

**HSG & ARRG**

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# HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDE

## WELCOME TO A CULTURE OF SAFETY

### Our Commitment

Trail Life USA (TLUSA) is committed to the health, welfare, and safety of our youth, volunteers, staff, and employees. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health considerations are integrated into everything we do.

While remaining intensely committed to the value of outdoor adventure, we are also thoroughly practical in our recognition that, as boys follow the trail to manhood, there is an inherent risk that results from the Trail Life USA program. The goal should always be to provide challenging, adventurous, and fun activities in a manner that no injuries occur beyond those that are readily treatable by simple first aid.

Our intention is to develop, encourage, and create a culture of safety that, while having necessary rules and policies in place, is driven responsibly by qualified leaders who respect the critical nature of the task of caring for boys. The adventurous spirit of boys must be stirred for them to grow into winning men, but it must also be responsibly managed to limit injury and tragedy.

Great responsibility lies in the fact that, since the range of perspectives of knowledge in an organization like Trail Life USA is so wide, we should be respectful and attentive to one another in determining what is safe, permissible, or forbidden in the process of carrying out our mission.

In addition to this Guide, other resources include detailed specific guidebooks and manuals for certain activities and programs that may at times modify, enhance, or bring greater clarity to issues in this Guide. For instance, the [Trail Life Shooting Sports Guide](#) provides greater detail and specifics with respect to shooting sports, so it supersedes any provisions that may be included in this resource as they apply to shooting sports.

All activities must be evaluated and planned based on the specific conditions, environment, location, and the maturity, knowledge, and experience of participants and leaders. In addition, common sense contributes to keeping all participants safe.

To instill a culture of safety for Trail Life USA activities, Adult Leaders (which include Registered Adults) must begin with a knowledge and understanding of Trail Life USA policies, rules, and guidance.

Adult Leaders are expected to:

- Follow all Trail Life Health and Safety Guidelines, as well as safety checkpoints for specific program activities.



*Look for this image for specific activity safety checkpoints.*

- Choose appropriate activities based on youth ages, abilities, and limitations.
- Use sound judgment in taking additional precautions necessary to avoid dangers and injuries.
- Work in partnership with youth in safety planning and implementation.
- Promote the concept of safety consciousness at all times, in all places.

Each youth member participates in creating a culture of safety through healthy attitudes and practices by:

- Using the Patrol Method, work in partnership with the leaders in planning for safety.
- Listen to and follow instructions and suggestions.
- Make safe choices.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Evaluate situations where a safety risk is involved.
- Use safety equipment properly, always.
- Suggest additional safety guidelines and precautions.



### **IMPORTANT**

Each adult should consider themselves responsible for safety. This is reinforced in our habit of asking, "Who's in charge of child safety and youth protection in Trail Life USA?" with the expected answer coming confidently from every adult, "I am!"

This is one way to "Walk Worthy."

### **Teamwork in Approaching Standards**

This Guide and the related Activity Guide serve to establish minimum standards. You must comply with any more restrictive standards imposed by local, state, or federal law.

In the event of a conflict between any resources provided by TLUSA and your Charter Organization, a recognized appointed representative of your Charter Organization, in communication with TLUSA, should determine how to best proceed.

### **Getting Around in this Guide**

This guide is mobile-friendly, so take it with you! If you can access the internet, you can access this guide!

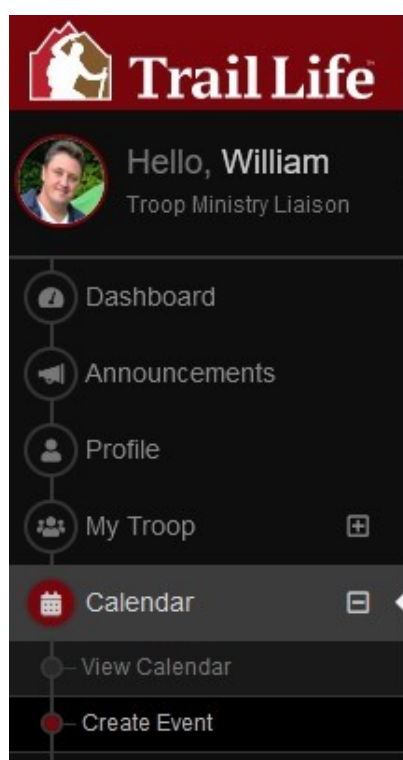
To use search features, simply use the search bar at the top of this page.

## Planning Specific Events and Activities: The Seamless Integration of Safety into Your Program Workflow

While this Guide speaks to essential considerations in keeping boys safe, the specific policies and guidelines on activities are delivered as you schedule the activities your Troop will want to pursue in fulfilling the promise of adventure.

The activities' policies and guidelines are integrated into the Event module of Trail Life Connect, meaning that, as you enter information for an upcoming event, the system will prompt you to review and accommodate the requirements for that particular event or activity. It will even create and issue permission slips customized to the event and populate your roster!

Before scheduling your event, you can conduct a "dry run" to explore what will be necessary for the activity or event. You can do this directly from your Troop Calendar in Trail Life Connect.



## Your Ongoing Responsibility: Staying Current

A Guide such as this is valuable and helpful, but Troop Leaders should be diligent in reviewing the most recent updates from Trail Life USA--along with all referenced materials and resources--prior to conducting activities.

In order to maintain appropriate standards, and in response to insurance requirements, legal standards, and best practices, it should be expected that Trail Life USA will modify, update, or amend these policies regularly. If substantial revisions occur, members will likely be informed through a notification in Trail Life Connect. Also, throughout this document any substantial revision will also be indicated by the following icon:



Additionally, an archive with changes since the initial release of this Guide version can be found in the next section titled, “[Updates and Clarifications \[7\]](#).”



#### **NOTE**

Adult leaders are responsible for being familiar with the most recent versions and revisions.

## **UPDATES AND CLARIFICATIONS**

Month Year (arranged with most recent at the top)

## **YOUTH PROTECTION AND MEMBER BASICS**

### **Creating a Safe Environment**

Proper attention to the environment is a critical consideration in the development of a culture of safety.

As an adult leader, you develop this safe environment for boys by:

- Monitoring the status of current adult Troop members in terms of their required background checks and current Child Safety and Youth Protection Training (CSYPT);



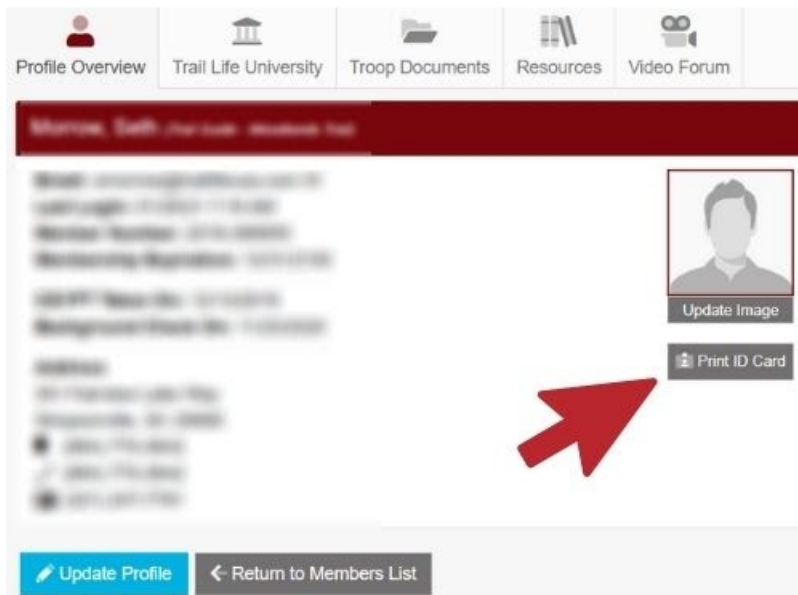
#### **TIP**

To see the status of your Troop leaders, log into Trail Life Connect and see them at the bottom of your home screen.

- Insisting on proper identification of vetted adult members by their wearing of Trail Life-issued credentials, including the [Lanyard and ID Card](#), at all gatherings. Many Troops purchase these in bulk and provide them to members, other require the member to purchase;



- Monitoring the display of a current ID card by each adult member. These cards are easily downloaded from member profile pages (Trail Life Connect) and clearly display the status of their membership and CSYPT;







- Encouraging familiarity with this Guide and the Activities Guide by assigning readings or Trail Life University (can be found on Trail Life Connect Dashboard) modules related to safety;



- Encouraging awareness of other events and individuals who might have access to the area;
- Conducting regular reviews and evaluations of facilities for safety issues before events;
- Practicing awareness of behaviors of all in attendance;



### WARNING

Abusers cannot always be easily identified and are typically trusted by children and their families. They are often people we know. Don't assume because this is a faith-based program held in a church that the youth are safe. Trust your eyes and ears and report anything that makes you uncomfortable.

- Increasing vigilance before and after meetings and events when leaders may be distracted interacting with parents or with arrival and departure duties;

**TIP**

Arrival and departure times can be a dangerous time because it may be unclear who is in charge of an individual youth (Leader? Parent?). Youth may be less supervised, thus more susceptible. An abuser will take advantage of this uncertainty.

In evaluating proper behavior, here are some guidelines to consider:

- All members must adhere to behavior consistent with the [Trail Life USA Oath, Motto](#), and follow all policies;

**TRAIL LIFE USA OATH**

"On my honor, I will do my best to serve God and my country; to respect authority; to be a good steward of creation; and to treat others as I want to be treated."

**TRAIL LIFE USA MOTTO**

"Walk Worthy"

- Immoral conduct, physical violence, hazing, bullying, insults, threats, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual conduct outside of the sanctity of marriage, inappropriate language, theft and deceit are inconsistent with Trail Life USA values and policies;
- Alcohol is not permitted at any Trail Life activity, except where part of a recognized religious practice;
- Everyone should respect youths' privacy – especially when it comes to toilets, showering, and sleeping arrangements;
- Separate accommodations, showers, dressing/changing areas and restrooms for adults and youth are required;
- It is never acceptable for an adult to be on or in the same bed with a youth;
- No interaction between adults and youth in a bedroom or a bathroom except in limited situations required due to health and safety concerns, in which case the no one-on-one rule must still be followed;
- Any sexual activities or overtures are strictly prohibited;
- Adults and youth are not to have "secrets," nor are adults to provide "special treatment," gifts, or "forbidden items" (e.g., tobacco, alcohol or allowing risky behavior) to youth;
- There should be no secret activities, meetings, or clubs;
- Appropriate clothing should always be worn – especially for swimming activities;
- Hazing, physical hitting, and/or corporal punishment (even if intended as discipline) are strictly prohibited;
- Youth leadership should always be monitored by adult leaders;
- No inappropriate physical contact is allowed;
- No "rough-housing," butt-slapping, massages, or inappropriate hugs;
- No touching of (or by) children in the genitals, breast or buttocks areas;
- Children may not sit on the lap of an adult other than their parent;
- Children should never be touched against their will unless they are a danger to themselves or others.

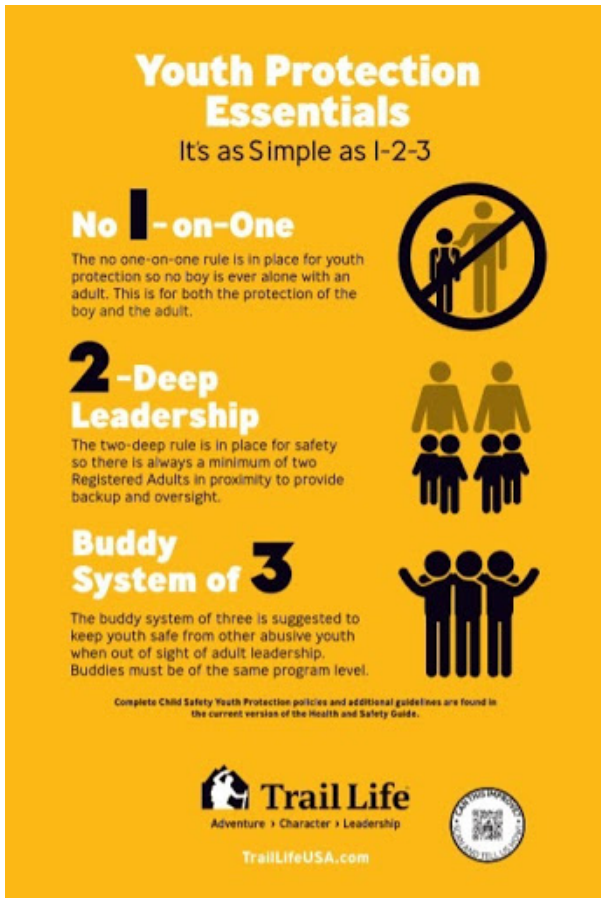
**1-2-3 Youth Protection Essentials**

Proper supervision is an essential starting place when it comes to operating a safe program for boys.

We have developed the simple **1-2-3 Youth Protection Essentials** that can be easily learned, taught, and practiced by adults and boys in Trail Life. There is no excuse for not following these clear essentials and they should be reviewed by all often. There are [helpful posters](#) in the Trail Life store that can

be visual reminders and can take the edge off of dealing with adults who may question the policy. Point them to this resource often.

The poster is a summary.

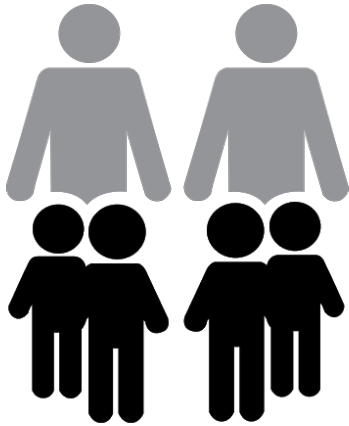


Here is more in-depth guidance:



**Essential #1: NO ONE-ON-ONE.** The **no one-on-one rule** is in place for youth protection so no boy is ever alone with an adult. This is for the protection of both the boy and the adult.

This extends to electronic communications such as email, texting, and on-line communications, as well as transportation to and from TLUSA activities.



**Essential #2: TWO-DEEP LEADERSHIP.** Generally speaking, the **two-deep rule** is in place for safety so there is always a minimum of two Registered Adults in proximity to provide backup and oversight.

These two Registered Adults on premises and either within eyesight or earshot or both at all Trail Life gatherings and activities (including transport), with the recommendation being that, whenever possible, a minimum of two adults should be with every group of boys. There should never be an adult alone with a boy who is not his or her own son.

Attendees should stay in areas designated for the activities and keep doors open.

Although parents' participation is welcome, a parent who is not a Registered Adult member (thereby trained and screened) is not considered part of this two-deep leadership requirement.

Of the two required Registered and trained Trail Life USA Adult Leaders, those 18-20 years of age may count for only one of the two-deep leadership positions required in the Youth/Leader Ratios and for satisfying the two-deep leadership requirement. The second leader must be age 21 or older except for overnight activities, when the second leader must be age 25 or older.



**Essential #3: BUDDY SYSTEM OF 3.** Inasmuch as it is possible, the **buddy system of three** is suggested to keep youth safe (even from other abusive youth) when out of sight of adult leadership.

These buddy systems should be established within the same program level (e.g., a group of Foxes, Hawks, Mountain Lions, Navigators or Adventurers), and should change frequently to prevent "favorites" for grooming by a youth abuser.

Youth should use this buddy system for restroom and bathhouse visits, meaning that two youth should not be alone in these settings. Either they go in and come out as a group of three or more, or they go in one at a time.

As this is the most-reported location for inappropriate incidents, restroom and bathhouse usage by youth should be closely monitored by a leader outside the restroom, aware of who is inside and tuned to what he can hear going on inside.

The buddy system should apply to tenting, also. Whenever possible, three or four boys of the same program group should share a tent, rather than only two (unless they are siblings with parental knowledge).

## Youth/Leader Ratios

Proper Youth/Leader Ratios should always be enforced.

Minimum Appropriate Youth/Leader Ratios are:

- 2 Registered Adult/Leaders per up to 8 boys in the Fox Patrol
- 2 Registered Adult/Leaders per up to 16 boys in the Hawk Patrol
- 2 Registered Adult/Leaders per up to 20 boys in the Mountain Lion Patrol and beyond

Supervision for specialized activities should include an above average level of knowledge and understanding of skills and equipment utilized, with all adults in supervisory positions possessing a working knowledge of these Health and Safety Guidelines. Some activities that are more intense may require additional adult supervision and specialized skills.

## Discipline

Discipline is important in following rules and ensuring a safe environment. Discipline should be administered according to Trail Life USA's values.

We must ensure that when a boy acts in a fashion that is unsafe, constructive guidance ("discipline") is provided in a Christian manner—constructively and with the goal of encouraging the boy to move his behavior towards the Christian model we all want. At the same time, we cannot allow physical, degrading, or punitive methods of discipline to be utilized in Trail Life USA.

Discipline should always be based on the betterment of the child, **never** the result of anger, and should never belittle, insult, or demean the child.

