 10–15 minutes can improve focus and productivity.
 - b. The NASA nap (26 minutes) is the optimal time for a performance enhancement of 34 percent and an overall alertness increase of 54 percent.
 - c. Extend that nap into the 40–60 minute range, and you will likely be groggy upon awakening as you didn’t finish the sleep cycle. Not good if you are already grumpy.
 - d. 90 minutes of napping can give you a boost of creativity as you finish a cycle. 90 minutes can also top off the sleep you missed the night before.
2. Plan to nap between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. so as to fit the circadian rhythm of most folks. Want everyone to be fresh at your evening campfire? Give them a program break, and schedule naps from 1:00–3:00 at the next campout or camporee.
3. Make sure you have a safe area and set-up. Make your room darker or cover your eyes (using two pirate patches, an eye mask, or an ostrich pillow). Lie down instead of sitting up. Good news for hammock campers: Hammocks are the best place to nap as the gentle swaying will help you go to sleep.
4. Set a timer. Remember, 26 minutes is optimal.
5. Need a super boost for your afternoon? Drink a cup of coffee BEFORE you lie down. Combining caffeinated coffee and a nap will make you feel invincible. (Of course, this is not recommended for youth; the target audience for this tip is the Scoutmaster.)

Napping can’t take the place of getting enough regular sleep. But it certainly may help you through the week at Scout camp or make up for staying up late around the campfire with your crew the night before.

Napping may also help you to

- Resist comfort foods and lose some excess weight.
- Lower your risk of cardiac disorders. Just knowing your nap is coming may lower your blood pressure!
- Reduce the risk of diabetes by lowering insulin and cortisol levels.
- Reduce stress and anxiety by lowering cortisol and releasing growth hormones.
- Combat driving fatigue on a long trip with an emergency nap.

RESOURCES

- Tips from the National Sleep Foundation: [sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/napping](https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/napping)
- The Secret Power of Naps: www.webmd.com/balance/features/the-secret-and-surprising-power-of-naps
- Napping: Do’s and Don’ts for Healthy Adults: www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/napping/art-20048319

BSA SAFETY MOMENT

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

Sometimes you just say “no” to an activity when you “know” the program of the Boy Scouts of America. So, did you “know” there are activities and programs that should NOT be part of any Scouting experience? Or that there are limits for when some activities should be introduced? How you can find out about them and why they are on the “list” are what this safety moment is about.

GENERAL INFORMATION

First, ask this question: **Is the activity in a handbook or other current literature of the Boy Scouts of America?**

If it is, great. Then you *know* it is part of the BSA program.

Wait, it’s not in a BSA handbook or literature. Then ask: **Does it support the values of the Boy Scouts of America?** If the activity helps to create good conduct, respect for others, and honesty, then most likely it is good to go. (Note: Values do not use fun, exciting, wilder, crazy, or faster as a test, nor do they include “We have always done it.”)

The next test: **Is it age appropriate?** For instance, by design the program limits the use of throwing knives and tomahawks to youth in Scouts BSA and above, and limits the use of pocketknives in Cub Scouting to Bears and above. A list of [age-appropriate guidelines](#) is in the appendix of the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

So, the activity you want to do isn’t in the handbook, but you think it supports the values of the BSA and it appears to be age appropriate. Last test: **Is it prohibited or unauthorized?** Look at the list of [prohibited activities](#) in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

So how does something get on the list? From time to time, cross-functional teams of volunteers and professional staff are asked to evaluate programs or activities to incorporate into Scouting. Sometimes it’s a near miss, social media, or an actual incident that brings an activity forward for review. Other times it’s a request for a new or revised program or merit badge. These requests are reviewed by a team using various risk assessment tools found in the [Enterprise Risk Management Committee Guidebook](#). As of this writing, 22 activities are on the prohibited listing. Prohibitions include failing to deliver program as designed or contained in our literature and common sense restrictions that include extreme sports, pyrotechnics, shooting or throwing at each other, and power tool use. The list is not comprehensive, but it serves as a definitive list of prohibited activities and it offers a broad sense of what is **not allowed** as a Scouting activity.

In addition, our program literature outlines restrictions or age-appropriate activities. For example, the *National Shooting Sports Manual* has a list of restricted activities including boomerangs, spears, crossbows, and blowguns; COPE literature restricts belaying.

