



# The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

(from the BSA "Guide to Safe Scouting", 1999 Printing)

The general policy of Scouting is train youth to do safely the many things they normally do, such as swimming and boating; handling firearms, knives, and axes; riding bicycles; and hiking and camping. Scouting's disapproval or restriction of hazardous sports and activities is a positive policy to keep fun in the program and to develop sound judgment through experience. It is consistent with our principle of safety through skill on the part of leaders and youth.

**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.
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# RISKS OF SCOUTING

Dil Brinton Jr. (480) 962-0058

**risk** \risk\ noun [from French *risque*, Fr. from Italian *risco*]

- 1** : possibility of loss or injury; a Peril
- 2** : dangerous element or factor
- 3** : **a.** (1) the chance of loss or the perils to the subject matter of an insurance contract  
(2) the degree of probability of such loss
- b.** a person or thing that is a specified hazard to an insured
- c.** an insurance hazard from a specified cause or source

There is risk in every activity we do or don't do Today's society is litigious. Many people feel it is always someone else's fault and that someone else should pay them.

Ways to handle risk

- 1. Ignore the risk** What risk? (Many adults can't see or recognize risks) Just because you don't recognize it doesn't make it go away or limit your liability.
- OR recognize risk and**
- 2. Assume the risk** You are responsible for damages and cost resulting from loss caused by the risk. (Sure hope you like lawyers and have a lot of money.)
- 3. Avoid the risk** Common sense tells you to avoid some activities  
Some activities are **PROHIBITED** by Boy Scouts or your sponsor.  
**See Guide to Safe Scouting**
- 4. Transfer the risk** Tour permits      Permission Slips      Commercial Insurance  
(changes in tour permit process)
- 5. Minimize the risk** Learn to recognize danger (See Sweet 16)  
Once recognized  
**Avoid** the risk      (don't do it! or quit!)  
**Transfer** the risk and ALWAYS      (insure against it or quit)  
**Minimize** the risk      safety equipment, special training & certification,  
(ATM)      proper supervision AND/OR  
**QUIT THE ACTIVITY**

**The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety** (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

As an aid in the continuing effort to protect participants in Scout activity, the BSA National Health & Safety Committee and the Council Services Division of the BSA National Office have developed the "Sweet Sixteen" of BSA safety procedures for physical activity. **These 16 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/her ability to lead and to 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.

**Boy Scout Gets Knife Lodged In Brain.** Dec 2005

An incredible and un-suspecting accident leaves a Utah Boy Scout just inches from death when he was stabbed right between his eyes.

While raking leaves for a Boy Scout event, one of the leaders flung a knife from his hand while trying to catch another scout who had tripped. "It was dark, it was like 8:30 and there was a light and I saw it flash before it hit me," said Kevin.

The blade landed in between his frontal lobes. It was 2 millimeters away from hitting a major blood vessel in his brain. Kevin's OK.



# **RISKS OF SCOUTING** (Adapted from Dil Brinton Jr. discussions)

Mike Zaccardi 602-803-1862

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Ways to handle risk

1. **Ignore the risk:** What risk? (Many adults can't see or recognize risks) Just because you don't recognize it doesn't make it go away or limit your liability.
2. **Avoid** the risk (don't do it! or quit!)
3. **Transfer** the risk and ALWAYS (insure against it or quit the activity)
4. **Minimize** the risk safety equipment, special training & certification,

**Hazard** is the event that causes the loss. Climbing, shooting, swimming, rappelling, biking, running, hiking, etc

- Leaders need to be aware of what can go wrong in order to mitigate the risk and severity of the hazard.
- Leaders can assume risk without knowing that you have done so.
- Leaders can assume risk by being negligent or by taking or not taking certain actions.
- Often the "Prudent Man" rule is applied. What would a "prudent man" have done in the case in question? If you engage in a prohibited action, your action may cause you to assume the risk.

## **The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety** (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

As an aid in the continuing effort to protect participants in Scout activity, the BSA National Health & Safety Committee and the Council Services Division of the BSA National Office have developed the "Sweet Sixteen" of BSA safety procedures for physical activity. **These 16 points, which embody good judgment and common sense, are applicable to all activities.**

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 activity (e.g. SCUBA) may require professional evaluation in addition to 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 activity for which they are unfit. To do so would place both the individual and others at risk.

Suggestions:

- Catalog each scout/leader's personal health & medical record form and keep with you for each outing.
- Understand all medical needs of troop and leaders. Verify critical medications are taken on schedule. Buddy system.

**Class 1 (update annually for all participants).** Activity: Day camp, overnight hike, or other programs not exceeding 72 hours, with level of activity similar to that of home or school. Medical care is readily available. Current personal health and medical summary(history) is

attested by parents to be accurate. This form is filled out by all participants and is on file for easy reference.

**Class 2 (required once every 36 months for all participants under 40 years of age).**

Activity: Resident camp or any other activity such as backpacking, tour camping, or recreational sports involving events lasting longer than 72 consecutive hours, with level of activity similar to that at home or school. Medical care is readily available.

If your child has had a medical evaluation (**physical examination**) within the last 36 months, a copy of the results of this examination must be attached to the health history for all participants in a camping experience lasting longer than 72 consecutive hours. If a copy is not available, a physical examination (using the Class 2 section of this form) must be scheduled by a licensed health care practitioner. This **medical evaluation** (physical examination) also is **required** if your **child** is currently **under medical care**, takes a **prescribed medication**, requires a **medically prescribed diet**, has had an **injury or illness during the past 6 months** that limited activity for a week or more, **has ever lost consciousness** during physical activity, or has **suffered a concussion from a head injury**.