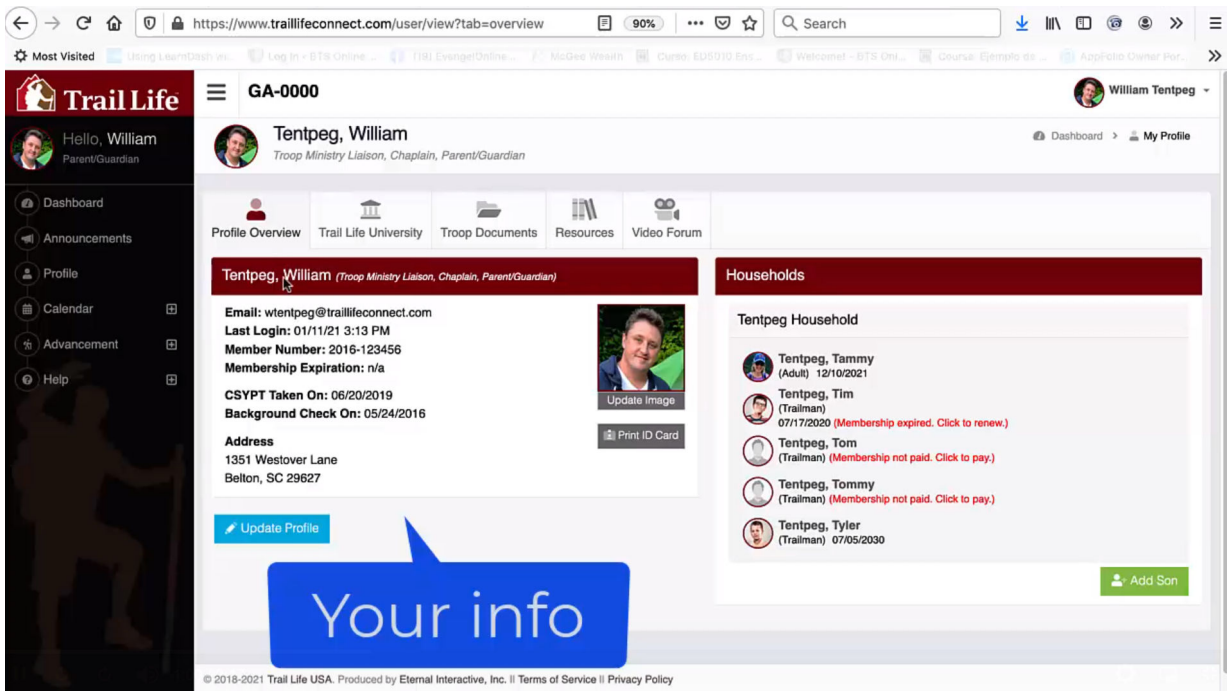
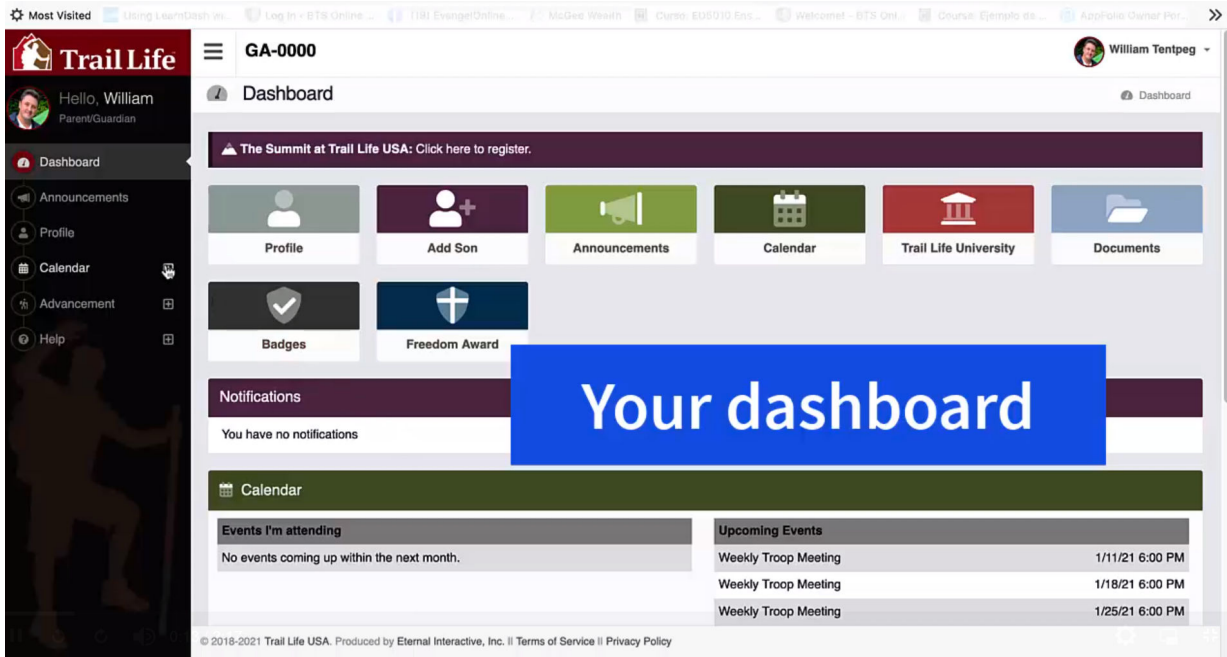
Discipline should never be physical, e.g., spanking, slapping, pushing or hitting, nor ever involve a deprivation of food, sleep, shelter, necessary transport, medical care, or other neglect.

- Under NO circumstances is physical punishment to be used.
- All verbal comments should remain constructive and positive. All discipline should occur in the presence of an adult witness.
- Each Troop should develop a Troop Discipline Policy.

## MEMBER/NON-MEMBER PARTICIPANTS

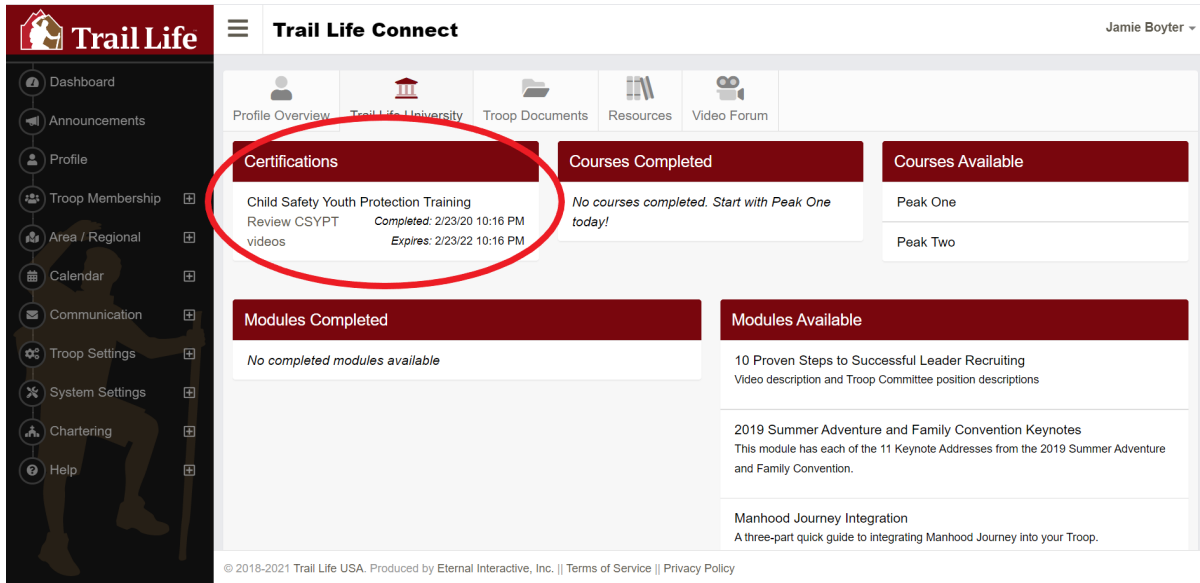
### Adult Member Screening

Trail Life USA wants to ensure that proper screening of all Registered Adults is conducted before approval and participation, and that the screening process translates into the local Troop restricting the roles of active attendee adults to properly vetted Registered Adult members with current and active Trail Life credentials. Credentials can be checked by a Trail Life Connect member search.



Trail Life insists on volunteer Leaders qualifying under the no-exception adult member standards, which include:

- A comprehensive volunteer application, including gathering an applicant's history and personal references on behalf of the Troop Ministry Liaison;
- Agreement with [Trail Life USA's Statements of Faith and Values](#);
- Successful passing of the initial Criminal Background Check and recheck every five years;
- Satisfactory passing of Child Safety Youth Protection Training and successful renewal at least every two years (or sooner);



- Final review and recommendation by the Charter Organization (through the Troop Ministry Liaison).

### What about Non-members?

While it is permissible to invite potential members to Troop activities and events, such as unregistered youth (visitors) pose a risk and should not be allowed to attend any activity without the approval of the Charter Organization and a completed and signed Parent/Guardian permission form and the appropriate [Trail Life USA Health Form](#).

The Trail Life Connect event protocols allow guests to complete this process by email invitation during event planning.

While we favor parents of Trailmen becoming Registered Adults, we understand some adults are seeking a program of excellence for their sons, but are uncomfortable signing the Statements of Faith and Values or are, in some other way, disqualified for membership.

We would like for them to experience the Christ-centered program with their sons, but adult non-members in attendance should be parents/guardians/adult family members only, and are to **take no active part in leadership of boys**. They will be distinguished by NOT wearing the Lanyard and ID Card.

!

**IMPORTANT**

This is why it is important that all Registered Adults wear their Lanyard and ID Card during any Trail Life event.

Only Registered Members and authorized/approved guests will be covered by Trail Life's liability insurance, and accident and sickness insurance.

## FACILITY, MEETING, AND TRIP SAFETY

### Facility Safety

The following points should be considered in selecting a Troop meeting place and making meeting plans:

- The meeting place should be easily accessible to all, taking into consideration and accommodating those youth with special needs.

- Buildings should be safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated, well-lit, and hazard-free, and have a designated tornado shelter location.
- Meeting places should allow adequate space for planned activities; have accessible toilets, a hand-washing facility, and provide sanitary drinking water.
- Troops should adhere to building capacity limits.
- The meeting places should have accessibility to a telephone. Emergency numbers should be posted by the telephone. However, if there is no accessibility to a phone your cell phone may be used as the emergency number. All parents must have this number and your cell phone must be turned on during Troop meetings.
- There should be at least two well-marked exits available. Exits must be easily accessible and unlocked from the inside. All Troop members should be aware of these exits, as well as a common meeting place outside.
- Leaders should arrive prior to the meeting to unlock doors and ensure that no youth must wait outside the building. Leaders must also remain at the meeting place until the last child is picked up by parent/guardian, maintaining two-deep leadership at all times.
- All Troops must have a First Aid Kit available at all Troop meetings and activities and members should know where it is located as well as the location of any AED's on site.

## Maintaining a Safe Meeting Environment

- Regular head counts are crucial when working with large groups. Knowing how many youth are in the group and conducting periodic head counts will help in keeping the group together. It is important to know where youth are at all times.
- The Buddy System can be an efficient way of keeping count of large groups. If each youth has buddies with whom he is required to stay and buddy checks are conducted on a regular basis, youth will be able to notify Adult Leaders if a buddy is missing. This system allows for a quick response to a lost youth.
- Youth should be aware of what to do if they get lost. A well-lit, well-populated meeting place (preferably a security kiosk, ranger station, etc.) should be designated at the beginning of the event.
- During any event or camping trip, it is the responsibility of Adult Leaders to confront unfamiliar faces. Any resulting uneasiness or discomfort with any such individual should result in them being advised that they are not to interact or be in proximity to the Troop or its members and (respectfully) asked to depart the vicinity (if it is a public facility the concern should be promptly reported to the staff of said facility). Troop members and participants should be advised not to have any interaction with that individual, and to report any continued attempted interaction or appearances by said individual.
- Youth should not go alone into public restrooms without adult members first entering the restroom to inspect conditions and make note of who is present. The adult member then waits outside of the restroom for youth to exit. Adults should be aware of any individual entering the restroom and if youth are inside for an unusual amount of time.
- Troops are required to develop a “Release of Youth Members” policy that is strictly followed ([see policy \[17\]](#)).



### IMPORTANT

Instruct youth members that, if anyone fails to follow these guidelines, the youth member should report this to the leaders and to their parents. It is the right thing to do and can help to protect them and others from harm. Likewise, adult leaders are to report any violations of the guidelines directly to Trail Life USA and to the Charter Organization of the individual violating the rules, using the Incident Reporting Form found in Trail Life Connect..



## **Release of Youth Members**

Troops must have a release procedure in place for all Troop meetings and activities. Troops are expected to utilize a parent sign in/sign-out sheet for boys under age 14. This may also act as an attendance form. This sign-in/out sheet should be kept with the Troop records.

It is suggested that an Adult Leader be responsible for this process. This gives Adult Leaders an opportunity to get to know parents, and makes them more able to recognize when a questionable situation arises.

Release procedures must be explained annually to all parents. Adult Leaders must receive written permission ahead of time to release a member to an adult other than the parent/guardian. Authorization for ongoing release can be given on the Health Form. Non-custodial parents/others must show a photo ID and sign a sign-out sheet.

It is also suggested that parents provide Adult Leaders a list of individuals who may not pick up their child, on the Health Form. This list can be useful in divorce/adoption situations where custody is an issue.

## **Off-site Troop Trips and Risk Management**

It's true that some Troop meeting facilities allow for adventurous and expanded activities on-site but, for the most part, Troop activities take on different health and safety challenges when the regular meeting place is left behind.

Trail Life USA's philosophy of safety involves less in the way of rules and restrictions and is more about assessing and managing risk well. The Activity Risk Reference Guide and activity and trip management process reflect this shared risk management philosophy with the expectation that everyone will do their part to keep our Trailmen and leaders safe during all activities and outings.

Procedures, permissions, and risk assessment for activities and trips are built into and handled through the Trail Life Connect Calendar and Event Management System. The system will generate an Activity/Trip packet of forms and information for leaders including a roster, itinerary, permission forms, and much more, which can be saved as a PDF file and printed if desired.

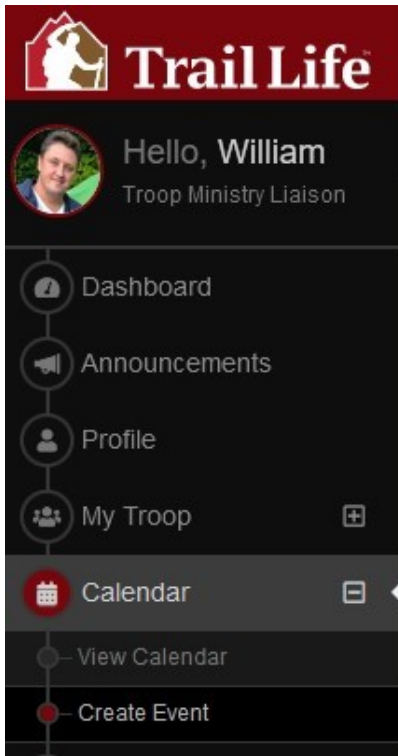
### **Activity/Trip Permission Protocols**

Activities in the Trail Life Activity Risk Reference Guide require different protocols depending on known risks. This may include the permission of parents, approval of the Charter Organization, and possibly a review by the Home Office.

The Trail Life Connect system automatically determines the protocols (high risk, vehicle, joint activities with AHG, etc.) for each activity selected for an event and requires that corresponding sections be completed as part of the event creation process in the Trail Life Connect (TLC) digital Calendar and Event programming.

### **Event Planning and Risk Management through TLC**

The risk management process is integrated into the event creation module in Trail Life Connect and must be completed by Troop leaders before every activity prior to any necessary permissions being obtained.



As part of our culture of safety, it is incumbent on leaders to take this process seriously and for the TML to enforce its thoughtful completion prior to approving an activity on behalf of the Charter Organization.

Lack of serious consideration and mitigation of risks in this process could result in the rejection of an activity by the TML or by the Home Office. Permission approvals are handled automatically in TLC depending on the activity or activities selected, length of activity, distance from the Charter Organization, and other factors selected during the event creation.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Event' form in the 'Main event setup' section. It includes the following fields and options:

- Active:** A toggle switch set to 'On'.
- Event Type:** A dropdown menu with 'No event type specified' selected.
- Title:** A text input field.
- Description:** A rich text editor with various formatting icons.
- Tags:** A text input field with the placeholder 'Add tags to better identify this event.'
- Event Date & Time:** A date and time picker showing '11-18-2020 10:00 PM to 11-18-2020 11:00 PM'.
- Timezone:** A dropdown menu set to 'UTC-05:00 EST Eastern Standard Time'.
- Event Address:** Two text input fields for 'Address line 1...' and 'Address line 2...', and a dropdown menu for 'City...' with 'Georgia' selected.

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced event details' section of the form, which includes several checkboxes and input fields:


- Required items:** Checkboxes for 'Medical form required' and 'Uniform required'.
- Camping & Service:** Input fields for 'Tent camping nights', 'Cabin camping nights', and 'Service hours'.
- Activity Miles:** Input fields for 'Hiking miles', 'Canoeing miles', and 'Biking miles', each with a 'Miles' unit indicator.
- Event Fees:** Input fields for 'Youth fees' and 'Adult fees', each with a '\$' symbol.

Any intentional attempt to avoid this evaluation or the required approvals in the event planning program could result in suspension or revocation of the Troop’s charter or the leader’s membership.

Using the event module is the only way to obtain the required review and permissions and ensures on-going compliance with Health and Safety standards and the continuity of insurance coverage. When an event is created on the Calendar, the TLC system will walk the leader through the necessary steps based on the activities selected, length of the activity, location of the activity, and other determining factors to populate the necessary parts of the digital form needed to obtain the correct permissions.

This includes a parent permission form for the event citing known risks, obtaining TML approval on behalf of the Charter Organization, prompting review by the Home Office, and much more.

Obviously, higher risk activities will require higher review protocols.



**IMPORTANT**  
Using the TLC Calendar and Event module is the only way to complete the permissions process for an activity or event. See the tutorials in TLC for more information and instruction.

## Risk Assessment

Additionally, the system requires that a Risk Assessment module be completed for all activities selected. All activities involve risk and using the module leaders can assess their Troop’s specific level of risk

for an activity based on previous experience, qualified supervision, age of the Trailmen, and other factors.

The system populates known risks that need to be addressed and allows leaders to add their own Troop-specific risks to be addressed ahead of time. Troops trying a new activity may have a higher risk for that activity and get more assistance mitigating those risks. Other Troops may have a low risk for the exact same activity because of their previous experience, risk averse leadership style, or advanced training. Safety and Youth Protection should each be addressed in assessing risk for activities and trips. Samples and tutorials are available on Trail Life Connect and more information on risk management is available in the Activity Risk Reference Guide.