Finally, there are some activities that may be restricted at the unit level but are allowed as part of a council-level activity. These include all-terrain vehicle and personal watercraft use and the pistol safety and marksmanship program for youth in Scouts BSA. Additionally, certain activities are specifically authorized at the high-adventure bases, such as crossbows at the Summit Bechtel Reserve and reloading ammunition at Philmont Scout Ranch.

RESOURCES

- Prohibited Activities FAQs: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/prohibited-activities-faqs/
- Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies/

BSA SAFETY MOMENT

SHOOTING SPORTS

SUMMARY

The Boy Scouts of America and the National Rifle Association (NRA) have worked together for more than 100 years to develop a strong shooting sports program. Many NRA trained men and women in BSA local councils are willing and available to work with units and youth. Too often, individual units want to go shooting with whatever guns they have at whatever location they think is safe. However, the BSA Shooting Sports program is both age-appropriate and structured with specific types of firearms and the appropriate places to shoot. Leaders and chartered organizations need to know and follow the program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This Safety Moment is not an all-inclusive document of every shooting rule available to you, but should serve as a reference document for you to make sure the shooting activities your Scouts are participating in are conducted appropriately and in the safest manner possible.

Safety considerations should be on the top of everyone's list, especially when dealing with firearms.

- Every council generally has a Shooting Sports Committee to manage and provide resources for all activities involving shooting sports whether during summer camps or during year-round shooting opportunities.
- Age-appropriate guidelines limit the shooting sports in Cub Scouting to council and district activities.
 - Cub Scouts in the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks can only shoot BB guns. Webelos Scouts can shoot pellet rifles only at long-term camps.
- Unit level activities only occur in Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouting.
- Some programs in are limited to council camps and special safety programs (pistol and cowboy action shooting).
- An established public range is preferred for any live fire.
- There are provisions for set-up and use of private ranges, if not at council range. These provisions involve council and landowner approvals. (See filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/Shooting%20Sports/430-065_WB.pdf)
- Using appropriate and adequate eye and ear protection will help to minimize the risk of injury.
- The proper ratio of range personnel and youth.
- Both instructors and range safety officers are needed for live fire. Each has a different role.
- Permission slips from parents are important, and required by states, for youth who will be shooting.
- Know and follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) for any range being used. Review the council range SOP in advance.
- The BSA shooting sports program does not include any firearms or devices regulated by the National Firearms Act, including machine guns, silencers, and short-barreled firearms.
- Use appropriate targets. The BSA program does not include the use of humans, human representations, animal targets in Cub Scouting, or incendiary or exploding targets.
- When handling firearms or operating a shooting range, take a PAUSE for safety: **P**ause before you start. **A**ssess possible hazards. **U**nderstand how to proceed safely. **S**hare your plan with others. **E**xecute the activity safely.

RESOURCES

- BSA Shooting Sports: www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/shooting-sports/
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

WEATHER-RELATED SAFETY

SUMMARY

Robert Baden-Powell once said the definition of the Scout motto *Be Prepared* is this: “A Scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise.” Baden-Powell also advocated that young men spend a lot of time learning in and about the out-of-doors, as he said, “The open-air is the real objective of Scouting and the key to its success.” However, we still need to be aware of our surroundings and their changing conditions, including what is happening with the weather.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Severe weather hazards, such as tornadoes, lightning, hail, flash flooding, and downbursts, can be dangerous. Each requires a basic understanding of what to do so that you can protect yourself and your Scouts. The scale of weather conditions can seem daunting—ranging from high heat with no humidity to torrential downpours with possible flooding. However, some key basic principles can help everyone prepare. Here are a few for you to consider:

1. Know the weather forecast before you set out on your trip.
2. Prepare for the types of weather hazards that are associated with your destination, such as tornadoes, lightning, snow, torrential rains, and high winds. The BSA's online Weather Hazards training (available through My.Scouting.org) is a great resource in this area and should be renewed every two years.
3. Double-check weather conditions immediately upon arrival to verify forecasts.
4. The weather can be integral in becoming lost or injured. If visibility becomes limited, respond quickly to gather the Scouts in your care.
5. Inquire about the location of any designated emergency shelters in the area.