**Class 3:** All Class 3 activities require a health examination within the past 12 months by a licensed health-care practitioner. This includes youth and adult members participating in high-adventure activities, athletic competition, and world jamborees. Annually, this form is to be used by adults 40 years of age or older for all activities requiring a physical examination and applies to *all* Wood Badge participants/staff regardless of age.

**Actual Medical problems:**

- Boys and adults may have medical problems that are unknown to you. There are boys and adults with diabetics, breathing disorders, sleep walkers and heart problems. The wilderness is no place to discover you have a secret medical problem!
- Scout had a heart attack on the corner while waiting for school bus. Two other scouts revived him and kept him alive until the paramedics got there. Boy died a week later after multiple heart attacks.
- On long term hike, a boy let his insulin get warmed (and spoil) so he went into shock on last day
- A boy was on daily Ritalin (for ADHD) but parent sent him to camp with no drugs (“we want him to go off of it for the summer so he won’t be addicted to it.”) Adult leader didn’t know he had the problem or was using meds.
- A boy have an epileptic seizure. Leader knew what to do, but would have been best if the adults had know that the boy had the problem and was subject to seizures BEFORE going on the hike.

# RISKS OF SCOUTING (Buddy System)

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Ways to handle risk

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**Hazard** is the event that causes the loss. Climbing, shooting, swimming, rappelling, biking, running, hiking, etc

- Leaders need to be aware of what can go wrong in order to mitigate the risk and severity of the hazard.
- Leaders can assume risk without knowing that you have done so.
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- Often the "Prudent Man" rule is applied. What would a "prudent man" have done in the case in question? If you engage in a prohibited action, your action may cause you to assume the risk.

**The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety** (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

**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 that knows where you are and what you are doing in any outdoor or strenuous activity.

## Lack of Buddy

- Under aged boy in Utah (2006) taken on scout activity. Boy got wet in lake. Scoutmaster (father) told him to go to camp and change (about ¼ mile up trail. Boy got lost, body never found.
- March 2006 scout lost in NC on hike with troop when he got behind the last leader.
- For more examples, use an internet search engine and search with "boy scouts" and "lost" or "death" or "injury"
- Eight boys from a Springville troop were lost for a night.
- A 13-year-old Scout fell into the swift Yellowstone River and was never found.
- A 14-year-old Scout from Utah was lost in the Wyoming wilderness for 19 hours after leaving camp to go to the bathroom.
- Ass't SM fell into Verde river and swept to other side. Quite a while before he was missed.
- An 11-year-old Utah scout was lost in the Uinta Mountains for four days after trying to return to camp alone from a climbing wall. Found about 5 miles from camp. (2005)
  - He was told stay on the trail & don't talk to strangers. ... "When an ATV or horse came by, he got off the trail. ... When they left, he got back on the trail."
  - "His biggest fear was someone would steal him,"

# **RISKS OF SCOUTING (Safe Area or Course)**

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**The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety** (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

**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.

## **Safe Area or Course Issues:**

- Several years ago a troop from Utah was hiking in Paria Canyon (in AZ). A sudden rainstorm about 15 miles away, created a flash flood that came down the narrow canyon they were hiking in. Two leaders and three boys were drown in a 60 foot high wall of water.
- On a hike, a sudden flash flood washed out several bridges and trails in a side canyon of the Grand Canyon and trapped a troop on one side of the river for a day.
- While on a hike-in camporee (now known as the “death march”) in a Superstition wilderness area. The organizers assured everyone that there would be water (from natural sources) at the destination. After a 5 mile hike in, there wasn’t any water. Most of the boys had already used up their water. The next morning (after a waterless night) the decision was made to cancel the camporee and get out as soon as possible. Most troops made it safely back to the trail head although many of the boys were dehydrated. Unfortunately one troop took the wrong trail and ended up at another trail head about ten miles away from their car. Fortunately there was water at that trail head.
- A troop went to the old mining site of Sasco for a campout. They played capture the flag with no lights. During the game a boy fell down a shallow mine shaft and broke his thigh. He had to be air evaced out. Helicopter costs and medical costs (including 3 surgeries) in excess of \$120,000.
- One year at camporee the 11 year olds were to hike 1.5 miles into the camp. The person marking the trail did not actually hike the trail but rather put a sign up at the start, in the middle and at the end. Unfortunately, the sign in the middle was in the wrong place and the 11 year olds hiked the wrong way. About midnight, someone noticed that none of the 11 year olds had registered and they sent out a search party. Fortunately, there were two adult leaders that hiked with their patrols and they managed to collect all the 11 year old “lost boys” (about 60 to 80 boys) and keep them together in the dark until they were found.
- Be sure to observe requirements for setting up a safe swimming area with markers, observers, safety equipment, and verification of the area being safe for the various swimmer’s ability.
- Scouts were floating five canoes on the fast-moving Clackamas River (near Portland) Saturday when two of the boats capsized. One was occupied by 11-year-old scout and an adult. Both were wearing life jackets but the current was too strong for scout to keep afloat or for rescuers to reach him. The adult was pulled to safety. The river was a frigid 43 degrees and was roaring at twice its normal summer flow. "At this river level, I don't think a canoe is the most stable platform to be out here in," said Clackamas County Marine Deputy. Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances. All equipment must be suited to the craft/water conditions. It appears some of these guidelines could have been overlooked, such as current information about river conditions. Some may also question why the group was using lake canoes rather than ones more suited for whitewater. Officials with the Boy Scouts in Portland were investigating whether troop leaders followed safety guidelines. (June 09, 2008)

# **RISKS OF SCOUTING (Equipment Selection and Maintenance)**

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**The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety** (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

**5. Equipment Selection and Maintenance.** Most activity requires some specialized equipment. The equipment should be selected to suit the participant and the activity and to include appropriate safety and program features. The supervisor should also check equipment to determine that it is in good condition for the activity and is properly maintained while in use.