## Unauthorized Activities

Certain activities, although fun, adventurous, and entertaining, carry significantly higher risk for serious injury or death and are unauthorized as Trail Life National or Troop activities. While certain Trailmen and Troop leaders may be skilled and knowledgeable in these activities, the safety of those individuals measured against the opportunity for furtherance of our mission impacts the decision to deem these activities as unauthorized.

Many times it is because there is no credentialing organization or certification process for leaders that would provide the confidence level necessary for the activity to be approved. Although there may be a high level of interest or experience, the activity does not meet the threshold of sufficient certification opportunities to permit the onsite supervision necessary to meet safety thresholds we need in order to satisfy our Core Value #4 of "Safety."

**The following activities are not approved by Trail Life and should not be a part of any Trail Life function.** Any activity not specifically mentioned in this guide should be reviewed and approved by the Home Office before considering.

- **Outdoor Ice Skating and Ice Fishing on Open Water**

This unauthorized activity includes outdoor ice skating, ice fishing, and playing on frozen open water sources such as rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, swimming pools, or similar open water sources. Ice skating on land-based outdoor rinks or indoor rinks is permitted.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized because it is considered hazardous and poses a high risk of injuries or hypothermia and drowning due to falling through ice. At present, there are no known certification agencies that would allow effective and consistent evaluation of conditions.

- **Bungee/Shock Cord Jumping, B.A.S.E. Jumping, bridge Jumping, and Cliff Diving** This unauthorized activity includes all forms of bungee/shock cord jumping, jumping from a Building, Antenna, Span (bridge), Earth (cliff), or another fixed object utilizing a parachute or wingsuit to descend to the earth or into water.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity due to collisions with objects and/or equipment dependency.

- **Exploring Abandoned Mines and Quarries** This unauthorized activity includes the exploration of an abandoned mine, quarry, or similar facility.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extreme risk of falling/drop-offs, roof or floor collapse, unsafe air or unsafe gasses, water/flooding, structural timber rot, disorientation, sharp objects, explosives, animal life, and hazardous chemicals.

- **Vertical Caving**

This unauthorized activity includes exploring any type of cave where a person will need to vertically descend and ascend a rope into an open expanse.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the combination of extreme risk factors that are present in this activity, such as falling, losing light, ropes and safety gear tearing, the difficulty of extraction, and others.

- **Boxing or Martial Arts Involving Weapons**

This unauthorized activity includes boxing and martial arts activities involving the use of a weapon including but not limited to a sword, staff, knife, stick, kubotan, nunchaku, and bow and arrow.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious bodily injury, impalement, or death inherent with using weapons.

- **Non-Tethered Hot-Air Balloon Rides**

This unauthorized activity includes hot-air balloon rides that are launched to freely fly untethered to the ground.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the risks of injury and/or death from falling from or crashing the balloon.

- **Using Mopeds or Motorcycles**

This unauthorized activity includes the use of mopeds or motorcycles as either a driver or passenger.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the inability to maintain child safety standards as well as the increased risk of injury or death from a collision or wreck due to no safety restraint system and no exterior framing.

- **Motorized Speed Events (Auto-Racing, Motorcycle Racing, Boat Racing, Drag Racing, Demolition Derbies, and/or Related Events)**

This unauthorized activity includes participation in motorized speed events including but not limited to Auto-Racing, Motorcycle Racing, Boat Racing, Drag Racing, Demolition Derbies, and/or Related Events. Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity because of extremely high rates of speed.

Motorized go-carts are allowed only if they are used at a commercial facility that provides equipment, liability insurance, and proper supervision of cart operation.

- **Fireworks**

This unauthorized activity includes the sale or use of fireworks unless done by a licensed certified fireworks specialist. While fireworks are entertaining to watch and even use,

Trail Life has deemed the personal or group use of fireworks as unauthorized due to the rates of injury, unpredictable nature of personal fireworks, and risk of extreme burns.

- **Water Chugging and Related Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes water or other liquid chugging activities and contests.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extreme risk of hyponatremia, or dilution of the blood sodium level because of too much water, which can result in serious injury or death.

- **Personal Watercraft, Parasailing, and Related Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes the use of personal watercraft and parasailing. Personal watercraft (aka Jet Skis, Sea-Doos, WaveRunners) includes recreational watercraft that the rider stands or sits on rather than inside of, as in a boat. Parasailing includes any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, or other devices that are towed by a motorboat.

Trail Life has deemed these activities as unauthorized due to the risks of serious injury or death due to high speeds and length of falls.

Water skiing, wakeboarding, and kneeboarding are considered "Water Tow Sports" and are authorized.

- **"Big Wall," Lead, Trad Climbing, and Speed Climbing**

This unauthorized activity includes "Big Wall", Lead, Trad, Speed climbing, and Ice or waterfall climbing. Big Wall climbing could involve more than one day and requires living on the route and engaging the use of portaledge or other equipment to sleep and rest. Lead climbing involves a roped party of climbers where only the lead climber is connected to safety equipment such as bolts, the others are attached to him by the rope. Trad (traditional) climbing involves the climber or group of climbers placing and removing their own safety anchors as they go up a rock face. Speed climbing is typically competitive and involves ascending a vertical face as quickly as possible and may include jumping from hold to hold.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with the length of falls and equipment dependency.

- **Class 5 and Grade V or above Outdoor Rock Climbing as Rated by the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS) Scale**

This unauthorized activity includes climbs at Class 5 (difficulty) and Grade V (length) or above. Trail Life has deemed these climbs as unauthorized due to the high risks of severe falls and potential for serious injury.

- **Participating in Rodeo Events**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in either amateur or professional rodeo events as Trail Life activities. Troops are also prohibited from sponsoring rodeo events.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious back, neck, and head injury or death associated with participating in this activity.

Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted.

- **Cannons and Large-Bore Artillery**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in loading or firing cannons and other large-caliber artillery. This is further defined to include "guns, howitzers, artillery pieces, combining the characteristics of a gun, howitzer, mortar, or multiple-launch rocket system, capable of engaging surface targets by delivering primarily indirect fire, with a caliber of 75 millimeters and above." Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to an extremely high risk of serious injury or death due to explosions, shrapnel, or flying projectiles.

- **Varsity, Interscholastic, and/or Club Football, Rugby, or Lacrosse**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in football, rugby, or lacrosse at any level as a Trail Life activity.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of head trauma and/or brain injury. This includes using these sports as Elective Hobbies Trail Badges or Freedom Experiences.

- **Technical Tree-Climbing with Ropes and/or Harnesses**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in technical tree climbing using ropes and/or harnesses to ascend a tree for extended periods of time or to perform work.

Trees are less stable of an environment to connect to and suspend from and include many elements that are not easily perceived that can lead to tree limb breakage, such as hollow limbs, interior rot, insect/animal damage, etc. In the event of a fall, there is a very high likelihood of bodily impalement.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity.

- **Gliding, Hang-Gliding/Paragliding, Ultralights, Paraplanes, or Outdoor Skydiving**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in activities involving the use of non-powered gliders, hang-gliders, parachutes, ultralight aircraft, paraplanes, as well as outdoor skydiving.

Trail Life has deemed these activities as unauthorized due to extremely high risks of serious injury or death inherent with these activities. Due to the length of descent and high rates of speed, accidents and/or crashes carry a high rate of serious injury and/or death.

- **Carrying Firearms on Trail Life Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes the carrying of firearms, including open or concealed by youth and adults, at Trail Life activities and meetings. For further information and qualifying exceptions, please see the Personal Weapons Policy.

Trail Life has deemed this as an unauthorized activity/action outside of the qualifying exception described in the Personal Weapons Policy in order to create a safe and welcoming environment for all families and Charter Organizations and to ensure that any firearms that are carried according to the Personal Weapons Policy are done so with the highest standard of safety and responsibility possible.

- **Youth Trailman use of Power Tools and Motorized Equipment**

This unauthorized activity includes the operation of powered equipment and tools by youth at Trail Life activities and events with the exception of power drills/drivers and power sanders with adult supervision. Trained adults over the age of 18 are the only persons allowed to operate power tools and motorized equipment. This includes but is not limited to chainsaws, log splitters, wood chippers, drill presses, nailers, and power saws of all types. Troops that have properly trained adults can train and

allow certain Trailmen to operate a power drill/driver or power sander. These Trailmen must be supervised by trained adults when using these two types of power tools.

While many youth have know-how and have used power tools, Trail Life has deemed the use of these types of tools as unauthorized due to the high risk of serious bodily injury associated with mis-handling of these tools.

- **Backcountry or Out-of-bounds Winter Sports**

This unauthorized activity includes all forms of backcountry or out-of-bounds winter sports including skiing (downhill or cross country), snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. Backcountry is defined as unmarked or unpatrolled areas either inside or outside a ski resort's boundaries. See listings in the activity guide for authorized forms of these activities and their specific guidelines.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to extremely high risks such as getting lost, getting caught in a snowstorm, being caught in or triggering an avalanche, and being injured far from assistance.

- **Moving Water activities classified above a Class IV by the American Whitewater Association**

This unauthorized activity includes rafting, canoeing, kayaking or similar activities on moving water above Class IV according to the American Whitewater Association. See listings in the activity guide for authorized forms of these activities and their specific guidelines.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to extremely high risks associated with these activities including drowning or other serious situations requiring rescue or life-threatening injury.

- **Moving Water/Whitewater Tubing or Powerboat Tubing**

This unauthorized activity includes float tubing on open moving water above a Class II according to the American Whitewater Association as well as riding on tubes that are being pulled behind powerboats.

Trail Life has deemed these two types of tubing activities as unauthorized due to the lack of ability to control and steer the tube when floating through larger rapids or being pulled behind a powerboat.

The lack of the individual to control the direction and speed in which they are going can result in a high risk of injury or drowning.

## Long-Distance, Longer Duration, and International Trips

Your Charter Organization and Trail Life USA Home Office must receive advance notification of any trip that will exceed the 400-mile radius of your Troop meeting place or which lasts longer than 72 hours. Submit event information through the TLC system at least 4 weeks prior to trip departure.

Those traveling to destinations outside of the United States must secure approval from the Charter Organization and the Trail Life Home Office three months prior to your trip through the TLC system. Additional requirements may be necessary based on your destination. Contact Trail Life Home Office for more details at [Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com](mailto:Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com).

## Troop Contact Person

It is critical to appoint a Troop Contact Person (an individual not taking part in the activity) to be your "back home" contact. This person should be available in the case of an emergency or change of plans. He/She would contact Troop parents if necessary. You are required to enter your Troop Contact Person in the TLC system for an event so they have access to the roster and itinerary information.

## When Advance Trail Life Home Office Notification is Required

Insurance company representatives place controls on insurance coverage of certain program activities. We ask for your cooperation. Please contact the Trail Life Home Office at [Insurance@TrailLifeUSA.com](mailto:Insurance@TrailLifeUSA.com) under the following circumstances:

- If you are planning to rent or lease a vehicle (bus, van, car, boat, etc.)
- If you are asked to sign a building reservation or use agreement
- If you are planning an activity to which the public is being invited
- If you are planning any trip that will exceed the 400-mile radius of your Troop meeting place (4 weeks in advance)

- If you are planning any trip that will last longer than 72 hours (4 weeks in advance)
- If you are planning an international trip (3 months in advance)

### **Certificate of Insurance**

If you are planning to participate in an event or activity that requires a Certificate of Insurance. Use the Certificate of Insurance request form on Trail Life Connect.

### **Vehicle Transportation**

Drivers for Troop activities must provide vehicle, auto insurance, seatbelt, and driver's license information to their Troop. This information must be kept current and reviewed by Troop leadership on an annual basis. Troop leaders must sign and acknowledge adherence to all Transportation Policies for each event within the Event management system in TLC.

### **Driver Age Restrictions**

Drivers of any allowed vehicle must be at least 21 years old except for drivers of 12-15 passenger vans, which require a driver who is at least 25 years old (see further information on use of Passenger Vans).

Regarding drivers over age 71:

- The decision to allow a driver over age 71 (or any driver) is best determined at the local level by the Charter Organization's policy and/or evaluation. If the Charter Organization approves an older driver transporting youth, then the Home Office will not interfere with that determination unless additional information comes to light creating reasonable doubts about their ability to safely transport youth, in which case the Home Office would be compelled to act if the Charter Organization did not, just as the Home Office would for any member of any age in that circumstance.



### **IMPORTANT**

#### **License Requirements**

All drivers must have a valid driver's license.

### **Auto Insurance**

Trail Life requires drivers to adhere to the following requirements for public liability insurance on vehicles used to transport members to activities or on trips. Drivers must maintain the following coverage unless your state or Charter Organization requires a higher standard:

- Passenger Cars, Minivans (<10 seats):
  - \$100,000/\$300,000 public liability per accident
  - \$50,000 property damage
- Passenger Van/Bus (10 or more seats):
  - \$100,000/\$300,000 public liability per accident
  - \$50,000 property damage
  - \$1,000,000 liability limit per accident is recommended

The automobile insurance purchased by Trail Life USA is for liability in excess of a volunteer's personal insurance for losses arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle while engaged in an official Trail Life USA activity. In no instance will the Trail Life USA automobile insurance provide physical damage coverage for damage to a volunteer's motor vehicle.



## Driving Record

It is Trail Life USA policy that if an adult driver has any of the following violations in the last three years (except where otherwise noted), that driver may not transport youth or adult members on any Troop activity:

- Driving under the influence
- Reckless operation
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Two or more moving violations within the last 12 months
- More than three moving violations
- More than two accidents in the past three years
- More than one accident in any one year
- Speeding over 80 miles per hour or 21 miles per hour over the posted speed limit
- Operating a motor vehicle during a time of suspension or revocation
- Operating a motor vehicle without a license
- Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle



### IMPORTANT

Trail Life USA, Charter Organizations, and/or Trail Life Troops reserve the right to deny a driver based on automobile safety or driving record or for any reason at all. The driver's motor vehicle record may be randomly checked.

## Driving Guidelines

- Cautious driving must be practiced, even on short trips. Drivers must utilize reasonable travel speed in accordance with local laws, road conditions, and weather conditions.
- Driving time by any individual driver is limited to 8 hours in an 18-hour period, and must be interrupted by frequent rests and food stops. Extended driving after dusk is very dangerous and strongly discouraged—take an additional day to keep a trip safe.
- All activities that distract the driver's attention are strongly discouraged (i.e. cell phone, eating). **Texting while driving is prohibited.**
- Vehicle must have seat belts for all passengers, which must be worn by all individuals during travel. Youth should wear lap and shoulder belts in every seating position in a motor vehicle. Note: Laws provide a minimum requirement, but may not always reflect best practices. See AAA's safety seat guide for more information.
- The vehicle must be inspected by its owner and be in good condition as to the brakes, steering, lights, tires, proper registration, etc. Particular attention should be paid to proper tire inflation.
- Vehicles should each have a Basic First Aid kit, and at least one of the vehicles in a group should have a more advanced First Aid kit as outlined in the [First Aid section \[33\]](#).
- Trucks may only transport youth in the cab. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to ride in the bed of a pickup truck or sit on the sides of a moving vehicle. The lone exception to this would be Trailmen riding on a float (described elsewhere).
- All vehicles must have at least one charged cell phone in case of emergency.
- Youth under 13 years of age should be properly restrained in the back seat, unless local laws are more restrictive, in which case the local law prevails.
- Appropriate Youth/Leader ratios and no "one-on-one" policies apply during transportation. In anticipation of stops where two-deep leadership will be required, it is recommended that supervision during transport in excess of three (3) hours should include at least two Registered Adult Leaders.

- The Charter Organization and Trail Life must approve the type of vehicle if it is other than a privately insured car or van (i.e. bus, airplane or other vehicle), at least four weeks prior to your activity. Troops should contact the Trail Life Home Office for approval.

## Using Passenger Vans

- The use of 12-15 passenger vans manufactured before 2010 is not allowed in connection with Trail Life programs and activities. The use of pre-2010 12-15 passenger vans could result in loss of Trail Life USA insurance coverage that would be available otherwise in the event of an accident.
- Any 2010 or later 12-15 passenger van may be used if it is equipped with Electronic Stability Control and seat belts for all passengers including the driver, who must be at least 25 years old. This applies to all 12-15 passenger vehicles, regardless of ownership.
- If a vehicle is designed to carry 12 or more passengers, the driver must have a commercial driver's license (CDL). In cases where local or state laws are more stringent, the local law prevails. Charter Organizations may request a Waiver to this CDL requirement by applying at this [link](#).

## Camping with AHG Troops

As stated in the Memorandum of Ministry Alliance, American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA agree to support one another in a mutually beneficial relationship as they separately minister to girls and boys, respectively, as God has called them to do. There are Biblical reasons for this distinctive focus for boys and girls. There are also Biblical reasons for interaction, including development of a proper understanding, appreciation, and honor of the opposite sex. Our shared Christ-centered values can guide both experiences of interaction between the sexes and our normal ministry to boys and girls separately. Because of this understanding, American Heritage Girls and Trail Life USA agree to the following.