You may never encounter a severe weather hazard. Your chances of being hit by lightning in your lifetime are 1 in 700,000, and the chances of your home being destroyed by a tornado (if you live in tornado alley) are 1 in 150,000. By learning and following these key principles, you can move forward with confidence and provide every opportunity to your Scouts to participate in Baden-Powell's outdoor laboratory.

RESOURCES

- National Weather Service: www.weather.gov
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: www.noaa.gov
- Weather Wiz Kids: www.weatherwizkids.com
- Struck by Lightning: www.struckbylightning.org



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION

SUMMARY

We've all caught some kind of infection, or sickness, from someone else. These illnesses are known as communicable or contagious diseases because they are spread from one person to another. They may occur when a healthy person becomes infected through contact with a sick person or by touching something that a sick person has come in contact with. Communicable diseases are caused by germs—both viruses and bacteria—and some examples include colds, flu, or strep throat. You can catch infections in several different ways, but all involve germs coming in contact with mucous membranes (like your eyes, nose, or mouth) or through breaks in the skin (like a cut or a hangnail).

GENERAL INFORMATION

While most communicable diseases are treatable, preventing the infection is the best approach. Communicable infections spread in many ways, including:

- Putting your hands in your mouth or touching your nose with germs on your hands.
- Inhaling after an ill person nearby has coughed or sneezed.
- Eating food contaminated from improper storage, handling food without proper handwashing, or consuming food that someone who is ill sneezes or coughs around.
- Touching blood, vomit, or stool from an infected person.

Touching surfaces that have been contaminated, such as light switches, tables, or faucet handles, can also lead to an infection. For example, a towel, sleeping bag, or even a bar of soap that a sick person has used can have germs on it. It may take hours for the germs to die unless there is proper cleaning. To clean surfaces, use a diluted bleach solution or commercial disinfectant.

Good handwashing is the most important step you can take to prevent spreading germs. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is OK for many situations, but if blood or soiling of the hands is present, or if you have diarrhea, then wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. To help reduce airborne germs, encourage everyone to cough and sneeze into an elbow or shoulder. Other ways to reduce the spread of diseases include:

- Do not touch obviously infected areas (like a fever blister or wound).
- Wear gloves when there is the potential for contact with an infected person or object. Use gloves if you must clean up any body fluids, clean the toilet, or give first aid. Used gloves are contaminated. Remove and discard them before touching anything or anybody else, and wash your hands after removing the gloves.
- Do not share any personal items like combs, cups, towels, soap, or eating utensils.
- If your immune system is not working well or you have not received all recommended vaccines, be sure to stay away from anyone who is ill.
- If you have an infection, **stay away from others.** (See “Resources” below.) A quarantine (isolation) may be useful in some situations. When someone feels better after taking medicine, it does not mean the individual is no longer infectious. If possible, stay at home until you are symptom-free, without medication, for at least 24–48 hours. If you are uncertain when it is OK to return to an activity, talk to your doctor.

RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives: www.cdc.gov/handwashing/
 - Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits/index.htm
- Boy Scouts of America
 - Local Council Membership/Participation Guidelines Regarding Communicable Diseases: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/communicable_diseases.pdf
 - Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Scouting: Recommendations for Unit and Council Event Leaders: [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103\(18\)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103(18)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf)
 - Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-102_PreEventChklist.pdf

BSA SAFETY MOMENT

CAMPFIRE SAFETY

SUMMARY

Who doesn't love a glowing campfire at the end of the day? However, to make sure it won't be your tent that burns, let's look at some good fire safety practices.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Handbooks for each program have useful tips for campfires. Here are a few highlights:

Environmental conditions

- Leaders should understand the local campfire regulations or requirements.
- Beware of current fire conditions, especially if it has been dry and windy. Check for any active burn ban.
- Consider wind direction and projected size of fire before starting.

Maintain your campsite

- Use an established campfire ring, if available, and keep your campfire size appropriate.
- Be sure your fire is a minimum of 15 feet from tents, shrubs, trees or other flammable objects. Always check for low-hanging branches above the fire.
- Store matches, lighters, and items used as fire starters in a secure waterproof box or bag outside of your tent. In bear country store away from your campsite.