Examples:

- Team went to Lake Powell with several youth and main boat had insufficient PFDs for the number of riders, no skis, no tubes, and one rope. Do not assume that just because someone owns a boat that they will have the gear needed or stowed on board to make the event successful. Pre-trip checklist is important.
- Team planned Saguaro Lake tubing outing. One boat had two battery failures (internal shorts). Had to pull battery from car. Boat batteries had not been checked or on trickle charger.
- On the way to Big Lake axle and hub failure on main scout trailer (tire disengaged from the trailer) due to improper maintenance. Had to unload that trailer and stow gear into other vehicles to continue trip while arranging for someone to come and get trailer and take it for repairs.
- On the way to Big Lake while going thru Eager tongue on trailer with 6 canoes snaps off and trailer careens off roadway. Fortunately, there were no injuries or collisions. Poor structural design and poor welding.
- Three trailers were borrowed for a high adventure outing and staged at scoutmaster's home to be loaded that evening for early morning departure. When inspected one trailer had no spare tire and 2 bald weather checked tires (both were replaced), one trailer had 2 flats (out of 4), and another one had 2 flats (out of 4). Each trailer had running light problems. Necessitating last minute repairs and tire purchases by scout committee members and scoutmaster. When procuring trailers insist that they be in good condition before needed.
- Deteriorated ropes fail when scouts try to cross a rope bridge. Ropes were old and were frayed but troop did not have funds to replace.
- While chopping wood ax head flew off narrowly missing ass't scoutmaster. Ensure axe heads are tight and chopping area is roped off within danger zone. Ensure scouts are aware of this failure mode and watch for it.

## **Unauthorized and Restricted Activities** (Guide to Safe Scouting P. 39-40 (2007))

- **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.**
- **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.**
- **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.**
- **The activity commonly referred to as "War Game" - in which individuals shoot paint or dye at one another - is an unauthorized activity.**
- **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.**
- **Technical tree climbing with ropes or harnesses is not authorized as a unit activity.**
- **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.**

Examples:

- Boy was killed while riding and "jumping" ATV's in desert with a group. (he drove off a 10 foot cliff)
- Boy and leader injured at Lake Powell in Jet ski accident (broad-sided a house boat) on church "superactivity" so that they could get around guide to safe scouting rules.
- 2006 an adult leader took boys on an ATV activity. A couple of boys were killed. BSA backed out as 'leader' was not registered, there was no tour permit, and this was an unauthorized activity. The church backed out as the 'leader' was not using Guide to Safe Scouting. Adult is now facing wrongful death law suit on his own.

## RISKS OF SCOUTING #7 (Safety Procedures and Policies)

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The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

**7. Safety Procedures and Policies.** For most activities there are **common sense** procedures and standards that can greatly reduce the risk. These should be **known and appreciated** by all participants, and the supervisor **must assure compliance.**

**Guide to Safe Scouting** covers most activities that scouts will participate in, but cannot cover all eventualities. It covers swimming, scuba, snorkeling, diving, kayaking, waterskiing, boardsailing, white water, camping, hiking, lightening, caving, judo, climbing, rappelling, knives/axes, rope structures, bikes, moving vehicles, skating, horsemanship, shooting, etc. Each section has safety concerns to consider.

**Risk vs. Hazard:** The Hazard is the event that causes the loss (e.g. caving, climbing, lightening, etc.).

Risk is the probability of the hazard causing damage.

1. What is common sense? Need to know what can go wrong. Most folks don't know what they don't know. Common sense is getting to be uncommon.
2. What can go wrong? Then guard against it. If the risk is too high or the hazard too great you don't do it!
3. Incident vs. accident:
  - a. Accident is an unforeseen event caused by carelessness or ignorance (Webster) [lack of knowledge], anything that happens by chance without an assignable cause and thru no fault of the victim. Prudent man rule. Would a prudent man have known this.
  - b. Incident is an occurrence resulting from a predictable cause, preventable if proper precautions were taken, action likely to lead to a grave consequence, High probability of happening.

### **Examples:**

- Boys hiking out at camporee decided to hitch a ride on the side of an equipment trailer. He bounced off and missed being run over by only a couple of inches
- Adults laid a large campfire at a camporee. They poured about 2 cups of Coleman fuel on the fire lay and waited to "let it soak in". There was no wind and the fire lay was in a slight depression. The fuel evaporated and the fumes traveled about 15 to 20 feet on the ground from the fire lay. When lit, there was a 35 to 40 foot wide ball of fire that engulfed the first two rows of boys and adults. Quite a lot of singed hair and a couple of first degree burns on arms and faces.
- Camp fire lighting by leader. Used flaming arrow with padded point soaked in liquid fuel no wire from bow to fire. Shot missed fire and hit scout in audience in chest. Didn't penetrate scout's skin because of padding. Didn't seriously burn him but sure scared him.
- OA ceremony at Camp Geronimo. Brave fired flaming arrow from across the pond. Arrow landed in middle of canoe between the two leaders. Arrow did not penetrate canoe and flame was put out quickly. Needed 3 new loin clothes.
- Youth activity held in rainy weather. Key activity was the "refiner's fire" done with melted lead. Despite known hazard of massive lead explosion and severe burns if even one drop of water had gotten into the pot, the program proceeded. Youth were gathered around pot, most with wet clothes and hair. Area immediately over the lead pot had two tarps. Fortunately there was no trouble or injuries.