- Each American Heritage Girls (AHG) Troop would typically camp by itself or with other AHG Troops, and each Trail Life USA (TLUSA) Troop would typically camp by itself or with other TLUSA Troops. For purposes of this policy, "camping" will include tent camping, cabin camping, hammock camping, camping under the stars, and/or any other overnight activity.
- Interactive camping involving both AHG and TLUSA Troops will be encouraged as an occasional and purposefully coordinated experience. "Joint" camping with both AHG and TLUSA Troops must be designed and executed to advance specific Christian virtues of mutual value, such as honor, purity, respect, cooperation, service, and fellowship.
- Joint AHG-TLUSA camping must comply with all of the following parameters:
  - There must be one registered AHG leader specifically designated with oversight authority and one registered TLUSA leader specifically designated with oversight authority at the camp at all times. These oversight leaders will assure the Christian purposes of the camp will be pursued, and will resolve any conflicts, questions, or other issues during the camp. If a conflict, question, or issue arises, an AHG troop leader will consult the AHG leader designed for this purpose of oversight. Similarly, TLUSA troop leaders will consult the TLUSA leader responsible for oversight. These oversight leaders may also expel any person or Troop of their respective programs for violating camp rules.
  - During the camp, there must be at least two actively engaged Registered Adult leaders for each AHG and TLUSA Troop, maintaining two-deep AHG as well as two-deep TLUSA leadership at all times. For the participation of younger AHG and TLUSA youth, namely AHG Tenderhearts and Pathfinders as well as TLUSA Woodland Foxes, the guidelines existing in the applicable AHG or TLUSA camping policies will continue to apply in a Joint Camping scenario.
  - No one (adult, boy, or girl) may camp who is not registered with AHG or TLUSA. Invited guest speakers, prospective members, trainers, staff, or media may be on site during specific times for specific purposes, as determined and monitored by the oversight leaders, but they may not camp overnight with any AHG or TLUSA units unless registered with AHG or TLUSA. While this parameter is different from Trail Life USA's Troop Camping Policy which allows for unregistered parents to camp with their Trail Life USA member sons, Trail Life USA Troops will adhere to this more restrictive policy when engaging in a joint camping venture with an AHG Troop.
  - Boys and girls may engage in all activities together, with direct adult supervision, except as limited below.

- Boys and girls must not be alone together. All boys and girls must be observable at all times and will typically function as teams within their Troops, patrols, or ad hoc camp activity units.
- Boys and girls must not touch each other in any inappropriate or questionable manner.
- Boys and girls must not haze, harass, intimidate, stalk, objectify, entice, or tease each other. Boys and girls must treat each other with respect, compassion, and honor at all times.
- Boys and girls must have separate and concealed bathroom and shower areas, or if only one such area is available, then specific times for separate use will be scheduled and monitored by adult leaders. No one may enter the bathroom and shower area of the opposite sex or at a time scheduled for use by the opposite sex.
- Boys and girls must be housed/sleep in separate campsites, with their respective gender-specific Troops. Boys and girls must never share (or be in) the same tent, cabin, tarp, or other sleeping area, and must not be able to see each other from their respective sleeping quarters. Boys and girls must not enter the sleeping area (campsite) of the opposite sex, but must remain with their own Troops during all hours. Sleeping areas must be supervised by adults. No youth will sleep alone in tents or have hammocks, sleeping bags, or any other bedding materials set up away from the rest of the Troop.
- Boys and girls must dress appropriately, in uniform or as otherwise determined by their Troop leaders. Boys and girls must never dress or undress within view of each other. Boys and girls must wear modest clothes, including modest swimwear. Generally swimming is discouraged as a joint activity, unless closely monitored by adult leaders, but other water activities may be engaged, such as canoeing or kayaking or water rescue skills. Boys must not be bare-chested but instead must wear t-shirts, and wear swimming trunks or shorts that are at least mid-thigh in length and surround the waist. Girls must wear modest swimming suits, with no midriff visible and minimal exposure of cleavage or buttocks. No camper or leader shall wear bikinis, thongs, Speedos, or similarly revealing swimwear.

## Family Camping Policy

While Trail Life USA puts a high value on family activity, our core elements such as our vision, mission, membership standards, and our program itself are specifically designed to be delivered in a boy-focused outdoor Troop setting of men and boys. This is where we best address the unique needs and critical development issues of boys. Many join our organization precisely because it is one of a few remaining male-focused opportunities and has a Core Value of “Male-Centered Adult Leadership.”

Alternately, family camping is geared towards family fun and fellowship. It also includes non-members (sisters, non-member brothers, non-registered or non-blood family members, etc.).

We believe there is tremendous benefit in families camping together (sharing time in the outdoors enhances relationships and builds memories!). However, family camping does not benefit from the covering of Trail Life USA is not recognized as an official Trail Life USA activity.

## ADDRESSING ABUSE AND INCIDENTS

### Educating Youth on Abuse Awareness

Adults are required to support and help youth members adhere to the teaching and instruction they are given in The Trailman’s Handbook for Navigators and Adventurers:

*“Your mind, your body and your soul are three things over which you have certain rights that other people cannot take away. A doctor may need to examine you in a very personal and private way, but if it makes you feel uncomfortable tell your parents or ask one of them to be with you during the examination. People may say things to you about ideas with which you don’t agree. If people go beyond what you think or have been taught is reasonable, or if they ask you to see, read or do things that make you feel uncomfortable—whether it’s a physical act or a spiritual one—you have the right to refuse it, and that is precisely what you should do. If they offer you alcohol, illegal drugs, or ask you to help them steal something, or they touch you or ask you to touch them in inappropriate ways, go find someone you trust and tell them. Tell them more than once if you have to, or tell other trusted adults. If you can’t get through to them, find someone else until you are believed.”*

*How do you know if something is wrong? One of the best things to do is to look for God's direction. It is that gut feeling based on reason, love, and developing your conscience by studying moral issues and the Bible's teaching on them. The more you develop your conscience, the easier it will be to know what the right thing to do is.*

*Adults should know better than to ask young people to perform sexual acts, disobey the law, or violate their religious principles. It is never your fault if someone asks you to do something wrong, even if they say it is. "Say NO, then GO, and TELL."*

## **Youth-on-Youth Abuse**

In a culture that seems more and more permissive, this issue is of high concern to parents engaging their sons in a program such as Trail Life. And rightfully so.

Be aware of warning signs regarding youth who may potentially abuse other youth. Warning signs include:

- Sexual knowledge or behavior more advanced than typical for his age
- Early sexual behaviors/acting out, sexual abuse, or early exposure to pornography
- Over-sexualization during childhood adolescence
- Stimulating, exciting, arousing contact with other children
- Children and teens engaging in sexual activity or sexual talk with each other, including sexual jokes
- Consistently engaging in inappropriate activity or violation of social boundaries



### **IMPORTANT**

Regarding youth-on-youth abuse, any sexual contact with a youth – regardless of who the other person is or how old they are – is wrong and should be reported.

## **Bullying**

Bullying of or by youth or adults is strictly prohibited and is usually characterized by the following factors:

- Some kind of imbalance of power, which can be physical, intellectual, emotional, related to abilities, or to social characteristics such as popularity.
- The person doing the bullying has an intent to cause emotional or physical harm.
- The bullying is repeated, whether across multiple victims, or across a span of time.
- There are unequal levels of effect in the conflict, with the victim experiencing trauma and the bully showing a lack of concern or blaming the victim.
- Bullying may include physical actions (tripping, pushing, damaging property); verbal choices (teasing, threats, abusive language); indirect approaches (telling lies, spreading rumors, ignoring and isolating the victim); or sexual harassment (sexually explicit language or sexual behavior or threats).
- Bullying can cross the line into abuse when there is physical injury, harassment to the point of emotional abuse, or sexual behavior that is abusive.
- Bullying can also include cyberbullying.

## **Incident Reporting**

Incidents that require reporting to Trail Life USA include any incident, accident, or situation that occurred at a Trail Life event AND: involved Trail Life members or guests; involved law enforcement; violated Trail Life policies; generated or may generate media coverage; resulted in an insurance claim (liability or accident/sickness); or resulted in legal charges.

This includes but is not limited to the following pertaining to a Trail Life event:

- Any youth protection incident (See [Mandatory Reporting \[30\]](#))
- Any incident involving abusive bullying (See [Bullying \[28\]](#))
- Any injury or illness that required EMS care
- Any injury or illness that results in hospitalization
- Any incident/occurrence of a missing Trail Life participant
- Knowledge that a Trail Life member was arrested
- Any incident generating media coverage or possible future media coverage (See [Media \[30\]](#))
- Any incident/occurrence of an encounter with a suspicious or seemingly dangerous stranger



### IMPORTANT

In addition to any required reports to law enforcement or other agencies, an Incident Report Form should be filed within Trail Life Connect and sent to the Charter Organization (through TML and/or SML) as soon as possible, certainly within 24 hours.

## Procedures Regarding Suspicion or Awareness of Abuse



### IMPORTANT

**NOBODY IS ABOVE THE RULES – ALL SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR OR VIOLATIONS OF POLICIES MUST BE IMMEDIATELY DOCUMENTED AND REPORTED.**

You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in “good faith.” Good faith means that you: (1) are acting based on reasonable suspicion; and (2) took reasonable steps to ascertain the readily available facts about the situation; and (3) are not trying to injure or violate the rights of someone else. You do not need proof or evidence that an incident occurred, and you should report if you have reasonable belief and good faith.

In the event that an act of child abuse is witnessed, reported, known, or reasonably suspected, the following procedures are to be followed:

- Remove the youth member from immediate danger and provide medical attention or get medical assistance if needed.
- If child abuse was witnessed, promptly remove (and if possible, detain) and report offenders to the local social services department and/or police immediately and to Trail Life USA at [Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com](mailto:Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com) as soon as possible, advising them of the situation and any and all action taken.
- Control your emotions, give support, and gather information about the incident.
- Immediately contact the appropriate social service agency and/or police as outlined in the Mandatory Reporting Policy with the following information (If unsure as to which police agency, call the **National Child Abuse HOTLINE: 1-800-422-4453**):
  - name and address of youth member(s)
  - age
  - parent’s/guardian’s name and phone number
  - nature and extent of abuse
  - identity, address, and contact information for the abuser(s), if any are known or suspected
  - any other information which would be helpful in investigating the situation

- If the suspected abuser is NOT the parent or guardian, notification should be made to parents/guardians.
- It is the responsibility of the registered adult member to file an Incident Report Form for all abuse incidents or suspicions with the Trail Life Home Office as soon as possible – even if information is incomplete. The Incident Report Form can be found on Trail Life Connect in the Documents folder.



### TIP

If you have a doubt about a policy, the best time to ask is during planning - not once the event or trip is over. Your first point of contact is your Area Team, but if you fail to get your question answered, do not hesitate to reach out to your Home Office staff at (321) 247-7761.

## Media Inquiries of Abuse Reports

All media inquiries regarding an incident occurring during a Trail Life event must be directed to the Trail Life Home Office at [Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com](mailto:Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com). Under no circumstances should a Trail Life volunteer speak on behalf of Trail Life USA.

## Trail Life Mandatory Reporting Policy



### NOTE

This policy is included as part of the Charter Organization Ministry Agreement which is reviewed and signed annually by the Senior Ministry Leader.

The following Mandatory Reporting advisories apply to Abuse (as defined below) by both adults and youth-on-youth.

Regardless of whether observed directly, heard second-hand, or discovered by whatever means, Trail Life USA requires the Charter Organization and adult leaders to comply with applicable state law in reporting abuse (as defined below):

1. to applicable law enforcement and/or an applicable child protective services agency; and
  2. also to Trail Life USA consistent with guidelines and policies established by Trail Life USA. Trail Life USA's policies require reports internally and externally when there is knowledge or reasonable suspicion that:
    - a. any Trail Life USA youth member is being or has been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused or neglected or has been (whether in person, online, or through communication devices) exposed to sexual exploitation, child pornography, solicitation or enticement, or obscene material ("abuse") or
    - b. any Trail Life USA youth member, young adult, or adult member has committed abuse against a minor, regardless of the victim's connection or lack thereof to a Trail Life USA Troop.
- Except as may be exempt by law (e.g., covered by state confidentiality laws), Trail Life USA also requires a report to Trail Life USA of any violations of Trail Life USA Child Safety and Youth Protection Policies or other policies and guidelines established by Trail Life USA.
  - Trail Life USA requires that the Charter Organization and adult leaders report to Trail Life USA any knowledge or reasonable suspicion that any member of Trail Life USA has threatened suicide, self-

inflicted bodily harm, or imminent harm against others. A report to law enforcement and/or child protective services may also be required by state law or may be advisable.



### IMPORTANT

Reporting to Trail Life occurs by completing the Incident Report Form found in Trail Life Connect and emailing it to [Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com](mailto:Legal@TrailLifeUSA.com). This form can be found in the National Resources as well as attached to every event on your Troop's calendar.

- The Charter Organization and adult leaders acknowledge and understand that they may be subject to mandatory reporting requirements under the laws of their state and/or federal law, and that failure to report abuse or threatened harm may constitute a criminal violation of applicable laws.
- The Charter Organization's and adult leaders' reporting of abuse and threatened harm shall comply with all applicable state laws. Information available here: (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/system-wide/laws-policies/state/>).



### IMPORTANT

Nothing herein or in any Trail Life USA policy or guideline affects or excuses any mandatory reporting required by applicable law, and nothing herein or in any Trail Life USA policy or guideline shall require a person to violate state law or disclose any information not permitted to be disclosed by state confidentiality laws.

## HEALTH & MEDICAL

### Certification Requirements

Trail Life requires that at least one adult per Troop must be certified in CPR, AED, and First Aid and present at all Troop activities. Approved courses must include skill practice with CPR dummies as well as a teaching AED. Courses must include instruction in Adult, Child, and Infant CPR and choking as well as AED usage for Adults and Children.

Troops are highly encouraged to have multiple adult leaders who are CPR, AED, and First Aid certified present at all Troop and patrol activities. This will help ensure a quick response time in an emergency situation.

### The Health and Safety Lead



### TIP

It is strongly recommended that the Troop appoint a Health and Safety Lead (HSL).

This designated adult leader, certified in CPR and First Aid, is responsible for the health and safety at an activity, meeting, or event. A Registered Adult with a medical background (such as a MD, RN, PA, Paramedic, or EMT) is ideal for this position. This could be a leader engaged in another role during the event as long as he is available as needed to fulfill these additional duties. This designation may change at each event depending on availability.

Members attending should know who the HSL is for the event. This could be accomplished in a variety of ways including displaying a first aid flag at their location or having them wear a brightly colored hat.

The HSL should be consulted in case of injury, illness, or medication distribution at events and should be capable of assessing injuries and determining if additional medical care is required. They are knowledgeable in all Trail Life USA policies regarding health and safety and review member Health Forms in advance of an event and keep other leaders aware of health conditions of members that may impact the event or other members.

They are the keeper of the First Aid kit, medications, allergy list, and health forms during the event.

## Health and Medical Considerations

- Every Troop leader, Navigators Trailman, and Adventurers Trailman should each have and familiarize themselves with the [Trail Life First Aid Guide \[32\]](#) .
- Information about member allergies should be indicated on the Medical Forms, and should also be indicated on a master list of all Troop Members' allergies (food, animal, environmental, medication, etc.) that the troop creates, maintains, and brings to each activity for planning and quick reference in an emergency.
- For backcountry adventures, ensure that the Troop or patrol has adequately prepared for and is properly trained for remote first aid delivery, potential evacuation, and/or sheltering-in-place for an extended time. Wilderness First Aid training is highly recommended. Contact your area team for information about local opportunities for this training.
- When administering any first aid, Adult Leaders should adhere to current [Standard Precautions](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control to reduce the spread of infection including but not limited to:
  - Hand hygiene
  - Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks)
  - Safe injection practices
  - Safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces
  - Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.

## Trail Life First Aid Guide

Trail Life's First Aid Guide is a handy, field-ready booklet that Trailmen can pack in a pocket, backpack, or daypack. The First Aid Guide provides easy-to-read basic instructions on what to do for various traumas, injuries, splinting, poisons, and other general safety measures.

The guide is made from a unique lightweight, waterproof, and durable material that makes it perfect for using on the trail, in a canoe, or on top of a mountain.



The Trail Life First Aid Guide is available in the Trail Life store [here](#).



### TIP

Every Trailman would benefit from carrying one on every adventure. This guide is also perfect for adults and is a great resource to keep in the car, office, and home in case of an emergency.



## Medical Exam

Participation in all activities, including meetings, is contingent upon the completion and submission of a Trail Life USA Health Form with information that is current for the program year. Participation in some activities is contingent upon completion of the Medical Exam Form by a medical professional based upon an evaluation within the most recent 12 months..

Additionally, Troop leaders concerned about participation by a member in a planned activity can require completion of the Medical Exam Form, if desired, as part of their risk management plan. Some activities that do not normally require a Medical Exam Form (such as hiking) may be dangerous for some people depending on their physical fitness level and medical history. Leaders who feel there is a risk from the activity should not hesitate to request that one or more participants provide proof of having had a medical exam confirming their fitness for the event.

## Medical Forms



### IMPORTANT

MEDICAL FORMS ARE REQUIRED ANNUALLY!

Each youth Trailman and Registered Adult is required to complete a Trail Life Health Form at the beginning of each Troop's program year, and in the case that significant changes in health condition or medications occur.. It should be filed with the appropriate adult leader.

It is recommended that all guests and attending unregistered parents attending anything beyond a normal Troop meeting complete a Trail Life Health Form and submit it to the appropriate adult leader.

The Trail Life Health Form is where parents record all medications that the Trailman is currently taking and is allowed to take, whether over-the-counter or physician-prescribed. The parent must provide written instructions specifying the name of each medication, the amount to be given, the times or frequency with which it may be taken, and the reason for its administration.

## First Aid Kits



### IMPORTANT

First Aid Kits are essential for Trail Life Activities. There are different types of first aid kits. Troops should have or assemble them based on contemplated risks from the Troop's planned activities

### First Aid Kits: Troop

- Each Troop must have and maintain at least one general Troop first aid kit that must be available at every Troop meeting, campout, or other outing. This kit should be adequately sized and equipped to handle the capacity of your Troop and may be tailored to address known Troop medical concerns or to address specialized local first aid issues. Various lists of first aid kit supplies can be found from the [Red Cross](#), [Mayo Clinic](#), [REI](#), and many other online sources.

### First Aid Kits: Personal

- It is recommended that each Navigators Trailman, Adventurers Trailman, and adult leader have a personal first aid kit that they carry for themselves on outings. The Trail Life [First Aid Guide](#) gives a list of recommended items to carry in a personal first aid kit.