Additives and Fire Extinguishing

- Additives to the fire are [prohibited](#). This includes chemicals, accelerants, color-changers, and other flame-enhancing products like Magical Flames™.
- Avoid cooking over a fire where chemicals or additives have been previously used.
- Always extinguish campfires properly. Ensure campfires are completely cold-out. Do a test on cooled ash for any sign of heat before you consider the fire extinguished.

Emergency Response

- Never leave a campfire unattended. Prepare a unit fireguard, and practice it.
- Always have a shovel/rake and water or other extinguishing materials handy.
- Be prepared to respond to burns or someone on fire with "Stop, drop, and roll."

RESOURCES

- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc/
- *Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities*: filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf
- *Storing, Handling, and Using Chemical Fuels and Equipment*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss06/
- *Leave No Trace*: www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/leave-no-trace/
- *Unit Fireguard Plan Chart*: www.scoutshop.org/unit-fireguard-plan-chart-616620.html



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

BEHAVIOR AROUND CAMPFIRES

SUMMARY

Campfires are a powerful part of the outdoor experience. They can be lively with laughter, storytelling, and fellowship. The campfire can also be a time of reflection, learning, and great peace. Safe behavior around a campfire ensures a good time can be had by all while mitigating the inherent danger of the fire. Here are some helpful reminders on behavior that can make your next campfire a positive and safe experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Handbooks for each program have useful tips for campfires.

Smart behaviors around a campfire

- Fires are useful, but they can be dangerous. Always respect a fire by showing smart behaviors.
- Stay outside of the campfire ring. Do not touch any part of the fire ring once the fire has been lit.
- Don't run, jump, or play around campfires. Understand that fires can cause injuries.
- "Once it's in, it stays in." Don't pull anything out of the campfire.

Maintain a safe campfire and campsite

- Always consider the campfire's surroundings. Ensure the campfire is the appropriate distance between the seating areas and tents.
- Verify federal and local regulations regarding fire bans and policies.

Cooking or roasting over a campfire

- Never swing, flick, or throw hot or burning food. If your food burns or catches fire, remain calm.
- Maintain a safe distance while cooking. Use a skewer long enough to keep your body outside the fire ring or containment area.
- Be careful with sharp skewers and keep the tip pointed in a safe direction. In the dark, others may not see the skewer. Prevent injury to others by being responsible. Maintain spacing with others around the fire.

RESOURCES

- *Campfire Safety*: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/camp-fire-safety/>
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc/
- *Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities*: filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf
- *Storing, Handling, and Using Chemical Fuels and Equipment*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss06/
- *Leave No Trace*: www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/leave-no-trace/
- Unit Fireguard Plan Chart: www.scoutshop.org/unit-fireguard-plan-chart-616620.html



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

CAMPOUT SAFETY CHECKLIST

SUMMARY

Camping is a long-honored tradition for many families, including the BSA family. Timing, supplies, and location should be determined ahead of time so you can make the most of your camping experience. There might be some instances where you overthink or underestimate a camping trip, but there are also many ways to enjoy the adventure, fun, discovery, and teamwork involved. A campout safety checklist will help to ensure these aspects of camping are accomplished while keeping you safe.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Camping can be enjoyable in almost any area—from the backcountry to summer camp, as well as national high-adventure bases, to name a few. When you decide on a camping trip, you need to consider who, what, where, when, how, and why.

Here are a few items to check off on your Campout Safety Checklist:

- **Documentation Needed**—This includes medical records, guidebooks, and permission slips. A Scout leader can ensure your safety as well as his or her own when you are both better informed of any limitations, hazards, or permissions.
- **Training**—General training, such as Youth Protection training, CPR/first aid, and Hazardous Weather, or specific training, such as Trek Safely or Wilderness First Aid, gives you the confidence to know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- **Planning**—Planning is important. Become familiar with your campsite location and do some research about the weather, licensing/permit requirements, and project or activity guidelines so you can be prepared.
- **Equipment**—Plan for vehicles involved or tools necessary for your camping experience. Also consider trailer requirements and first-aid or emergency kits.
- **Emergency Planning**—A prepared Scout is a confident Scout. Keep a cellphone handy as well as a list of local authorities (fire department, police, hospitals, etc.) in case an emergency occurs, such as inclement weather or a lost Scout. If you are in the backcountry, canyons, or a remote location, coverage may be one to two hours away. A GPS tracking/messaging device is helpful in these locations. For more information, visit www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/personal-locator-beacons.html.
- **Program**—Know your program. There should be age-appropriate activities, safety equipment, proper supervision, and a discussion on potential hazards.