## **Unauthorized and Restricted Activities (Risks are high & Hazards are great)**

The following activities have been declared unauthorized and restricted by the Boy Scouts of America: Guide to Safe Scouting P. 39-40 (2007)

- **Boxing, karate, and related martial arts - except judo, aikido, and Tai Chi - are not authorized activities.**
- **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.**
- **Participation in amateur or professional rodeo events and council or district sponsorship of rodeos are not authorized.**

- **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
- **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.)
- **Water chugging and related activities are not authorized for any program level.**



## **RISKS OF SCOUTING #8 (Skill Level Limits)**

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The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 35-36 Guide to Safe Scouting 2007 printing)

**8. Skill Level Limits.** There is a minimum skill level requirement for every activity and the supervisor must identify and recognize this minimum skill level and be sure that none are put at risk by attempting activity beyond their ability. A good example of skill levels in Scouting is the venerable "swim test" which defines conditions for safe swimming based on individual ability.

**Guide to Safe Scouting** covers most activities that scouts will participate in, but cannot cover all eventualities. It covers swimming, scuba, snorkeling, diving, kayaking, waterskiing, boardsailing, white water, camping, hiking, lightning, caving, judo, climbing, rappelling, knives/axes, rope structures, bikes, moving vehicles, skating, horsemanship, shooting, Winter Activities, etc. Each section has safety concerns to consider.

### **Examples**

- At a Sunday Service in 1982 there were over 200 knife wounds as boys got bored during the long meeting and started whittling. They whittled in their lap and when they slipped, mostly the knife went into the upper thigh or the palm of the hand.
- Scout was chopping in camp and hooked ax on overhead tree branch. The ax slipped out of his hands. When he looked up to see where the ax was, it fell, butt first, on his face. (no double bladed axes)
- At Summer Camp in 1998 near Big Lake with 5 troops, the designated leader started the camp with a very complete "Tote-n-Chit" refresher session covering knives and axes. Within 5 minutes of the session being adjourned a scout returned with half his thumb cut off.
- Ten year old boy came with his father to pick up scouts at the end of camp. Boy had a sheath knife (with 8 inch blade). He was showing it off to another boy and accidentally stabbed himself in the stomach. Trip to hospital for stitches.
- At camp Raymond there were three fires from a wilderness survival overnight that were not properly put out and flared up into small forest fires. About 10 acres burned from the three fires.
- In Utah boys on 'campout' who were being supervised by a 16 year old boy started a forest fire. Burned council camp and national forest. Parents (and Boy Scout council) lost \$15,000,000 law suit from government for fire.
- At a winter camp a boy spilled Coleman fuel on his hand and suffered a "cold burn" as the temperature of the fuel was below zero degrees. "How could it be that cold? It was still liquid." See page 53 of GSS under XIII. Winter Activities item #14.
- Asst. Scoutmaster killed in Superstition Mountains while hiking with his troop. He was showing them how to rock climb when the knot he (improperly) tied came apart and he fell 120 feet. (it took him 4 hours to die and his two sons were there).
- At Ben Avery shooting range a scout was accidentally shot and killed when an "unloaded" gun was dropped in the parking lot and went off.
- At wilderness youth camp (so we aren't restricted with all those silly Boy Scout Rules), two boys were almost killed when a 12 gauge shotgun misfired. (missed them by about 8 inches at a distance of 3 feet) No details were available of leader NRA training or range supervision.
- While shooting trap at wilderness scout camp shotgun range, scout experienced "squib" load (shell had no powder or the powder was defective. Wad was lodged half way down the barrel.). He was not aware that this could happen (or what the consequences would be) and proceeded to load another round and was ready to fire again when the range master realized what had happened and called a "cease fire" and proceeded to use this as a "teachable moment". Despite being an eagle scout, having earned rifle and shotgun shooting merit badges and having been briefed prior to the activity, he got caught up in the action and forgot what to do. Shooting was an occasional activity for him and was not familiar with the risks.

## **RISKS OF SCOUTING #9 (Weather Check)**

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The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

### **9. Weather Check. The risk factors in many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. These variables and the appropriate response should be understood and anticipated.**

The threat of severe weather doesn't always mean you need to cancel your weekend camping trip. However, you should take precautions to avoid incidents.