#### First Aid Kits: Specialized

- Certain Troop activities or adventures will require more specialized first aid kits. Troop and Patrol Leaders should review each activity or adventure and assess any additional items that should be included in the Troop or patrol's first aid kit. Recommendations can be found at [Backpacker.com](#), [the American Alpine Institute](#), [Adventuremedicalkits.com](#), and many other online locations. Troop leaders should also refer to the [Shooting Sports Guidebook](#) for an explanation of the items to include in the Shooting Range Kit.
- All first aid kits should be assembled ahead of time, and prepared and current for any outing or meeting. Every first aid kit must be updated on an annual basis to ensure all contents are fully stocked and any expired items removed.

## Medications Guidelines

### Medications Guidelines: Administration of Medication

Trail Life members are discouraged from taking medication at Trail Life gatherings unless absolutely necessary. Trail Life policy does not mandate nor encourage that registered adult leaders dispense medication. Ideally, a CPR and First-Aid Certified adult/leader with knowledge of medication should be deemed as the Health and Safety Lead for each Trail Life activity. This adult leader is the only person besides parents or guardians allowed to administer medication to youth Trailmen. All medications must be administered according to the prescribed guidelines for each medication and each Trailman. Medications should not be dispensed if contraindications are present. If the Health and Safety Lead is uncomfortable administering certain medications, efforts should be made with that Trailman's parents or guardians to make it possible for that Trailman to still participate.

No Trail Life youth member is allowed to self-medicate while participating in a Trail Life event. The only exceptions include emergency use medications such as by an inhaler, insulin syringe, or epi-pen, provided that the Trailman understands its proper use. Parents must indicate on the Health Form in writing that the youth is in possession of such medication and possesses the knowledge and ability to administer it to himself. The Troop Health and Safety Lead should be made aware of any Trailman with emergency use medication and should understand the proper usage of each.

### Medications Guidelines: Over-the-Counter Medications

Over-the-counter medications are only "prescribed" by parents and guardians of youth Trailmen and must be recorded on that Trailman's Trail Life Health Form. You can find this form in Trail Life Connect under the Documents folder.

If circumstances require that the Trail Life member must receive over-the-counter medication at a Trail Life event, the Troop's Health and Safety Lead (or other designated leader) will review the Trailman's Health Form and may only administer medication that is approved by the Trailman's parents. These medications must be in their original packaging, placed in a zippered plastic bag, clearly and permanently marked with the youth's name, and kept in the possession of the Health and Safety Lead for the duration of the event

The Troop has the right to limit the duration of parent-prescribed medications and/or to require a physician statement for continued use of any medication beyond a specified time period.

Troops may want to include some over-the-counter medications in their first-aid kit. These medications may only be given to youth Trailmen if they are listed on the Trailman's Health Form and approved by the parent or guardian.

Some common over-the-counter medications to include in a Troop first aid kit are:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Anti-Diarrheal (Kaopectate, Pepto-Bismol)
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Calamine Lotion
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)



### **IMPORTANT**

**No Trail Life youth member may bring over-the-counter medications for self-administration.**

## **Medications Guidelines: Physician-Prescribed Medications**

Physician-prescribed medications must arrive in their original packaging. The name on the bottle must match the name of the youth who is to receive the medication. Medication will be given only to the youth whose name is on the prescription bottle and may not be shared, even among siblings.

The parent or guardian should provide a written request that Trail Life leaders comply with the physician's order by signing the boy's Health Form. Medications should not be dispensed if contraindications are present.

Possible reactions to medications should be noted. Any necessary emergency response should be outlined by the physician, either directly on the form or as an attachment describing the appropriate treatment.

## **Medications Guidelines: Storage, Security, and Records of Medication**

Storage and Security:

- All medications (prescription and over-the-counter) for each Trailman must remain in their original labeled container from the pharmacy or drugstore and must be kept by the designated Troop Health and Safety lead in a locked area. If the medications must be kept cool, the Trailman's parents should provide a cooler or thermos and if necessary sufficient ice to maintain the desired temperature range.
- Emergency use medication should be kept on the youth Trailman's person if he understands its proper use and administration. If the Trailman does not understand those things, the Troop Health and Safety lead should hold onto and store the emergency use medication where it can be accessed readily.
- Both Trailmen and parents must be informed at the beginning of each Trail Life activity of the identity of the Health and Safety Lead as well as contact information.

Records:

- The Troop Health and Safety lead must complete the Troop's medication log each time any medication (prescribed or over-the-counter) is administered. This log should become part of the Troop's permanent records.
- All medical information is considered confidential and should be shared only with adults who are responsible for the health care of the Troop. All medication (excluding emergency use meds: epi-pens, inhalers, etc.), medication logs, Health Forms, and Incident Report Forms should be kept in a locked area when not being used. The Troop will retain all Health Forms as a permanent part of the member's record, for at least seven years.

## ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO, AND PERSONAL WEAPONS

### Alcohol, Drug, Tobacco, and Vaping Policy

The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, and e-cigarette (vaping) products has been proven to be a significant health hazard and is not permitted at any Trail Life function or activity.

Since Registered Adults and leaders serve as examples for the youth members, smoking and vaping is not allowed in the presence of youth at Trail Life activities or events. Use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and e-cigarettes by a Trail Life Adult Member during a Trail Life event should be referred to the Charter Organization and Trail Life Home Office for consideration. Use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or e-cigarettes by a Trail Life youth member should be reported to the youth's parents.

### Controlled Substances

Persons under the influence of controlled substances (including, but not limited to marijuana – even if medically prescribed or legal) or alcohol or in possession of the same are prohibited from participation in any Trail Life activity or program.

### Personal Weapons Policy

#### Personal Weapons Policy: Concealed Weapons

Trail Life USA respects the rights of individuals to keep and bear arms. In order to honor this God-given/ Constitutionally protected freedom, promote responsible weapons handling, and safeguard the organization, Trail Life USA has set forth five requirements that must be met by each individual wanting to carry concealed weapons at Trail Life USA events. These requirements must be completed and submitted to the Trail Life USA Home Office via the online request form in order to receive authorization to carry concealed weapons during Trail Life USA activities.

Persons using or possessing concealed weapons must comply with all local, state and federal laws regarding the possession of concealed weapons.

Requests for concealed carry authorization require:

1. Written permission, on official letterhead, by the Charter Organization signed by the Senior Ministry Leader (SML); (or the Troop Ministry Liaison (TML) if he can legally sign documents representing the Charter Organization).
2. A copy of any legally required license or permit to carry a concealed firearm; (Active and Retired Law Enforcement Officers will need to submit their Law Enforcement ID's and/or certifications as pursuant to HR 218/LEOSA § 926B & 926C).
3. Written statement by the requesting individual committing that weapons will be concealed and not be a source of distraction or disruption at Trail Life USA meetings and events;
4. A signed copy of the Concealed Weapons Hold Harmless Agreement; (See 31545 TLUSA Personal Weapons Policy doc on TLC)
5. Proof of liability insurance coverage, with limits of liability commensurate with USCCA recommendations which covers any subsequent legal issues that may arise due to the use of a concealed firearm. This is to protect the individual, the Charter Organization, and Trail Life USA from issues that may arise upon the use of a concealed weapon.

To request authorization from Trail Life USA, please complete the online request form at <https://podio.com/webforms/18538608/1309026>.

#### Personal Weapons Policy: Open Carry

To promote responsible weapons handling, open carry of weapons is not allowed during Trail Life USA normal activities. However, there are two specific circumstances where Trail Life USA will waive this restriction and allow Troop Leadership to openly carry a firearm:

- An approved Shooting Sports event where all Shooting Sports guidelines are followed. Open carry in this circumstance is only for the purpose of Shooting Sports activities and all Shooting Sports guidelines and supervision is required as stated in the Trail Life USA Shooting Sports Guidebook.
- Backcountry remote activities where life-threatening predators and wildlife (ex. grizzly bear, brown bear, moose, cougar, etc.) are active. Open carry in this circumstance is only for the purpose of personal protection from life-threatening predators and wildlife.

Both of these situations will be governed by the authorization and safety protocols explained in the Trail Life USA Shooting Sports Guide. In following our Shooting Sports Guidelines, Trail Life USA does not require that individuals have liability insurance to openly carry a firearm during either of these two circumstances.

Persons openly carrying weapons under these circumstances must comply with all local, state and federal laws regarding the possession of openly carried or concealed weapons.

More information and an FAQ can be found in the Personal Weapons Policy doc online on TLC.

## WEATHER/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Weather Hazards

Weather can prove to be a hazard in any situation, but with some planning and awareness, serious threats to health and safety can typically be avoided.

It is important to be aware of local weather forecasts. While this is especially important when planning an outdoor activity, leaders should pay attention to weather and environmental conditions at every Troop gathering. Equipment or plans may need to change depending on the forecast – even potentially resulting in the postponement or cancellation of an activity or meeting.



### IMPORTANT

SAFETY IS ALWAYS PRIMARY.

It is also helpful to utilize a weather radio or an app, especially during times of year when dangerous weather patterns are more common. Being aware of the approach of hazardous weather can allow for important emergency procedures to be implemented. It is also important to understand and obey area emergency siren systems. Education of participants--including youth--and early notification can be key to minimizing threats to health and safety.

### Lightning

Lightning is a fairly common occurrence and can be extremely dangerous. Places to avoid during a lightning storm include:

- Summits, or places that are the highest location around. If found in this situation, quickly descend to a lower elevation, away from the approaching storm.
- Beside isolated or tallest trees. If found in this situation, try to move quickly to a group of lower trees or assume the lightning position (Crouch, with your feet close together and your bottom off the ground. Do not place your hands on the ground. If you have access to insulating material (such as a sleeping pad, or backpack), crouch on it. Avoid the temptation to crouch together during a storm. Participants should spread out, 15-20 feet apart. Be sure that group members are visible and that spreading out does not put anyone into a danger zone.
- An open field, where you are the tallest object. If found in this situation, try to find a low-lying area or assume the lightning position.

- If you are on/in water, immediately return to shore.

If a building or a car is available, immediately retreat to this shelter. Dense forests, located in a depression can be a good place to wait out a storm. If the storm is less than six miles away (or the time between thunder and lightning is less than 30 seconds) assume the lightning position.

## Tornado

If a warning is issued, head for a protected area immediately. Find a safe place; stay low, covering your neck and head.

Some safe places include:

- Storm shelter/basements
- Caves/tunnels
- Interior corridors/hallways/bathrooms
- Reinforced concrete buildings
- On a floor, while lying beside heavy furniture

Places to avoid include:

- House trailer
- Tents
- Gymnasiums
- Indoors, near windows
- Attics with steep roofs



### TIP

If shelter is unavailable, move away from the tornado's path at a right angle. If movement is not possible, lie flat in a ditch and protect your head.

## Winter Storms

When traveling in winter, ensure that you have sufficient supplies of food, water, sleeping bags, blankets, flashlights, batteries, etc. Be sure to pack a shovel and some cat litter in your car, in case your vehicle gets stuck in deep snow or ice. If you live in a part of snow country where tire chains are allowed, be sure to keep a set in the trunk. Plan places along your route to stop if the weather conditions decline rapidly.

## Earthquakes

- The greatest danger in an earthquake is from falling debris.
- If outdoors, head for a clear area, avoiding buildings, power lines, utility poles, etc.
- If indoors, stand in a doorway, or lie under a heavy piece of furniture. Stay away from windows.

## Flash Floods

- During heavy rains, avoid natural streambeds and narrow channels, which tend to create fast waters.
- Flash floods are dangerous due to swift currents and their unpredictable nature. When warnings are posted, evacuate the area immediately
- If evacuation is not possible, seek the best route to high ground. Do not attempt to outrun the water. Climb straight up a tree, bank, hill, etc.

- Never attempt to wade or drive through water higher than 6 inches. If in a car, get out of the vehicle and call for help.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Insurance Considerations

In addition to insurance information in the Vehicle Transportation and Troop Trip sections, you should be aware that 100% Member registration is crucial in protecting Leaders, Volunteers, Charter Organizations, and the Trail Life Organization. Youth members and adult volunteers must be Registered Members prior to regularly attending Troop activities.

Only Registered Members and authorized/approved guests will be covered by Trail Life's liability insurance and accident and sickness insurance.

### Electronic Devices

Cameras, cell phones and other electronic devices should never be used inappropriately or in any way that can violate someone's privacy or cause them any harm. Embarrassing pictures could be used to coerce a youth into further abusive situations and activities or for bullying.

To avoid access to inappropriate material, youth members are prohibited from using devices that do not belong to them, particularly an adult's device, without direct supervision.

Devices containing cameras or video recorders may not be used near bathrooms or changing areas.

### Social Media

**The posting of certain comments, photos, links or references to third party blogs, social networks, and websites could have a negative impact on Trail Life USA, its members and its Charter Organizations. All posts and comments should evidence Christian charity, clarity, and respect for the truth.** To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established this policy for the appropriate use of social media. The safety and protection of youth should always be a key focus.

### Social Media and Child Safety Concerns

**Staying true to the commitment of protecting youth and keeping children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be the primary consideration where social media usage is concerned. There must be strict compliance with all aspects of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA"). All communication with youth on social media channels should be public and follow the two-deep leadership policy. All electronic communication between adults and youth should always include one or more other authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread.**

### Clothing

- Clothing should be activity-appropriate and help to protect from environmental hazards.
- Uniforms and lanyards can be useful in providing identification, as well as show a deep pride and passion to be a Trailman.
- Proper shoes and socks are important in preventing fatigue, blisters, and discomfort. **Closed-toed, closed-heel shoes are highly recommended for all meetings and activities except those involving water.**
- For warmth and partial protection from hypothermia, a hat, and several light, loose layers of clothing are helpful in cold weather. It is helpful if the layer closest to the skin is made of a wicking fabric such as polypropylene. Having cotton next to the skin in cold weather can be counterproductive because it stays wet with perspiration because it is not wicking.
- The type of material used in clothing construction is also important in determining when a particular garment is useful. For example: wool insulates well, even when wet; and cotton breathes.

- Waterproof gear is always useful when there is a chance of getting wet.
- Sunscreen and hats should be worn in situations where extended sun-exposure is probable.

### **Service Dogs**

Trail Life USA defines the term service dog in the same way that the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does. A service dog is specially trained or equipped to do or assist with tasks directly related to an individual's disability. The term does not include service dogs still in training, as they are not yet qualified. And the term excludes animals that provide comfort or emotional support to a person but do not qualify as service animals under the ADA. For more about service dogs, see [https://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm).

Service dogs are permitted at Trail Life events as allowed by law. Leaders, working with the dog owner, should make Troop members aware of appropriate behavior with the specific service dog and handler such as petting, feeding, playing, and giving right of way to the dog and handler.



# ACTIVITIES RISK REFERENCE GUIDE

## Activities Risk Reference Guide

Each Trail Life Troop activity has unique risk factors that should be considered in great detail before attempting. Leaders must be aware of the general health and safety policies and principles in the Trail Life Health and Safety Guide and should consider them integrated into all activities.

The Activities Risk Reference Guide is designed to highlight some of the most common risks associated with the various activities in which Troops commonly participate. This guide also replaces some previous age restrictions on certain activities with recommendations while more clearly defining who is considered qualified supervision for each activity.

## Archery Tag

Archery tag activities, also known as Extreme Archery, include the use of personal archery tag equipment, private group archery tag facilities, and/or commercial archery tag facilities.

### Age Recommendation

Trailmen of all ages can participate in laser tag activities provided there are no facility restrictions to participate.

### Qualified Supervision

This activity requires at least one supervisor that is at least 18 years of age who is knowledgeable in the archery tag sport and its equipment and can ensure that all equipment is in safe, working order. Commercial facility employees can count as this supervisor.

General Health and Safety criteria for supervision, training, and youth-to-leader ratios apply to any archery tag activity.

### Restrictions

Every participant must wear appropriate, properly fitting safety masks.

Trail Life Troop leaders must follow all restrictions imposed by the commercial vendor or facility or owner of the archery tag equipment or facility.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability to follow directions could result in Trailmen injuring themselves or others
- Younger Trailmen may become fearful of arrow impact or after an arrow impact.
- Smaller Trailmen may be injured by larger or stronger Trailmen.

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Injury due to not knowing how to properly handle the equipment
- Trailmen not knowing where proper game boundaries are

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Bowstrings injuring the hands or forearms of Trailmen
- Facemasks coming off or failing to protect

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Archery Tag has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injury from tripping, falling, or bumping into things by running
- Arrows causing injuries when Trailmen are impacted

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be present and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Troop leaders should inspect any private facility or location for hazards before Trailmen play archery tag. Examples could include tripping hazards, sharp or dangerous obstacles/blinds, unsafe equipment, etc.
- Non-participants should stay out of the game area behind a barrier or out of reach of any stray arrows.
- Trailmen of similar size, maturity, and strength should play together.

## **Backpacking**

Backpacking is defined as multiple-day hiking trips where all individual, patrol, and Troop gear is carried in packs. Some backpacking trips may have specialized gear and supplies restocked at certain locations.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that this activity be restricted to Navigators and Adventurers Trailmen.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply. Additionally, at least one attending adult should hold a Wilderness First Aid/CPR certification.

### **Restrictions**

Troop leaders will need to make individual determinations based off of the maturity and skill level of their Trailmen.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen of different ages have different levels of exhaustion that will need to be taken into account.
- Older adult leaders may have specific risks that would need to be accounted for (ie heart condition, CPAP/breathing issues, joint issues, muscle tone, etc.)

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Leaders and Trailmen do not understand the level of difficulty of the terrain
- Leaders or Trailmen with experience may be overconfident in their own abilities or the abilities of other participants.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- An insufficient amount or type of gear was brought.
- Insufficient or defective rain gear was brought.
- Any sharp-edge gear (ie. ice ax, crampons, etc.) could puncture or rip other gear.
- Clothing and/or sleeping gear could get wet.
- Insufficient or too much clothing could be brought.
- Gear not suited for backpacking could be brought.
- Food and cooking gear may not be suitable or sufficient for the activity.
- Food could spoil or run out while on the trail.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Backpacking has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Severe weather
- Injuries could happen far from assistance.
- Hypothermia
- Altitude sickness
- Heat exhaustion/stroke
- Dehydration

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be present and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Preplan to carry enough water for every Trailman and/or have planned refilling/filtering locations along your route.
- A water filtration device or purification methods should be available for refills from natural sources.
- Have at least two alternate routes selected and planned for in case of a plan change.
- Adult leaders should be familiar with the selected routes and may need to hike them in advance of the group's trip.
- A guide service should be acquired for more technical backpacking trips. (ie. summiting a high-altitude peak, traversing unfamiliar terrain, etc.)
- Adult leaders should have knowledge of and skill handling the terrain, wildlife, weather conditions, and other hazards from the area of the backpacking trip.