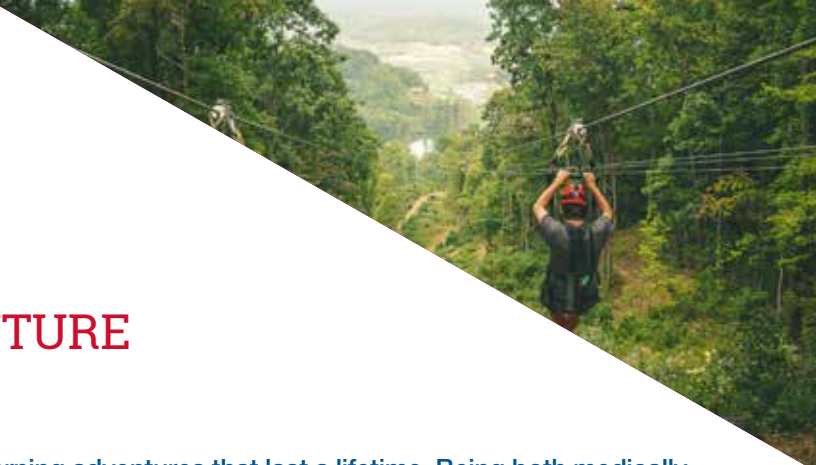
RESOURCES

- Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies/
- Campout Safety Checklist: www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/campout_checklist.pdf
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

BE PREPARED FOR HIGH ADVENTURE



SUMMARY

High-adventure trips are intended to deliver wilderness and learning adventures that last a lifetime. Being both medically and physically prepared for these trips will help ensure they are as safe and enjoyable as they are memorable. While this is true for all Scouts, it is especially critical for adult leaders to be prepared!

GENERAL INFORMATION

- High-adventure trips are physically demanding and have inherent risks, and each crew member needs to understand how to mitigate these risks. Part of this process is ensuring that each crew member has identified any medical issues that may place either the crew member or the crew at an increased risk of a medical emergency while on the trip.
- The first step is to complete the three parts of the BSA Annual Health and Medical Record (AHMR). You must meet with a licensed health care provider (e.g., M.D., D.O., N.P., or P.A.) to complete Part C of the Record. Be sure you and your provider have read the “High-Adventure Risk Advisory” section of the AHMR so everyone fully understands the known health risks associated with the high adventure.
- Have an honest and open conversation with your provider about whether it is appropriate for you to go on the trip. The physical demands vary by high-adventure activity, but the presence of any of several medical risk factors can raise concerns. While the list is not all-inclusive, the following are important factors: excessive body weight, history of heart or cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes, seizures (epilepsy), asthma, allergies or anaphylaxis, ingrown toenails, recent musculoskeletal injuries, orthopedic surgery, and psychological or emotional difficulties.
- If it’s medically appropriate for you to go, the second step is to be sure you are physically fit enough to meet the challenges of high adventure. Being fit will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the trip! Most high-adventure trips require a combination of cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular endurance, and muscular strength. Can you walk three miles in an hour without stopping? Pass the BSA swim test? Do 10 push-ups? Go up three flights of stairs without your legs tiring? If not, then you would benefit from improving your fitness.
- A simple way to increase your fitness is to complete the [SCOUTStrong Presidential Lifestyle Award Challenge](#). The challenge is designed to help participants become more active while also eating healthier.

RESOURCES

- Annual Health and Medical Record: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/
- Risk Factors Affecting Participation: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/risk-factors/
- SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge: www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit/scout-strong/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS

RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION

SUMMARY

Are you getting ready for your Philmont Trek and a summit of Baldy Mountain? Perhaps you live close to sea level and plan to hike the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada range, Kings Peak in the Uinta range, or some 14ers in Colorado. These trips might result in symptoms or effects of acute mountain sickness (AMS), high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), or high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE), which if untreated could result in death. As altitude is gained, air grows “thinner,” and less oxygen is inhaled with each breath.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Acute Mountain Sickness

- Have you recently arrived at an altitude of 6,000 feet or higher? Look for signs of AMS, such as headaches, loss of normal appetite, nausea (with or without vomiting), insomnia, and an unusual weariness and exhaustion.
- The treatment is to descend or to stop ascending and wait for improvement before going higher. Continuing to ascend in the presence of symptoms is not recommended. If the illness progresses, descent is needed.