- First, go to the [e-Learning site](#) in MyScouting and take the new "Weather Hazards" course. It features great graphics, a fast pace, and plenty of hands-on activities. All of which makes it easier to tell you this: Starting this year, it's mandatory. At least one leader on every trip must have taken the course. Tour permits will not be issued without at least one trained leader. Planning for weather and the sources of weather information available is a large part of the presentation. Many topics are discussed including: lightning, thunderstorms, hail, cold and hot weather, floods, tornados, wind and hurricanes. Of the top causes for injuries nationwide, lightning continues to hurt our Scouts.
- After you've completed weather training, [click here](#) for the Health and Safety team's collection of weather-related links (see below). And if you're really ambitious, get your Boy Scouts to earn the [Weather merit badge](#).
- To earn the badge, they'll discuss weather safety, identify clouds, and define high- and low-pressure systems

#### **Weather Check Examples:**

1. A Boy Scout group in California hiking above tree line on high mountain. Rain started and leader had them all 'huddle together' under tarp so that they could 'stray dry'. Lightning struck group, several deaths resulted (and several law suits). 2006
2. A 13 year old Scout and scoutmaster from Napa Valley were killed when a lightning bolt struck one of the two tarps the troop had set up in a meadow just east of Fresno, Calif. Seven others were injured in the incident. They were treated and released from the hospital in Visalia, Calif. July 2005
3. 2006 group of three adults and 9 boys hiking near Globe. Got snowed in with only 2 tents and not enough warm clothing. One leader stayed with boys and two adults hiked out to get help. Air evacuated out of area by sheriff. Leaders did not heed weather warnings and were not prepared.
4. Scout troop hiked into the Rivas Ranch area off SR88 near Apache Lake in April 2009. Weather got cold and rainy. One scout showed symptoms of hypothermia. Search & Rescue was called in. Troop located, youth warmed up and troop hiked to safety. Weather forecasts had warned of unseasonably bad weather (cold, wet, snow) all week leading up to the hike. Leaders and scouts were not properly outfitted with gear.
5. August 2008: A lone 35-year-old woman fell into a crevasse on Mount Shasta (6400ft). After getting out she wandered the peak for two days before a group of Boy Scout Explorers rescued her late Monday. The temperatures at night were in the 40s. 15 members of a Boy Scout Explorer group found her Monday evening. She had nothing with her at the time, including no provisions, and no one had reported her missing. It took more than seven hours to arrive at the trailhead, because of her injuries and dehydration and no stretcher was available.
6. A "bizarre" incident occurred at a remote Utah Boy Scout camp in the Uinta Mountains, a bolt of lightning killed a 15-year-old Eagle Scout and injured three others as they slept in their cots. Two physicians that were in camp and instantly responded, were unable to revive the scout. The lightning bolt struck a pine tree in a nearby grove, traveled down about 10 feet and bounced out of the tree and hit one of the barn nails holding the logs of the Adirondack cabin together. The bolt then traveled through the barn nail, eventually coming out on the other side to where one of the victims lay in his cot. At an elevation of 10,400 feet, Camp Steiner is the highest Boy Scout camp in the nation, and a magnet for lightning. Due to this, the Great Salt Lake Council, which oversees Camp Steiner, has in place training, guidelines, and equipment to ensure the highest possible level of safety for its youth and adult leaders. The camp has hired engineers to install lightning rods on the tops of the Adirondacks. "We plan on grounding the buildings out so that if a lightning strike did bounce and hit the cabin, or it took a direct hit, that voltage would go into the ground as opposed to throughout the cabin.

## Weather Smart Links

National Weather Service—[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)—The U.S. government's premier Web site on weather, with weather news, safety, maps, etc.

Weather on the go! NWS Services for PDA's and Cell Phones: The PDA service, designed for wireless devices with small screens and Web browsers, is available at <http://mobile.weather.gov>. Cell phone service is intended for phones with Wireless Application Protocol (WAP). You must have WAP to access the following site: <http://cell.weather.gov>

These services provide basic low bandwidth access to NWS products, including watches and warnings, zone forecasts, low and high resolution radar and satellite images, surface observations, marine forecasts and most other NWS text products.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

Weather Wiz Kids—[www.weatherwizkids.com](http://www.weatherwizkids.com)—An excellent site created by meteorologist Crystal Wicker from Fox News, with weather-related education for kids, teachers, and parents.

Struck By Lightning.org—[www.struckbylightning.org](http://www.struckbylightning.org)

**Thor Guard Inc.** is making available severe weather and outdoor events planning resources by offering Thor Guard lightning prediction and warning systems, as well as Internet weather subscription services, to BSA local councils. Thor Guard will give councils a discount off all Thor Guard manufactured products and weather subscriptions. Because they each have specific requirements and needs, councils will be quoted individually with the applied discount. Councils may contact the Health and Safety Service for more information.

## RISKS OF SCOUTING #10 (Planning)

Mike Zaccardi (602) 803-1862

The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 28-29 Health and Safety Guide)