## **Campfires / Camp Stoves**

Campfires and Camp Stoves activities consist of igniting, maintaining, and/or extinguishing an open fire or any type of mechanical cooking device that uses open flames and/or flammable liquid as its heat source.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that Trailmen who have NOT received their Fireguard Card and/or their Fire Ranger Trail Badge NOT participate in lighting, tending, or extinguishing campfires or camp stoves of any kind unless supervised and for the purpose of earning that card or Trail Badge.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply.

Trailmen without their Fireguard Card or Fire Ranger Trail Badge should have an older Trailman with his Fire Ranger Trail Badge or Troop leader present and supervising during these activities.

## **Restrictions**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that Trailmen who have NOT received their Fireguard Card and/or their Fire Ranger Trail Badge NOT participate in lighting, tending, or extinguishing campfires or camp stoves of any kind unless supervised and for the purpose of earning that card or Trail Badge.

Trailmen and Troop leaders should know and follow any local, State, or National restrictions set in regards to conditions for fire use.

## **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

### **• Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen could be more susceptible to burns at a further distance from a fire.

### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may not be familiar with what items are and are not flammable.
- Older Trailmen may become reckless or careless around familiar fire situations.

### **• Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may not realize what items carry heat, ex. Pot lids, marshmallow roasting stick, rocks, aluminum foil, etc.
- Certain types of firewood produce more sparks which could ignite surrounding items or ground cover. (ex. Pine, poplar, etc.)
- Fuel tanks for camp stoves may be damaged or leaky.
- When building our own fire rings, do NOT use rocks that have been submerged in water. They can explode when heated causing injury.
- Tables for camp stoves may be unstable.

### **• Activity-Specific Factors**

Campfires/Camp Stoves Have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Environmental conditions could contribute to a higher risk of fires getting out of control. (ie. lack of water, high winds, drought, easily ignitable surroundings, etc.)
- Pots and pans could spill and injure or burn Trailmen.
- Trailmen could trip and fall into a fire.
- Explosive materials such as aerosol cans and other flammable items may be too close to fires.

## **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be present and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Campfires should be appropriate in size for the amount of Trailmen present.
- Rarely (if ever) cook over an open flame. Cook over hot coals.
- Do not burn wood that is diseased or growing fungus.
- Do not burn poisonous plants.
- Clear all underbrush and leaves out of a ten-foot area where the fire will be built.
- Select a fire area where there are no low-hanging limbs from nearby trees.
- Use established fire rings if available.
- No campfire or camp stove should be left unattended while burning.

- Buckets of sand, soil, or water should be nearby along with a shovel to fully extinguish fires.
- A Troop leader should ensure that all fires are appropriately extinguished.
- Tents and other flammable objects should remain at least 10 feet from the fire.
- A bed of ash or dirt should be underneath the firepit so as not to ignite tree roots underground.

## Camping

Camping as an activity is defined as any overnight activity in which the patrol or Troop participates. This activity includes using tents, treehouses, hammocks, tarps, cabins, cottages, houses, and/or public facilities as overnight accommodations.

### Age Recommendation

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for Hawk Trailmen and older; however, Fox Trailmen may attend an overnight campout with a parent.

### Qualified Supervision

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply.

Each Fox Trailman attending a camping activity must have at least one of their parents/guardians attending with them during the entire camping activity.

### Restrictions

Each Fox Trailman attending a camping activity must have at least one of their parents/guardians attending with them during the entire camping activity.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen could easily go missing.
- Trailmen may not see certain risks associated with camping activities.
- Each camping type (tent, hammock, backpacking, and “car camping”) and location will have different rigors that should be considered in relation to the participant’s ages.

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Tents, tarps, or hammocks being set up too close to dead or rotting trees that if fall could cause injury or death.
- Tents, tarps, or hammocks being set up in a rut, valley, or gulley that could flood during rain.
- Setting up camp in an area more prone to high winds.
- Trailmen may act overconfident because of familiarity.
- Inexperienced Trailmen could cause delays or require extra adult supervision.
- Inexperienced parents attending could cause injuries.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen could injure themselves on various camping equipment.
- Vehicles and equipment could get stuck in the mud.
- Tent lines and stakes become tripping hazards.
- Equipment could fail during a campout.

- Insufficient equipment could cause injuries and/or disillusionment.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Camping has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not bring the correct clothing or personal equipment.
- Trailmen could sustain burns from campfires and/or cuts from knives.
- Wildlife encounters (ex. Bear, coyote, bees, etc.)
- Patrol members could forget or leave food or equipment at home.
- Severe weather
- Different terrains will have unique risks.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be present and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- To maintain two-deep leadership, adult supervision ratios might need to be more than the minimum due to Trailmen being spread out in different camping areas.
- The Troop Quartermaster should work with adult leaders to ensure that all equipment is in working order before any camping activity.

## **Cave and Slot Canyon Exploring**

These activities include tours beyond those described in the Cave Touring section and may include crawling, climbing, limited lighting or require supplemental lighting, tight spaces, rappelling, irregular or wet surfaces, and other strenuous activities. Cave and Slot Canyon exploring also restricts the possibility of a quick escape or rescue in the event of an injury or accident.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office highly recommends that this activity be limited to Navigators, Adventurers, and adults.

### **Qualified Supervision**

This activity requires a two-step supervision process. Firstly, a trained expert or cave guide familiar with each particular cave MUST verify that the cave is age-appropriate and weather-appropriate for each exploration activity and participant. This same expert MUST provide on-site guidance during each cave exploration activity.

Secondly, at least one Trail Life leader must be in the front of each group of youth Trailmen and at least one Trail Life leader must be at the rear of each group of youth Trailmen.

### **Restrictions**



#### **IMPORTANT**

A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.

Cave Exploring must NOT be attempted under any circumstances without each participant wearing a UIAA 106 certified helmet and close-toed, close-heeled, and non-skid shoes, preferably boots.

Troops should only explore known caves that are mapped.



## WARNING

Exploring abandoned mines and Vertical Caving are restricted and prohibited as a Trail Life activity. Please see the unauthorized activity list for more details and reasons for this activity.

Other restrictions will need to be made by individual Troop leaders on a case-by-case basis for each cave and group attending the activity taking into account the generic risk factors below as well as any unique risk factors present in each cave.

**A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.**

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

This activity requires self-awareness and humility from EVERY participant. Trailmen need to be trusted to know their own fears and abilities as well as be able to respect and listen to the direction of Troop leaders.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may have an unknown fear of extreme darkness or a sense of being alone
- A Trailman not having sufficient strength to assist another Trailman
- Trailmen may not take the safety considerations seriously
- Trailmen may not be mature enough or vocal to express fear or inability
- Trailmen may get stuck or enter passages too narrow for adults to follow or enter
- Trailmen may not have the appropriate experience to know how to act/handle an incident

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

This activity requires specialized knowledge about underground terrain, weather, local geography, and unforeseen scenarios.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Adult leaders may not have sufficient knowledge or experience leading a certain activity
- Trailmen or leaders may not know the layout or geography of the cave
- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected equipment failure (headlamp/flashlight failure, etc.)
- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected weather event (underground flash floods, etc.)
- An injury or accident may occur requiring a new plan to be created “on the fly”
- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as deep pools of water, unseen tunnels or shafts, loose/falling rocks, etc.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

While Cave Exploring requires minimal equipment, the needed equipment is vital to ensure a safe and successful cave exploring activity.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Headlamps/Flashlights may run out of battery or fail unexpectedly
- Incorrect or damaged equipment is used. Ex. A non-UIAA 106 certified helmet was worn
- Equipment usage records were not kept resulting in no or incomplete knowledge of damage to certain equipment

- Incorrect clothing can cause unnecessary injuries. Ex. Sandals or low-rise shoes.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Cave and Slot Canyon Exploration have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Bad or low oxygen levels.
- Tight or small enclosed spaces can be difficult to navigate and can cause fear.
- Trailmen getting wet
- Higher risk of flash floods
- Cuts and scrapes from sharp rocks or falling on uneven surfaces
- Twisted ankles from uneven surfaces or sand or water on slick rock
- Increased risk of hypothermia due to sustained lower temperatures
- Falling into unknown or unseen shafts
- Dislocation of joints from twisting or squeezing through slots or shafts
- Dislodging loose rocks
- Increased difficulty for evacuation or a quick exit
- Trailmen wandering off or getting lost
- Youth/Leader ratios or two-deep leadership not being maintained

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Participants should always have three points of contact with the cave's surface.
- Participants should use gloves, knee pads, and clothing that does not snag.
- Shafts and holes should never be entered head-first.
- Troop leaders should ensure that no Trailmen suffer from claustrophobia or fear of the dark before each cave exploring activity.
- Each participant should be given and know how to read a map of each cave.
- The use of guide ropes should be considered for caves with multiple passages.
- UIAA 106 certified helmets and should be worn by all Trailmen.
- Troop leaders or guides should carry a rescue rope or rescue webbing during the entire activity.
- Troop leaders should use and require any additional safety equipment recommended by the local expert/guide.
- Troop leaders should not attempt any activity until satisfied that all participating Trailmen have the training, ability, and willingness to comply with all safety rules and guidelines.
- All gear, including ropes used for weight support or hauling as well as fencing in caves, should be regularly inspected and retired according to industry standards.
- Every Trailman should have two backup, hands-free light sources.
- Adequate food and water should be taken and carried throughout the activity.

## **Cave Touring**

This includes public cave tours that are walking only (no crawling, climbing, etc.) on lit walking paths led by a certified cave guide or that have cave guides stationed throughout the cave.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for all Trailmen of any age; however, it is recommended that parents participate with younger Trailmen.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply.

A Registered Adult or Leader must be at each, the front and the rear of the group of youth Trailmen.



### **Restrictions**

None

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may have an unknown fear of enclosed spaces
- Trailmen may not be mature enough or vocal to express fear or inability

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as deep pools of water, unseen tunnels or shafts, loose/falling rocks, etc.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Incorrect clothing can cause unnecessary injuries. Ex. Sandals or low-rise shoes.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Cave touring has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Wildlife such as cave bats can cause fear.
- Trailmen getting wet
- Cuts and scrapes from sharp rocks
- Increased risk of hypothermia due to sustained lower temperatures
- Trailmen wandering off or getting lost
- Youth/Leader ratios or two-deep leadership not being maintained

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Troop leaders should ensure that Trailmen who suffer from claustrophobia or fear of the dark should not participate in any cave activity.
- Proper clothing and non-skid shoes are recommended.

## **Community Activities**

Community Activities are defined as parades, floats, hayrides, festivals, fairs, theme parks, etc. Any activity that takes place in large groups of people from the community where non-Trail Life members are present can also be categorized as a community activity.

### **Age Recommendation**

Trailmen of all ages may participate in community events and activities, though the activity must be appropriate to the age, maturity, and ability of participating youth.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety criteria for supervision, training, and ratios apply.

### **Restrictions**

None

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Falling off of a float or ride
- Younger Trailmen may get lost easier in crowds.
- Trailmen may not maintain a buddy system of three.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not following rules and regulations for rides or activities
- Trailmen could get lost.
- Certain rides or activities may be too dangerous or scary for certain Trailmen.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Equipment failure resulting in injury
- Inappropriate shoes cause blisters
- Safety equipment might not be functioning properly.
- Trailers or tailgates may not be properly secured while pulling.
- Loose clothing could become tangled in equipment parts.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Community Activities has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen walking too close to a float or ride
- Trailman may find himself separated from the group
- Personal safety risks could be more prevalent at public events that are more politically controversial.
- Sun exposure, and/or lack of water cause dehydration and/or overheating.
- Crowds in public places have a higher risk of youth getting lost, harassed, or abused.
- Certain foods or items at these events may contain allergens that Trailmen may be allergic to, including hay fever allergies from hay bales..

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- A Lost Person Plan must be developed and all youth should know what to do if they find themselves separated from the group. A meeting place should be designated prior to the start of the activity.
- Troop leaders should assess the likelihood of political-motivated confrontation before participating in any public event. Additionally, leaders should assess whether it is appropriate for youth participation based on prior assessments.
- Members should wear a uniform or Trail Life apparel when participating on behalf of the organization, excluding official political activities.
- Persons riding floats must be able to hold onto something stationary.
- Floats pulled by vehicles must be insured.
- No body parts, legs, arms, etc., may hang over sides of float/hayride.

- Trailmen or leaders walking near a float should not walk within falling distance of any vehicle's or float's tires.

## Cycling

Cycling activities are defined as an individual, patrol, or Troop activity in which Trailmen propel a bicycle or other vehicle by means of foot pedals. Mountain Biking is not included here because it has its own risks; so it is addressed as a separate activity.

### Age Recommendation

Trailmen of all ages can enjoy Cycling.

### Qualified Supervision

An adult with knowledge of skills and equipment used in Cycling must be present. There must be an adult at the front and back of the group.

### Restrictions

Younger Trailmen bicycling should be limited to parking lots and bicycle trails.



### **IMPORTANT**

**Use of proper fitting helmets is required.**

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen riding a distance or difficulty beyond their abilities
- Younger Trailmen riding erratically or in an uncontrolled manner

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperienced riders may try to ride beyond their ability.
- Trailmen may ride against the traffic rather than with the flow of traffic.
- Trailman may not use proper hand signals.
- Trailman may not stop at intersections or may ride ahead.
- Trailmen may not respect other traffic on the road (cars, pedestrians)
- Improper braking can cause injury to the rider
- Lack of knowledge of the proper use of gearing on a bicycle can cause increased fatigue or lack of being able to keep up with the group (walking up hill, etc.).
- Trailmen may not stay sufficiently hydrated.
- Trailmen may neglect to eat potassium-rich foods.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Equipment failure during a ride (flat tire, broken chain, etc.)
  - Using a non-certified helmet, an unsecured or improperly fitted helmet, or a helmet for another sport.
  - Using an improperly sized bicycle or one that is not adjusted for height properly causing increased fatigue or injury
  - Improperly adjusted brakes or gears causing issues or injuries
  - Chains that are improperly meshed with the gears, malfunctioning, or lacking chain guards can cause injuries.
  - Gear shifters may not work properly.
  - Bicycles may lack or have broken lights or reflectors.
- **Activity-Specific Factors**  
Cycling has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:
    - Trailman may become lost on the route.
    - Trailmen may not know how to properly ride or pass while in a group.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Ensure that your trip will both begin and end in daylight.
- Know where emergency services are located along your route.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and the presence of other cyclists, pedestrians, motor vehicles and other possible hazards (rocks, glass, holes, etc.).
- Make sure all participants are familiar with and aware of the designated route. Participants should each have a map of the bike route, when applicable.
- When available riders should stay in dedicated bicycle lanes.
- Riders should not ride on sidewalks.
- Riders should obey all traffic signs.
- When approaching an intersection, slow down and stop if necessary, look left, right, back and ahead. Always stop at a railroad crossing, look both ways and proceed cautiously across the crossing, walking bicycle across railroad crossing if necessary.
- Check equipment such as tires, brakes, chain, and gears before departure and during extended stops. Adjust reflective mirrors.
- Clean and adjust the bicycle. Apply reflective material to the bicycle if not present. Ensure that the bike is the proper size for the rider.
- Make sure equipment is brought on trips for minor repairs and adjustments including: first aid kit, small tool kit, tire repair kit, lubricant, air pump, locks, ID tags, emergency cash, and weather appropriate gear.
- When traveling long distances carry fluids and energy snacks. Periodically stop and rest before re-summing the journey. Each youth must have access to his own water.

## **Downhill Skiing / Snowboarding**

Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding are defined as any activity where Trailmen use skis or snowboards to traverse through snow down from the top of a hill or mountain.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for all Trailmen of any age; however, it is recommended that parents participate with Woodlands Trail Trailmen.

### **Qualified Supervision**

Each skiing and snowboarding commercial facility must have trained staff equipped to handle first-aid emergencies that patrol all ski areas.

**Restrictions****NOTE**

A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.

EN 1077 certified helmets must be worn for both activities by all Trailmen and adults.