High-Altitude Cerebral Edema

- Be watchful for loss of coordination (e.g., an inability to walk a straight line or stand straight with feet together and eyes closed).
- Signs and symptoms often include a severe headache unrelieved by rest and medication, bizarre changes in personality, seizures, and coma.

High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema

- HAPE symptoms often appear initially as a dry cough, soon followed by shortness of breath, even at rest. Shortness of breath becomes more pronounced, with chest pain as fluid collects in the lungs.
- The cough may become productive and with frothy sputum early on that may turn reddish.

PREVENTION GUIDELINES

Preparation: Discuss your planned climb with your health care provider while undergoing a pre-participation exam (Part C of the Annual Health and Medical Record). Improve your fitness with regular hikes while carrying a load in anticipation of your climb.

Staged ascent: If possible, your first camp should be no higher than 8,000 feet. Increase no more than 1,000 to 1,500 feet per day. When starting out higher than 9,000 feet, spend two nights acclimating to that altitude before proceeding higher. Proceed higher during the day, but return to a lower elevation to sleep (climb high, sleep low).

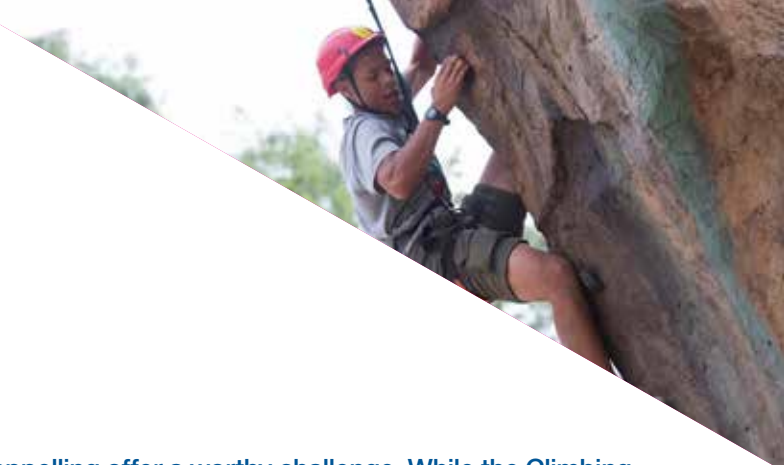
Appropriate exercise level: Until acclimated, exercise moderately, avoid intensity, and be alert to shortness of breath and fatigue.

Hydration: To offset increased fluid losses at high altitudes, stay well-hydrated.

Evacuation: Stop ascending until AMS symptoms resolve. If you suspect the onset of HACE or HAPE, evacuate rapidly to a lower altitude (descending at least 1,000 to 1,500 feet) and get evaluated by a physician as soon as possible.

RESOURCES

- Annual Health and Medical Record: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/
- *Fieldbook* (available at scoutshop.org)
- Medical Risk Factors: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/risk-factors/



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

CLIMBING

SUMMARY

Young people today seek greater challenges, and climbing and rappelling offer a worthy challenge. While the Climbing merit badge spurs interest in these activities, the proliferation of climbing gyms and facilities has also made climbing and rappelling readily available. Knowing and following the BSA's guidance will help units execute a fun and safe activity for all.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Climb On Safely is the Boy Scouts of America's procedure for organizing BSA climbing/rappelling activities. Here are the basics:

1. **Qualified Supervision**—A mature adult at least 21 years of age who understands the risks of climbing is needed. Additionally, one adult supervisor is required for every 10 participants. Ensure someone in the group is currently trained in first aid and CPR.
2. **Qualified Instructors**—A minimum of two instructors is needed, but more may be necessary to keep a 6-to-1 ratio of participants to instructors.
3. **Physical Fitness**—All participants are required to have an Annual Health and Medical Record to show evidence of fitness.
4. **Safe Area**—Use an established climbing/rappelling site or facility. Survey the site in advance for possible hazards and ensure it can accommodate the number of participants.
5. **Equipment**—Verify proper equipment is available and meets requirements outlined in [Belay On](#).
6. **Planning**—Share your plans, secure any permits or permissions for venues/sites, obtain weather reports, and have emergency plans in place.
7. **Environmental Conditions**—Monitor potentially dangerous conditions like loose, crumbly rock; poisonous plants; wildlife; and inclement weather.
8. **Discipline**—All participants should respect and follow all instructions and rules. Learn and present the rules prior to the outing.

CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

Practice Challenge by Choice, a concept that allows individuals to choose the level at which they want to participate in the various climbing activities without being pressured or coerced by the group and without having to justify their choice.

SAFETY CHECK

- **Clothing**—No baggy clothing, jewelry removed, and long hair tucked in
- **Harness/Helmets**—Properly fitted helmets; belay and buckles attached per manufacturer
- **Environment**—Program areas free from obstructions; people on ground in safe location
- **Connections**—Belay system connections and all rigging checked and rechecked
- **Knots**—Properly tied, dressed, and backed up with a safety knot

RESOURCES

- Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities: www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416_Insert_Web.pdf
- BSA COPE and Climbing website: www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope/
- *Belay On*, No. 430-500: www.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/430-500_BelayOn_WB.pdf
- Climb On Safely: www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/Climb_O_Safely.pdf
- Climbing merit badge requirements: www.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Climbing.pdf

Use of Energy Drinks in Scouting Activities

Energy drinks contain water and stimulants, such as caffeine, ginseng, and guarana, as well as varying amounts of other ingredients including carbohydrates, protein, amino acids, vitamins, sodium, and other minerals. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Committee on Nutrition and the AAP Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness have rigorously reviewed the available scientific data on energy drinks and sports drinks and found that “stimulant-containing energy drinks have no place in the diet of children and adolescents.” [1] Virtually all other relevant professional organizations have echoed this opinion. [2–5]

Energy drinks should be differentiated from sports drinks in that energy drinks always include stimulants in addition to the water, sugars, and minerals generally contained in sports drinks. Again, the consensus expert medical opinion is that, for almost all exercise environments, water intake alone is the best way to remain hydrated. [2–4]

Because of the potential for adverse medical consequences as well as the negative professional recommendations regarding use of energy drinks by children, the following recommendation is made by the BSA Safe Scouting Support Committee:

**Energy drinks are to be discouraged at Scouting events
and should not be sold at BSA trading posts or other retail venues.**

References

1. Committee on Nutrition and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness. 2011. “Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks for Children and Adolescents: Are They Appropriate?” *Pediatrics* 127 (6): 1182–1189.
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3. Higgins, J.P., K. Babu, P.A. Deuster, and J. Shearer. 2018. “Energy Drinks: A Contemporary Issues Paper.” *Current Sports Medicine Reports* 17 (2): 65–72. On behalf of the American College of Sports Medicine.
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BSA SAFETY MOMENT

TRANSPORTING SCOUTS SAFELY

SUMMARY

Driving can be one of the most dangerous forms of travel. Motor vehicle accidents can lead to serious injuries and even fatalities—not only for the driver but for passengers and others on the road. Motor vehicle accidents typically produce the most frequent and severe liability claims affecting the Scouting family.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Many Scouters need to have a greater awareness of the risks of transporting Scouts in vehicles. The following tools can be utilized to help educate leaders to the dangers involved:

THE RISK ZONE

www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/632-006_WB.pdf

This roundtable presentation will educate participants on

- Ways to prevent distractions
- Fatigue while driving
- SUVs and vans
- Traveling with trailers
- Insurance information



15-PASSENGER VAN TRAINING

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/15-Passenger-Van_USI-BSA_FINAL.PDF

USI has provided a short 15-Passenger Van slide deck for your use prior to your next trip using vans as transportation. As a reminder: Pre-2005 15-passenger vans are not authorized for Scouting activities.

DROWSY DRIVING: THE SLEEPY KILLER

www.lds.org/callings/church-safety-and-health/training-and-video-resources/drowsy-driving?lang=eng&clang=tam

This video on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Safety and Health website can be downloaded and used to train adult leaders.

DRIVER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

my.Scouting.org

This program is based on the concepts of defensive driving, recognizing hazards, and preventable collisions. Go to the BSA Learn Center under expanded learning. Once completed, a certificate will be generated and the participant's training records updated.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/
- Scouting Safely: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/