**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 emergency response or a change of plan. **What Can Go Wrong???**

- In 2003 a troop with several vehicles were camping near Bushnell Tanks. It started raining when they decided to come home. One of the cars got stuck in water in a wash they were trying to cross. Adults had the boys stay in the car while they tried to pull the car out. They called the sheriff for a tow truck. It would take several hours so they had the boys stay in the car (stuck in the water in the wash) so they would not get wet. About 30 to 45 minutes later a flashflood came down wash, rolled car several times drowning several boys. (Not only were the adults on the scene sued for wrongful death but the committee chairman who did not come on the trip was also named as a party to the suit. It was claimed that he had not properly organized the trip and made sure that enough qualified leaders were on the campout.)
- Some years ago, a leader took a troop and hiked 4 or 5 hours into the Hell's Gate area in Arizona. That afternoon as they were coming back from fishing, the leader fell and broke his leg. The boys got him back to camp and made him comfortable. Two boys (a 14 and a 15 year old) hiked out and drove the car into the nearest town. They were picked up by the sheriff. They explained what had happened but were unable to pinpoint their location on a map of the area. The sheriff called the wife and she did not know the location, but she knew someone who had told them how to get there. He was flown via the department of public safety helicopter to the town. Although he did not know the exact area, he knew the general area. He and the rescue team hiked (in the dark) back into the canyon and found the scouts and the leader (now in much pain). They were unable to get a helicopter into the site so they had to strap the scoutmaster to a body board and carry him part way out to an open spot. About 4:30 the air ambulance was able to land and take him to the hospital. They boys and the other adult continued hiking out and drove home in the scout leader's truck.
- In the mid 80's a local troop went to camp. The adults could not stay the whole week. So Sunday evening after the boys had gone to bed, the adults left the troop in the hands of the 16 year old senior patrol leader. By Tuesday afternoon he was calling the parents to come get their boys as he was tired of watching and babysitting them.
- Several years ago a group of older scouts and leaders were hiking the wilderness trails in the Grand Canyon. One of the adults had brought his young son (10 year old) along. During the hike they ran out of water and became dehydrated. – especially the young boy. It was decided to leave him (alone) on the trail while the others hiked the several miles to the Colorado river to get water and bring back to him. When they got back the boy was a couple of hundred yards down the trail but had died from dehydration and exposure.
- Aug 2007 man and woman hiking (8 miles) in mid day in Userly Park (each with one liter of water) Temp was 110 and they became dehydrated. She died about 150 yards from the parking lot – from car and additional water.
- Jan 2005 local troop hiking in Superstition Wilderness area 20 miles. 13 boys 2 adults only 3 or 4 boys had been on hike longer than 5 miles. First hike for many of the boys. Got lost when trail vanished due to erosion. Boys wanted to turn back, adults wouldn't. Heavy rain and hail in afternoon, while hiking on ridge only 3 boys had jackets. By nightfall lost with no food, 2 flashlights a GPS unit but no map. Boys wanted to stop and build fire for night adults made them keep hiking. By 6 p.m. (dark) families worried and called sheriff rescue team. They would not start looking until empty vehicles located and no one knew exactly where they were going. No tour permit filed. About 2 a.m. flashlight gave out. About 4.a.m helicopter spotted them and tried to get them to go to flat spot. Scoutmaster refused (we aren't quitters. We aren't lost we're just a little late). About 4:30 a father figured out where they were, clipped fence on wilderness area and four wheeled in to pick them up. Put all of them in the back of open truck, drove out. Boys split up into small groups and taken home. Boys with scoutmaster wanted to stop to get warm food and drink at fast food place. He would not let them, "it's Sunday and we don't want to break the Sabbath." Total estimated hike distance about 26 miles in 24 hours.
- "Many of the leaders of these trips are not used to the wilderness environment. The kids don't make bad decisions; the leaders do" says Ken Phillips, chief of emergency services for Grand Canyon National Park, who has been involved in numerous backcountry rescues of Scout troops during his 23 years there.

## **RISKS OF SCOUTING #12 (Permit and Notices)**

Mike Zaccardi (602) 803-1862

The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 35-36 Guide to Safe Scouting 2007 printing)

**12. Permit and Notices.** BSA tour permits, council office registration, government or landowners 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.

**Tour permit Guidelines:** <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34426.pdf>

1. BSA Local Tour Permit Policy <= 500 miles;
  - I. Activities involving any overnight activity.
  - II. Activities involving aquatics or climbing activity (including any pool parties)
  - III. Activities held 25 miles or more from your normal meeting location (home base).
2. BSA National Tour Permit >= 500miles
3. The tour permit is a planning tool to help leaders minimize the risks that may come from weak or inadequate activity planning
4. The tour permit provides a record of the activity as clearly relating to Scouting. (personal insurance and liability exposure)
5. Provides the Council / Scout Committee / parents information to locate a unit in the event of an emergency.
6. Checklist / proof that the activity has been well planned and organized and under capable and qualified adult leadership.
7. Tour permits are accepted by national parks, military installations, and other organizations (Some may require the approved tour permit for entry).
8. Tour leader must verify that they have access to and read/understood the Guide to Safe Scouting and one leader must be current in Youth Protection Training and any other required training for the activity (swimming, shooting, climbing, etc).
9. For all activities, trips, and outings, it is highly recommended that each youth provide a signed permission slip from a parent/guardian authorizing them to participate, and for the leader to seek medical attention if required.

**Annual Health and Medical Record & Informed Consent and Hold Harmless/Release Agreement:**

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34605\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34605_Letter.pdf) rev 9/09

**BSA Flying Permit Application:** <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/19-672.pdf>

Required for all flights except commercial flights. No experimental aircraft. Pilot's license, liability Insurance, and maintenance requirements.

**Forest Service permits:** Contact FS center ahead of time for restrictions, reservations, and requirements (sanitation, fires, camping density, etc).

**Local or National Parks permits:** Call ahead or make reservations via internet. Plan ahead since there may be a waiting list or restrictions on number of people admitted per day.

**Camping Reservations:** Call ahead or make reservations via internet

**Incident Report Forms:** <http://www.usscouts.org/usscouts/safety/incident.pdf>

- Attend to injuries first and foremost, call 911, ensure appropriate medical care, etc.
- Reportable injuries: unconsciousness, hospital admission, surgery beyond stitches and simple fractures.
- Report incident to Scout Master, camp director, & Council Scout Executive
- Written documentation of who, what, when, where, how. Take photos. Witnesses.
- Adhere to council crisis communications plan.