**Skiing and snowboarding in the backcountry or out-of-bounds** is an **unauthorized activity** and should **NOT** be attempted by any Trailman.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Because any aged Trailman can participate in either of these activities, Troop leaders should assess each Trailmen, patrol, and buddy group to ensure that risks are assessed and mitigation efforts are made.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inadequate fitness of either Trailmen or supervising adults can pose additional physical and/or medical risks.
- Trailmen not maintaining the 3-person buddy system due to differing levels of experience and speed.
- Woodlands Trailmen may not be aware or able to avoid other hazards around them (ex. Other skiers, moguls, ice patches, drop-offs, etc.)
- Trailmen may overestimate their own abilities and attempt runs that are too dangerous for their experience level
- Trailmen may not have the maturity to follow safety guidelines

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Each of these activities requires very specialized knowledge about terrain, equipment, weather, and unforeseen scenarios.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected weather events
- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as ice, water, avalanche, etc.
- Injuries due to not knowing how to control acceleration, deceleration, and direction
- Falling injuries due to improper balancing
- Injuring others due to crowding

- **Equipment Factors**

Skiing and Snowboarding have unique equipment associated with these activities that each Trailman should be familiar with and understand how to operate safely.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Faulty boots, bindings, boards, and/or skis
- Clothing getting caught, ripped, or broken
- Goggles not fitting or overly fogging
- Chairlift malfunctions
- Impaling oneself on a ski pole

- Skis or boards may not be appropriate for the conditions and type of skiing activity. (ex. Downhill Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Snowboarding, etc.)
- Certain ski waxes may not be appropriate for certain snow conditions.
- Boots and bindings may not fit properly.
- Trailmen may not have sufficient clothing to stay dry and warm.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Skiing and Snowboarding both have high risk of injury along with several outside risk factors that are unique to these activities. Unique risks could include but are not limited to:

- Skis becoming crossed or spread too far apart causing bodily injury
- Twisting or rolling ankles
- Injuries to limbs, head, and/or neck due to falling
- Injuries due to collision with other skiers, trees, or objects while traveling at high rates of speed
- Potential risk for injury while using Chair lifts or other on-hill transportation equipment.
- Trailmen not understanding the run coding system (ex. Black Diamond, etc.)
- Hypothermia
- Sunburn
- Windburn or chapped skin
- Overheating due to large temperature variations from indoors and outdoors
- Snow blindness
- Avalanche risk increases after heavy snowfall.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Clothing should be worn in layers that wick moisture away from the body to avoid hypothermia and/or overheating.
- Sunscreen should be used for any exposed areas.
- Trailmen should be assessed according to their own ability and limited to ski runs according to their level of proficiency.
- The 3-person buddy system should be utilized by all Trailmen while participating.
- Beginning skiers should be given instructions by qualified instructors.
- Troops should create a "lost person plan" that is known and understood by all participants.
- Troop leaders should create a check-in system with periodic check-ins required.
- Rests should be scheduled to avoid exhaustion.
- Regular hydration and high-energy foods should be provided.
- All Trailmen should follow all rules and posted signs for the ski facility including trails, runs, ski lifts, etc.
- The use of rails, man made jumps, chutes, or other enhancements that are designed for skiers to leave the ground or otherwise perform acrobatic maneuvers are strongly discouraged.

## **Unmanned Aircraft (Drones)**

Drone activities are defined as operating small unmanned aircraft systems that follow all applicable FAA guidelines.

### **Definitions**

CFR - Code of Federal Regulations

Small unmanned aircraft (Drone) system - an unmanned aircraft weighing less than 55 pounds on take-off and the associated elements required for the safe and efficient operation of the aircraft.

*Remote Pilot* - a person who has a Remote Pilot Certificate and who satisfies the requirements of 14 CFR §107.65.

### **Age Recommendations**

Drone operations are available for Trailmen of all ages provided that qualified supervision is overseeing the activity. Qualified supervisors may impose any age restriction at their discretion and according to any applicable FAA guidelines.

### **Qualified Supervision**

Qualified Supervision for this activity is personnel certified by the FAA as a *Remote Pilot*.

By nature of their certification, they are expected to be familiar with and adhere to all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations.



### **IMPORTANT Aircraft (Drone)**

Unmanned aircraft (Drones) must be registered with the FAA and in a condition for safe operation.

### **Restrictions**

The unmanned aircraft (Drone) must be operated by a Remote Pilot or by a person under the direct supervision of a Remote Pilot in command who can immediately take direct control of the flight of the small unmanned aircraft (Drone).

Operators are required to keep the unmanned aircraft within visual line of sight.

No unmanned aircraft should be flown indoors.

Any community, local, or state regulations and laws must also be followed regarding the use and operations of unmanned aircraft (drones).

### **Risks**

Flying unmanned aircraft (drones) involves risks. Following the Federal Aviation Regulations, having qualified supervision, and utilizing registered, airworthy aircraft (drones) significantly reduces those risks. The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow directions
- Inability or unwillingness to handle or not handle the aircraft.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Pilot error
- Surrounding bystanders could be unaware of the drone's presence

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Motor or mechanical failure
- Negligent maintenance
- Damaged or defective batteries
- Radiofrequency interference
- Onboard camera failure
- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Flying unmanned aircraft (drone) has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

  - Serious injury or death from drone crashes, falls, or impacts including:
    - Bruises
    - Scratches
    - Lacerations
    - Eye injuries
    - Broken bones
    - Concussions
    - Death
  - Weather or Terrain conditions
  - Interference by wildlife or other objects
  - Challenging recovery conditions if the drone is lost
  - Falls or landings near or around bystanders
  - Privacy concerns by surrounding neighbors or people

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- No unmanned aircraft should be flown indoors.
- Any community, local, or state regulations and laws must also be followed regarding the use and operations of unmanned aircraft (drones).

### **Unmanned Aircraft Activity Ideas**

- A Design Your Own Badge using the CLEAR method:
- A Design Your Own Badge using the Certification method:
  - A remote pilot certification

## **Fishing**

Fishing may or may not be a part of other aquatic activities and could take place from land, a pier, a dock, or any type of watercraft. It can include many different types of fishing techniques, ex. Rod & Reel, Nets, Deep sea fishing, etc.

### **Age Recommendation**

Trail Life youth of all ages may enjoy fishing, though swimming competency must be considered prior to any fishing activity that takes place over open water. Limited swimming ability may impact supervision, site choices, etc.

### **Qualified Supervision**

At least two qualified adults must be present, either

- a Supervising Adults with a First-Aid certification, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications if fishing over open water.



**NOTICE**

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Fisherman	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

**Restrictions**

- If fishing happens over open water from a pier or watercraft, Troop leaders should refer to the Swimming Activity Risk Reference Guide for guidance.
- Personal flotation devices MUST be provided for all watercraft, meeting or exceeding all guidelines.
- Eyewear is suggested for fishing activities to minimize risk to eyes from equipment.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may be more susceptible to injuries from fishing equipment.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may injure themselves by not knowing how to handle fishing equipment.
- Trailmen may fall into water due to not knowing how to properly balance on the boat, dock, or pier.
- Trailmen may not know when a fish or animal too large for them to handle may be hooked.
- Trailmen may not know how to handle unhooking an animal other than fish. (ex. Alligator, Turtle, etc.)

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen could be using equipment that is not designed for the type of fishing they are participating in.
- Trailmen may become injured by fishing hooks or other tackle.
- Personal items and equipment can be lost if dropped over the edge of a watercraft.
- Trailmen may not have a PFD when fishing from a watercraft.
- PFDs may not be Coast Guard-approved.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Fishing has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Multiple Trailman fishing in close proximity can hit or injury others while casting.
- Bacteria and pollution can cause the fish to be unhealthy to eat.

- Insufficiently cooking fish can cause sickness.
- Trailmen can become “hooked” by other nearby Trailmen.
- Fishing near the edges of bodies of water could expose Trailmen to poisonous plants, venomous wildlife, or large predatory animals. (ex. Poison ivy, Snakes, Alligators, etc.)

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity, including in public locker rooms.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Only have as many persons and weight on a watercraft or boat as the craft allows by law.
- Trailmen should have a sufficient amount of drinking water and snacks if fishing for an extended period of time.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible. (Reflected sun off of the water can cause sunburn also.)
- Avoid overcrowding, especially in public facilities.

**Flatwater Boating**

Flatwater boating activities include traversing any body of water that is rated by the American Whitewater Association as Class A to Class I, using a canoe, kayak, sailboat, raft, or rowboat.

**Age Recommendation**

Trail Life youth of all ages may enjoy Flatwater Boating, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. See the restrictions section for further details.



**IMPORTANT**

It is highly recommended that Woodlands Trailman be accompanied by an adult in the same watercraft.

**Qualified Supervision**

At least two qualified adults must be present, either

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications

If the provider provides a certified lifeguard or certified instructor, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when boating or tubing in open water at all times.

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

Adults should be well versed in the use and training of the craft being used. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)

### **Restrictions**

- **Swimming Competency**
  - Participants in various boating activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
  - This test must be completed before a youth can participate in activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a “qualified adult” is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).
  - Participants in Flatwater Boating activities must have shown at least a Beginner competence in the swimming test. If any participant is unable to complete the Beginner swim test, then he must ride in a boat with an adult who is a certified lifeguard or an adult trained in water rescue techniques.
- PFD’s must be worn by all participants regardless of swimming competency.
- PFD’s must be inherently buoyant (NOT inflatable) and US Coast Guard approved.
- All flatwater boating activities must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Lack of strength to control the craft
- Shortness of stature affecting the fit of craft. E.g. foot braces, thigh braces in a kayak, or ability to man the oars in a rowboat.
- Older Trailmen may be overconfident in their ability.
- Older adults may not have sufficient strength to control craft.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not have proper knowledge to handle adverse weather or water conditions.
- Navigational skills may not be adequate
- Supervisors may not have adequate water rescue techniques or knowledge.
- Piloting and watercraft handling skills may not be adequate for the particular craft in use.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Not having the proper equipment size/type for each person including paddle length and type
- Not having enough equipment and/or safety gear for the number of participants
- The wrong type of craft for the activity. For example, a river canoe or kayak on flat water is difficult to keep moving in a straight line as they are designed to turn.
- PFD’s might not fit properly or be US Coast Guard approved.
- Swimwear could become torn on sharp objects.

### • **Activity-Specific Factors**

Flat-water Boating has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Sudden weather changes can affect the water speed.
- Motorized boat traffic can cause extra hazards such as flipping, collisions, large wakes, etc.
- Unknown boating areas may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks/reefs, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Sunburn due to overexposure
- Windburn
- Hypothermia
- Man-made hazards such as debris, pollution, chemicals, etc. can cause injury or illness and should be assessed ahead of any boating activity.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone.
- Every Trailmen should wear a properly fitted PFD with a signaling whistle while participating in any boating activity.
- Troop leaders should establish a method of communicating among the Troop. (ex. 2-way radios, cell phones, etc.)
- Trailmen should be familiar with the type of craft they are using for each activity and know how to properly pilot and correct an overturned craft.
- All Trailmen should receive prior instruction on how to properly handle all boating equipment.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible.
- Trailmen should use a strap on their prescription glasses and/or sunglasses that floats when dropped in water.
- Avoid overcrowding or exceeding rated occupancy and weight limits.
- Supervising adults must stay with the youth when boating, tubing or participating in other open water activities at all times.
- Youth Trailmen must not be allowed to travel on any water unsupervised.
- Set up a system of tracking all Trailmen prior to putting in.



### **NOTE**

#### **Helpful Resources-**

- [Windy.com](https://www.windy.com) or the [Windy App](#) - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.
- [AmericanWhitewater.org](https://www.americanwhitewater.org) - the American Whitewater Association, creators of the *International Scale of River Difficulty* definitions for classes of whitewater. Includes a database of rivers and river segments with their class of difficulty. This site can help you find flatwater sections for your Troop's activity.

## **Flatwater Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP)**

Flatwater stand-up paddleboarding includes traversing any body of water that is rated by the American Whitewater Association as Class A to Class I, using a canoe, kayak, sailboat, or rowboat.

**Age Recommendation**

Trail Life youth of all ages may enjoy Flatwater SUP, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. See the restrictions section for further details.

It is highly recommended that Woodlands Trailman be accompanied by a parent or other adult swimmer on their own SUP willing to assume the responsibility for the oversight and safety of the Woodlands Trailman while participating in SUP.

**Qualified Supervision**

At least two qualified adults must be present, either:

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications

If a certified lifeguard or certified instructor is provided, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when paddleboarding in open water at all times.

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

Adults should be well versed in the use and training of the SUP being used. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)

**Restrictions**

- Swimming Competency
  - Participants in SUP activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
  - This test must be completed before a youth can participate in activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a "qualified adult" is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).
  - Participants must have shown **Swimmer competence** in the swimming test. If any participant is unable to complete the Swimmer swim test, then he must not participate in any SUP activities.
- PFD's must be worn by all participants regardless of swimming competency.
- PFD's must be inherently buoyant (NOT inflatable) and US Coast Guard approved.
- All flatwater SUP activities must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- Moving water or whitewater SUP is not permitted.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multi-

tude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Not understanding the importance of staying with the group while paddling, going off on their own
- Lack of upper body strength causing fatigue
- Older Trailmen may be overconfident in their ability.
- Older adults may be more injured from falls.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improperly handling the paddle causes harm or injury to shoulder or spine
- Inexperience in the water hinders ability to “self-rescue” if you fall off the board
- Several Trailmen crowding and “horseplaying” while SUP can cause falls and injuries.
- Underestimating a light wind’s effects on your ability to paddle into it
- Not leashing yourself to your board when flat-water SUP or abandoning your board
- Trailmen may not have proper knowledge to handle adverse weather or water conditions.
- Navigational skills may not be adequate.
- Supervisors may not have adequate water rescue techniques or knowledge.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- The board and paddle are not properly sized for the participant, causing difficulty in handling.
- PFD’s might not fit properly or be US Coast Guard approved.
- Swimwear could become torn on sharp objects.
- Equipment could cause head injuries if impacted upon a fall.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

SUP has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Weather risks including currents, lightning, or windy conditions.
- Lack of balance causes frequent falls off the board.
- Motorized boat traffic can cause extra hazards.
- Unknown boating areas may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks/reefs, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Sunburn due to overexposure
- Windburn
- Hypothermia
- Man-made hazards such as debris, pollution, chemicals, etc. can cause injury or illness and should be assessed ahead of any swimming activity.
- Crowded location increases risk of injuring self or others.
- Paddling over shallow areas could cause injury in the event of a fall.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone.
- Every Trailmen should wear a properly fitted PFD with a signaling whistle while participating in any SUP activity.
- Troop leaders should establish a method of communicating among the Troop. (ex. 2-way radios, cell phones, etc.)
- Trailmen should be familiar with the type of paddleboard they are using for each activity and know how to properly correct an overturned craft.

- All Trailmen should receive prior instruction on how to properly handle all boating equipment.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible. (Reflected sun off of the water can cause sunburn also.)
- Trailmen should use a strap on their prescription glasses and/or sunglasses that floats when dropped in water.
- Avoid overcrowding.
- Supervising adults must stay with the youth at all times. Supervising adults must stay with the youth when boating, tubing or participating in other open water activities at all times.
- Youth Trailmen must not be allowed to travel on any water unsupervised.
- Set up a system of tracking all Trailmen prior to putting in.
- If you have someone who is an experienced kayaker, it is advisable that they accompany the tubers in the event someone needs assistance.
- Consider the use of a helmet if paddling near rocky areas.



## NOTE

### Helpful Resources-

- [Windy.com](https://www.windy.com) or the [Windy App](#) - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.
- [AmericanWhitewater.org](https://www.americanwhitewater.org) - the American Whitewater Association, creators of the *International Scale of River Difficulty* definitions for classes of whitewater. Includes a database of rivers and river segments with their class of difficulty. This site can help you find flatwater sections for your Troop's activity.

## Flatwater Tubing

Flatwater tubing is an activity where Trailmen float (NOT pulled behind a boat) on an inflatable tube through a calm, level, or slow-flowing body of water or channel, Class A to Class I. This can include commercial river tubing tours or lazy river tubing facilities.

### Age Recommendation

Trail Life youth of all ages may enjoy Flatwater tubing, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. See the restrictions section for further details.

It is highly recommended that Woodlands Trailman be accompanied by a parent or other adult Swimmer on their own tube willing to assume the responsibility for the oversight and safety of the Woodlands Trailman.

### Qualified Supervision

At least two qualified adults must be present, either:

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications

If a certified lifeguard or certified instructor is provided, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies, and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when boating or tubing in open water at all times.


Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

**Restrictions**

- **Swimming Competency**
  - Participants in various boating activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
  - This test must be completed before a youth can participate in tubing activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a “qualified adult” is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).
  - Participants must have shown at least a **Beginner competence** in the swimming test. If any participant is unable to complete the Beginner swim test, then he must be accompanied by a parent or tube beside an adult who is a certified lifeguard or an adult trained in water rescue techniques.
- PFD’s must be worn by all participants regardless of swimming competency.
- PFD’s must be inherently buoyant (NOT inflatable) and US Coast Guard approved
- All flatwater tubing activities must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- If the river conditions in any way approach those of “fast-moving, or Class 2 and above”, the participants should end the activity and immediately get out of the water.



**IMPORTANT**  
**Moving water/whitewater tubing and powerboat tubing are unauthorized activities.**

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**  
 Risks could include but are not limited to:
  - Assuming younger participants and weak swimmers are safe because they are on a tube or there is a lifeguard present
  - Shorter Trailmen may have a harder time staying in the tube
  - Older Trailmen may be overconfident in their ability.
- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**



Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not know or recognize put-in or pull-out spots while on the water.
- Trailmen may not have proper knowledge to handle adverse weather or water conditions.
- Supervisors may not have adequate water rescue techniques or knowledge.

• **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Tubes may be too large for smaller Trailmen.
- Tubes could be damaged and leak.
- PFD's might not fit properly or be US Coast Guard approved.
- Swimwear could become torn on sharp objects.

• **Activity-Specific Factors**

Tubing has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Sudden weather changes can affect the water speed.
- Motorized boat traffic can cause extra hazards.
- Unknown boating areas may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks/reefs, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Tubes getting stuck on rocks, overhanging limbs, or submerged objects
- Sunburn due to overexposure
- Man-made hazards such as debris, pollution, chemicals, etc. can cause injury or illness and should be assessed ahead of any swimming activity.

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone.
- Every Trailmen should wear a properly fitted PFD with a signaling whistle while participating in any boating activity.
- Troop leaders should establish a method of communicating among the Troop. (ex. 2-way radios, cell phones, etc.)
- If you have someone who is an experienced kayaker, it is advisable that they accompany the tubers in the event someone needs assistance.
- Trailmen should tube in their buddy groups of three.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible. (Reflected sun off of the water can cause sunburn also.)
- Trailmen should use a strap on their prescription glasses and/or sunglasses that floats when dropped in water.
- Avoid overcrowding.
- Supervising adults must stay with the youth at all times.
- Attending adults should disperse themselves among different groups of Trailmen to be able to more quickly assist in the event of an emergency.
- Youth Trailmen must not be allowed to travel on any water unsupervised.
- Set up a system of tracking all Trailmen prior to putting in.