**Monument to lost Friends:** <http://byhigh.com/History/HoleintheRock/Hole-in-the-Rock.html>

#### Incident 1:

Several years ago the scouts visited SASCO (Southern Arizona Smelter Company) near Picacho Peak. It is an old abandoned smelter. The boys decided to sleep on the concrete slab that partially covered the basement. One of them stepped backwards into a hole in the concrete pad. He fell about five feet to a soft dirt basement floor. During the fall he broke his femur bone in one leg.

The leaders stood on high ground and called 911. They were transferred to four different operators and then it took another ten minutes for them to identify their location. They brought out a fire truck and a helicopter. It took about 20 minutes for them to get there once the 911 operator identified our position.

It took about an hour to get his leg stabilized, get him on a gurney and loaded into the helicopter. The helicopter took him to Tucson medical. Two leaders drove down to Tucson to meet them. They called his parents to let them know what was going on. Fortunately there were two other leaders to stay at camp.

The hospital is obligated to take life saving measures. They went to work diagnosing and stabilizing the boy. They said because he was stabilized, they could wait for the parents. Otherwise they would have needed the permission slips to authorize further treatment. The scout had surgery to put rods in his leg. He also had a lot of follow up including surgery to remove the rods once he was healed.

The family had no insurance. Also turns out that LDS youth are not covered under BSA rider insurance. LDS units registering save \$2 or so per boy because the church is self insured and BSA honors that as insurance and waives theirs. Well it turns out the insurance offered from the church is very similar to BSA. It is a \$15,000 rider policy. So, in addition to whatever insurance you have personally, the church will pay up to \$15,000 in addition to that. The church paid \$15,000 of a \$100,000 bill for helicopter ambulance, surgery, etc. The rest is the responsibility of the family.

The leaders had a tour permit and permission slips but none of that was needed. The tour permit would have been crucial if the parents could not have been reached or if there was a liability suit. The liability issue is kind of scary, especially since the family had no insurance. "You're a fool if you don't utilize what protection there is out there for you." This was not considered a dangerous outing but these things happen anywhere at anytime.

#### Incident 2:

A scout from the Mesa East Stake died about 4-5 years ago while on a hike/high adventure activity with his team. The scouts were hiking near Workman Creek in the Sierra Ancha Mountains south of Young. One of the younger Varsity Scouts was crossing over the stream close to a nearby cliff. He stepped in the stream and slipped on the mossy, slimy creek bottom, then fell into the stream and was carried over the nearby cliff falling over 180 feet to his certain death.

Besides the obvious loss of life a further repercussion from this incident was that the coach, who had been faithful in the past at obtaining tour permits, did not procure one before this outing. Technically, he did not qualify for liability coverage from BSA because he did not file a tour permit. Fortunately for him the BSA covered the incident because of his good compliance previously in obtaining tour permits on a regular basis.

While he may have avoided personal financial catastrophe in this circumstance I think we all agree this is an example of the potential liability every volunteer faces when taking YM into the wilderness. It is just good sense, as well as a requirement, to have a valid tour permit as required.

## **RISKS OF SCOUTING #13 (First Aid Resources)**

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The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 35-36 Guide to Safe Scouting 2007 printing)

**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 the local community. Whatever is determined to be needed should be available.

**Trail Safety:** 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 an unusual environment with proper instructions on fire safety, orienteering, and safe travel. 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.

**Swimming:** Lifesaving equipment in good repair shall be ready for immediate use by guard personnel. A flotation device is recommended, such as a rescue tube, bodyboard, or PFD, supplemented, as appropriate, by reaching and throwing devices, and small craft. Dive boats should be equipped with radios and first aid kits, and should deploy a safety line.

**Kayaking:** Appropriate rescue equipment must be available. During treks, safety gear such as navigation aids, weather radios, individual signal devices, throw bags, first aid kits, spare paddles, and spare clothing should be carried in the kayaks or in support craft. Be able to perform CPR and first aid, including hypothermia.

**Trek Safely: Qualified Supervision** The lead adult is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently trained in first aid appropriate to the type of trek and the environment. American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Basic (a 16-hour course) and CPR are recommended. A signed parental informed consent form for each participant under 18 years of age may be used for adventurous activities such as whitewater, climbing, and horse packing treks.

**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.

**CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens:** 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.

### **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.

### **Training Resources:**

- Boy Scout Handbook and Fieldbook
- BSA First Aid Merit Badge
- American Red Cross First Aid & CPR training
- BSA-American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Training Class.
- **The Emergency Care and Safety Institute** is pleased to announce a new venture with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to provide training based on BSA's new Wilderness First Aid Curriculum and Doctrine Guidelines. Based on BSA's 16-hour Wilderness First Aid Curriculum, ECSI's *Wilderness First Aid Field Guide* and *Boy Scouts of America Wilderness First Aid Instructor's ToolKit CD* meet course requirements and address everything individuals need to know to prevent and treat emergencies in remote areas, including: Bleeding and wound care, Burns, bites, and stings, Bone, joint, and muscle injuries, Cold- and heat-related illnesses, Altitude illnesses, and much more! Need to qualify as "Instructors" to conduct classes. <http://boyscouts.ecsinstitute.org/> **Instructor Class: Philmont May 5-9, 2010 \$150.**

### Examples:

- Group of scouts had just reluctantly checked out the water at Gisella in anticipation of cliff diving. There was a lot of grumbling but the scoutmaster was insistent that the proper underwater obstacle checks be done. As the boys were finishing the inspections and discussing other safety issues a group of college students came by and one simply took off his shirt and dived into the water and hit a rock that was 6 inches under water and suffered head lacerations that the scouts got to practice first aid and witness the injury up close. They will never forget the sight.
- Scout had brought model rocket engines to campout. One of the engines was disassembled and the propellant scraped out on a rock. The scout struck a match to light the propellant which instantly ignited, burnt very hot and quickly. Scout burnt both hands very badly requiring an agonizing one hour trip to the hospital and weeks of recovery.
- Sept 2007 lady hiking in desert with a group was bit by Mojave Rattlesnake, no one in group knew correct first aid and she died while being taken to hospital.
- Three Boy Scouts suffered second- and third-degree burns when another scout spilled flaming rubbing alcohol on them in their campsite. All three boys were airlifted and hospitalized. Two were treated and released. A 17 year old died of second & third degree burns.
- A team was on a Varsity Super Activity. The first 2 days of the activity were planned as a service project, for an elderly Navajo couple in Page, AZ. They re-roofed their small home, replaced windows, and replaced their front door. The leaders made sure that all proper tour permits were filed, all adults were trained etc. They had copies of parental release forms, copies of their physicals etc. They also made sure that these were duplicated and that more than one adult had access to the paperwork. One of the young men fell off the roof of the home and fractured his arm (this was a simple fracture, not a compound fracture). When the injured scout arrived at the hospital in Page, he had all forms in place, parents work phone numbers, insurance providers etc. The people at the hospital commented to us that they see Boy Scouts in there on a weekly basis, and almost all of them are unprepared with the paperwork. The also commented on how nice it was to have a Varsity Scout team that was prepared with all of the required documents, phone numbers etc. Having a tour permit filed, and all of the forms completed made what could have been an all day chore take only minutes. *Make sure that you file a tour permit each and every time, and make sure that all of your leaders are trained. Having emergency phone numbers, cell numbers etc for each parent also made the process much smoother.*

## **RISKS OF SCOUTING #15 (CPR Resource)**

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The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (page 35-36 Guide to Safe Scouting 2007 printing)

**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 CPR-trained person (preferably an adult) be part of the leadership for any BSA program. Such a resource should be available for strenuous outdoor activity.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **BSA Health and Safety Guide for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)**

This specialized skill to endeavor to revive those persons with cardiac arrest (no breathing-no pulse) may be taught to Boy Scouts and Ventures by an instructor currently trained by the American Red Cross or American Heart Association or National Safety Council. We do not recommend teaching this skill to Cub Scouts.

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). Mouthpieces or mouth barrier devices should be available for CPR.

Resident camps are required to have one staff member for every 40 campers who has been coached in first-aid practices for conditions most likely to occur in camp and who has been trained in CPR by any recognized community agency. The resident camp ranger and aquatics director must hold current certificates in CPR.

#### **BSA Official Position on Traditional CPR Procedure:**

Recently there has been much discussion about the compression-only (or "hands-only") CPR technique. In the forthcoming months, this topic will be discussed by members of the Boy Scouts of America's Health and Safety Committee, which oversees the BSA's health- and safety-related policies and procedures. This committee also works closely with the American Red Cross and its BSA liaison to help ensure that such policies and procedures are the most appropriate for Scouting. The compression-only technique may be suitable for some emergency situations. It is not, however, an all-encompassing method for every CPR-related circumstance. For example, drowning victims will still require mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, because they do not have enough oxygen in their blood. In addition, the compression-only technique should not be used for infants and children. There are other situations where the compression-only technique should not be applied.

**Respiratory Complications After Resuscitation of a Near-Drowning Victim** Near-drowning accidents are usually witnessed, and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is delivered at the scene. Victims usually want to leave the scene quickly after a successful resuscitation. They can develop pulmonary edema (flooding of the lungs with fluid) hours later and die from an inability to get oxygen to the blood. Cough with or without bloody phlegm warns of this later complication. All near-drowning victims must be admitted to a hospital with respiratory intensive-care unit monitoring for a 24-hour observation period to watch for complications. Lung rupture can occur during the submersion or consequent to the resuscitation efforts. Pneumonia is a later complication in the fluid aspiration-injured lung. The hypothermic near-drowning victim requires special attention.

**Tour Permit:** At least one person must be trained in CPR from any recognized agency for Safety Afloat and Climb On Safely.

### **Examples:**

1. Scout had a heart attack while waiting on the corner for his school bus. Two other scouts revived him and kept him alive until the paramedics arrived. The boy died a week later after multiple heart attacks.
2. Boy Scout saved a 6 year old boy from drowning in hotel swimming pool. The scout used his scout training when he performed CPR on the swimmer. He managed to get water from his lungs and kept him alive till paramedics arrived and transported the victim to the hospital.
3. Scout leader and his son went to a Boy Scout Camp in and were reviewing first aid lessons when they heard a nearby commotion. Investigating they found an adult lying on the ground and his face was blue and he was in cardiac arrest. The adult gave the victim CPR until an ambulance arrived to take the victim away. The victim made a full recovery. Scout leader was awarded a local lifesaving award and recognition. July 2008
4. A 15 yr old Las Vegas scout and 6'2" varsity football player with a clean bill of health died on an outing in Arizona's West Clear Creek area. Only a short way up the canyon, he hopped down from a 2-3' boulder, took two steps and collapsed to the ground. There were no signs or symptoms before he collapsed. One leader left to get help while the other leader performed CPR till the medics arrived over an hour later and pronounced him dead on the scene. June 2009