## NOTE

### Helpful Resources-

- [Windy.com](https://www.windy.com) or the [Windy App](#) - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.
- [AmericanWhitewater.org](https://www.americanwhitewater.org) - the American Whitewater Association, creators of the *International Scale of River Difficulty* definitions for classes of whitewater. Includes a database of rivers and river segments with their class of difficulty. This site can help you find flatwater sections for your Troop's activity.

## Flying

Flying activities are defined as Trailmen experiencing flight orientation or receiving flight training for airplanes or any other mechanically-powered flying activity that follows all applicable FAA guidelines for purposes other than transportation.

### Definitions

*Orientation Flight* - a flight whose primary purpose is to inspire, motivate or introduce a Trailman to aviation or an aspect thereof. A Trailman might receive flight instruction, and he may be allowed to operate the controls, but training is not the flight's intent.

*Training Flight* - a flight whose primary purpose is to train a Trailman to develop the skills necessary to operate an aircraft.

*CFR* - Code of Federal Regulations

*Commercial pilot* - a person who holds a commercial pilot certificate and who is qualified in accordance with the applicable parts of 14 CFR Part 61 that apply to the flight operation.

*Instructor pilot* - a person who holds an unexpired flight instructor certificate.

### Age Recommendations

Flight opportunities are available for Trailmen of all ages. Qualified supervisors may impose any age restriction according to the type of flying activity and any applicable FAA guidelines.

### Qualified Supervision

Qualified Supervisors for this activity are personnel certified by the FAA for their particular flying activity. By nature of their certification, they are expected to be familiar with and adhere to all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations.

- Powered Flight
  - All powered flight training is to be conducted by a certified flight instructor qualified for flight operation.
  - All power aircraft orientation flights are to be conducted by a commercial pilot or an EAA Young Eagles approved and current volunteer pilot.
- Solo Flights
  - Solo flights must occur under the supervision of a qualified flight instructor. A youth Trailman operating as a pilot in command of a flight under a private pilot certificate may not transport other youth Trailmen.

### Aircraft

Powered aircraft must be registered with the FAA and in airworthy condition and have minimum insurance coverage of \$1,000,000 per incident for property damage and personal injury liability.

### **Restrictions**

The following forms of “Flying” activities are unauthorized and must NOT be part of any Trail Life activity:

- Gliding
- Hang-gliding/Paragliding
- Ultralight Aircraft
- Paraplanes
- Parachuting/Outdoor Skydiving
- Non-tethered Hot-air Balloon Rides
- Parasailing and Related Activities



### **NOTE**

Please see the unauthorized activity list for more details and reasons for each activity.

### **Risks**

Flying and being around aircraft involves risks. Following the Federal Aviation Regulations, having qualified supervision, and utilizing airworthy aircraft significantly reduces those risks. In general, flying is very safe.

However, the following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow directions.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Pilot error
- Ground crew error

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Engine or mechanical failure
- Negligent maintenance
- Contaminated fuel

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Flying has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Serious injury or death from aircraft crashes or falls including:
  - Bruises
  - Scratches
  - Sprains
  - Eye injuries
  - Broken bones

- Concussions
- Paralysis
- Severe Burns
- Death
- Weather or Terrain conditions
- Runway defect
- Interference by wildlife or other objects
- Challenging search and rescue conditions
- Hard or forced landings
- Trail Life youth/leader ratios and two-deep leadership may not be able to be maintained.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Due to the nature of some flight activities, there are times where it may be impossible for two-deep leadership to be maintained. In such cases, the Troop must take particular care to ensure that the youth Trailman and the parents/guardians know the circumstances. The Troop must require pilots who are not members of Trail Life to review and adhere to Trail Life Child Safety and Youth Protection policies.



#### **TIP**

#### **Helpful Resources**

Young Eagles - provides youth ages 8-17 their first free ride in an airplane. <https://www.eaa.org/ea/youth/free-ye-flights>

There are scores of agencies, local and national, that provide scholarship funds for youth to learn flight. Search the Internet to find opportunities, making sure to utilize any local air and space museum resources. Also, take a look at the [EAA](#) and [AOPA](#) websites.

### **Flying Activity Ideas**

- A *Hit the Trail!* adventure involving orientation flights
- A Design Your Own Badge using the CLEAR method:
  - Solo an aircraft
- Freedom Experience (propose a New Freedom Experience in either the Science and Technology or Trades fields)
  - Earn an airplane pilot certificate
- Additional Freedom Experience (propose a New Freedom Experience in either the Science and Technology or Trades fields)
  - Earn an airplane instrument rating
- A summer adventure participating in a flying camp

### **High Ropes Challenge Courses**

High Ropes Challenge Courses are activities, typically individual, that are suspended in the air higher than 6 feet above the ground and often include climbing or rappelling activities where the Trailmen are suspended in the air by ropes and harnesses (see the particular activity listing for these activities as well if included).

**Age Recommendation**

These activities are recommended for Navigators aged Trailmen or older.

**Qualified Supervision**

This activity requires at least one certified climbing/rappelling/ropes course instructor to be present at all times. Typically the venue providing the wall or course will have a certified instructor present; if not a Troop leader must be certified by a nationally recognized certifying agency and authorized by the host site to operate its high course elements.

Examples of nationally recognized certifying agencies include the Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA), Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), or similar organizations.

**Restrictions**

Troops should only utilize high ropes challenge courses from certified facilities that are inspected annually. Homebuilt structures and climbing walls should not be used for any activity other than bouldering (Climbing without ropes no higher than 10 feet above the ground)..

Troops should abide by all host site/high course provider regulations, form requirements, and policies.

**IMPORTANT**

**A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.**

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

These activities require differing levels of strength and maturity. Troop leaders must assess their Trailmen on an individual basis to determine which activities should be attempted by which Trailmen. Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen having a fear of heights or falling
- Trailmen not mature enough to follow safety guidelines
- Trailmen may not be tall enough to safely complete certain activities

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

These activities generally do not require prior knowledge or experience; however, Troop leaders should take the following risk factors into consideration.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen getting splinters from wooden climbing walls, ropes course structures, or metal splinters from cables
- Injury from scraping or falling due to not knowing how to balance on various objects
- Trailmen may not know how to belay other Trailmen safely while participating

- **Equipment Factors**

Typically the equipment for these activities are provided by the venue. Troop leaders will need to assess the equipment safety before allowing Trailmen to participate.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Helmets may not fit properly or come off during participating
- Harnesses may not securely fasten or may be damaged
- Challenge course elements may have loose bolts, boards, or cables which could cause injury
- Rope burn or rope entanglement
- Old or defective belay equipment
- Rope records and rope retirement should be up-to-date

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

High ropes challenge courses have high risks of serious injury and/or death.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not using correct belay technique and injuring themselves or others
- Trailmen not securing equipment properly
- Sunburn, windburn, and dehydration
- Falling long distances
- Hair, fingers, and/or skin becoming pinched or jammed in equipment
- Swinging and hitting wooden elements

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- UIAA 106 certified helmets in good condition should be worn for each climbing activity by all Trailmen.
- Close-toed and close-heeled shoes and long pants should be worn during high ropes challenge course activities.
- Facilities should have all of their activities and equipment inspected annually according to their state standards.

## **Hiking**

Hiking activities include any length of activity where Trailmen travel along trails, paths, roads, or fields by foot.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for all Trailmen of any age.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply. Additionally, at least one attending adult should hold a Wilderness First Aid/CPR certification for hiking trips that pass through areas where emergency medical assistance may not be readily available.



#### **NOTE**

It is recommended that each Fox and Hawk Trailman attending a hiking activity should have at least one of their parents/guardians attending with them during the entire hiking activity.

### **Restrictions**

Troop leaders will need to make individual determinations based off of the maturity and skill level of their Trailmen.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen will not have the same stamina as older Trailmen and could cause delays, hindrances, or group separations.
- Older Trailmen may not thoroughly heed warnings or risks.
- Troop leaders could have underlying health issues that could affect or manifest themselves during hiking activities.

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Hikers could become lost on unfamiliar trails.
- Previous knowledge and experience could cause carelessness from overconfidence.
- Hikers without proper preparatory knowledge could sustain injuries during a hike, such as blisters, twisted ankles, and/or cuts from hanging tree branches.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Daypacks or backpacks may be imbalanced, poorly designed, too heavy, and/or overloaded.
- Water bottles, camelbaks, water bladders, and/or filtration elements could fail or leak.
- First Aid Kit might be low on supplies or not contain certain needed items.
- Hiking boots may not be properly fitted or broken in before a hike.

#### • **Activity-Specific Factors**

Hiking has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Severe weather
- Dehydration
- Altitude sickness
- Heat exhaustion/stroke
- Blisters (causing infection)
- Foot or ankle injury
- Snake bites
- Yellow-jacket stings
- Poison ivy
- Sunburn
- Fatigue
- Wildlife encounters

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Ensure that all Trailmen wear proper footwear and clothing appropriate to the hike and weather.
- “Moleskin” should be carried in every first aid kit for blister protection.
- It is recommended for Trailmen to carry extra socks on extended hikes.

- Ensure that the Troop/patrol first-aid kit includes medications for stinging insects.
- Hiking sticks or walking sticks provide extra stability.
- Trailmen should carry sufficient amounts of water, food, rain gear, and toilet paper.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible.
- Trailmen and adult leaders should properly train for hikes.
- Ensure that enough water is carried for each attendee.

## Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is defined as any activity where Trailmen are interacting with and/or riding a horse, mule, donkey, or other similar animals.

### Age Recommendation

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that this activity be limited to Hawk Trailmen and older.

### Qualified Supervision

This activity requires at least one supervisor that is at least 18 years of age who is a skilled horseman with advanced knowledge and skills in Western and/or English riding, grooming, saddling, bridling, and tack.

### Restrictions

Riders are restricted to riding horses that have the size, habits, and temperament that pairs best with each Trailman.



### **NOTE**

Additionally, **participation in rodeo events is an unauthorized activity** and must not be part of any Trail Life activity other than as a spectator. Please see the unauthorized activity list for more details and reasons.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

This activity requires Trailmen to have self-control, confidence, patience, gentleness, and to not scare easily.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- A Trailman not having sufficient size, strength, confidence, or experience to control the horse
- Trailmen may not take the safety considerations seriously
- The horse may not be used to riders of differing sizes and weights
- Trailmen may not have appropriate experience to know how to act/handle an unexpected event

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

This activity requires knowing how to act around large animals and how to lead oneself, animals, as well as others.

Risks could include but are not limited to:



- Adult leaders may not have sufficient knowledge to properly teach/train Trailmen in horse handling techniques
- Trailmen or leaders may be uncomfortable around large animals.
- Trailmen may not know how to mount or dismount from a horse safely.
- Trailmen or leaders may not know how to handle an unexpected action by the horse.
- Trailmen, leaders, and animals may encounter an unexpected weather event (thunderstorms, rain, flash floods, etc.)
- An injury or accident may occur to a Trailman or a horse requiring a new plan to be created “on the fly”
- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as river/stream crossings, rocky slopes, muddy terrain, etc. that require specialized knowledge and experience to navigate

- **Equipment Factors**

Horse tack should be regularly inspected by the owner and/or ranch hands and be in good working order. Additionally, all equipment must be the appropriate size for each rider.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- The helmet may not fit properly or come off during a ride
- Saddle or other tack may fail
- Trailmen may drop certain equipment during a ride

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Horseback riding has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Horse uncontrollably bucking or running
- Trailmen getting kicked, stepped on, or bitten by the horse
- Trailmen falling from a horse
- Trailmen and/or horse encountering bees, predators, or other natural hazards
- Trailmen wandering off or getting lost
- Horses can be moody, and unpredictable.
- Horses may suddenly shy, or startle for no apparent reason.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Helmets, long pants, and boots/shoes with a heel must be worn at all times.
- Riders must be supervised in the proximity of horses whether mounted or not.
- Riders must abide by all stable rules.
- Horse stables and riding stalls should be well-lit and free of hazards that are not normally found in a well-maintained stable.
- Trails must be marked and mapped.
- Trail rides should maintain the stable’s guidelines and restrictions on the animal’s pace, passing, courtesy, nearness to others, and other rules.

## **Ice Skating**

Ice skating is defined as any activity where Trailmen are standing on or moving around on a frozen surface using specialized footwear with a blade running the length of the bottom of each shoe/boot. All ice skating activities should take place on artificially created surfaces where there is no possibility of falling through ice into water.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for all Trailmen of any age.

### **Qualified Supervision**

At least one of the adult supervisors must be an experienced ice skater. This may include rink employees/referees.

### **Restrictions**

Ice skating is only allowed at public indoor facilities or similar public outdoor facilities not over water.



### **WARNING**

**Ice skating in winter on frozen open water, i.e., ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, private or public swimming pools, is considered hazardous and is an unauthorized activity for Trail Life USA functions.**

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Because any aged Trailman can participate in either of these activities, Troop leaders should assess each Trailmen, patrol, and buddy group to ensure that risks are assessed and mitigation efforts are made.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Woodlands Trailmen may not be strong enough to balance on skates
- Trailmen may not have the maturity to follow safety guidelines

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries due to not knowing how to start, stop, and turn
- Bruising due to falling
- Injuring others due to crowding or poor skill in controlling direction and speed

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improperly sized or laced skates
- Skate blades may not be sharp
- Leather boots may not be oiled causing blisters

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Unique risks could include but are not limited to:

- Twisting or rolling ankles
- Walking off the ice with skates can cause property damage if things are stepped on while wearing skates.
- Injuries to limbs, head, and/or neck due to falling
- Injuries due to collision with other skaters
- Running over hands, fingers or limbs with sharp steel skate edges.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.

- Clothing should be worn in layers that wick moisture away from the body to avoid hypothermia and/or overheating
- Beginning skaters should be trained by experienced skaters to avoid fallen skaters and supervised by adults.
- Troop leaders should create a check-in system with periodic check-ins required.
- Rests should be scheduled to avoid exhaustion.
- Regular hydration and high energy foods should be provided.

## **Indoor or Artificial Wall Rock Climbing and Low Ropes Challenge Courses**

Indoor or Artificial Wall Rock Climbing is defined as climbing a built structure using artificial hand and footholds while using fixed anchor climbing equipment. These climbing walls and towers are typically around 30-40 feet high. Low Ropes Challenge Courses are defined as man-made obstacles that people must traverse, typically built or assembled on or near ground level. These obstacles are typically used in team-building exercises or individual training.

### **Age Recommendation**

These specific activities are recommended for any age Trailman; however, each participating Trailman's strength, abilities, and maturity should be taken into consideration before allowing them to participate. Troops must abide by any age restrictions imposed by the host/provider.

### **Qualified Supervision**

This activity requires at least one certified climbing/rappelling/ropes course instructor to be present at all times. Typically the venue providing the wall or course will have a certified instructor present; however, if not a Troop leader must be certified by a nationally recognized certifying agency.

Examples of nationally recognized certifying agencies include the Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA), Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), and similar organizations.

### **Restrictions**

Troop leaders should actively monitor their Trailmen and restrict the participation of any Trailman that does not demonstrate the maturity needed to safely participate in this activity.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors** These activities require differing levels of strength and maturity. Troop leaders must assess their Trailmen on an individual basis to determine which activities should be attempted by which Trailmen.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not having sufficient strength to complete the activity or assist another participant
- Trailmen not mature enough to follow safety guidelines or facility rules
- Trailmen having fears of heights or fear of doing certain ropes course activities.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

These activities generally do not require prior knowledge or experience; however, Troop leaders should take the following risk factors into consideration.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen getting splinters from wooden climbing walls, ropes course structures, or metal splinters from cables

- Injury from scraping or falling due to not knowing how to balance on various objects
- Trailmen may not know how to belay other Trailmen safely who are ascending or descending

- **Equipment Factors**

Typically the equipment for these activities are provided by the venue. Troop leaders will need to assess the facility and personal equipment safety before allowing Trailmen to participate.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Helmets may not fit properly or come off during climbing
- Harnesses may not securely fasten or may be damaged
- Low ropes elements may have loose bolts, boards, or cables which could cause injury
- Rope burn or rope entanglement
- Old or defective equipment

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Indoor or Artificial Wall Rock Climbing has similar climbing risks as with outdoor climbing.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not using correct belay technique and injuring themselves or others
  - Trailmen not securing equipment properly
  - Climber injuries
  - Scrapes and bruises
  - Fingers could get sprained or broken
- Low Ropes Challenge Courses include risks of falling and injuries related to falling.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Rolling ankles
- Falling and injuring limbs
- Hitting one's head
- Ropeburn or splinters

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- UIAA 106 certified helmets should be worn for each climbing activity by all Trailmen
- Close-toed and close-heeled shoes should be worn during a low ropes challenge course activity and climbing experience.
- For indoor bouldering (climbing without ropes), climbers should not climb higher than 10 feet above the ground.
- Facilities should have all of their activities and equipment inspected annually according to their state standards.

## **Indoor Skydiving**

Indoor skydiving is defined as an activity where Trailmen enter specialized vertical air tunnels that can cause Trailmen to float and experience freefalling in a controlled environment. Only nationally certified indoor skydiving locations are to be used where Trailmen can participate under the supervision of a certified instructor.

### **Age Recommendation**

Trailmen of all ages can participate in Indoor Skydiving provided that Trailmen are not excluded by the facility restrictions on age, height, or weight to participate.

### **Qualified Supervision**

Instructors must be qualified by the [International Bodyflight Association](#).

### **Restrictions**

Facilities utilized must comply with the safety standards of the [International Bodyflight Association](#).

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow directions.
- Smaller Trailmen may be too light to safely participate.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperience could cause fear.
- Trailmen may not know or properly learn how to maneuver during a flight.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Facility may not adequately inspect their equipment and safety gear.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Indoor Skydiving has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Bumps and bruises from the walls of the apparatus.
- Joint dislocations from grasping fixed items during flight
- Impact injuries from falling onto the safety netting at the bottom of the tunnel.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Troop leaders and facility personnel should ensure that all clothing and safety gear properly fits each participant.

## **Inflatables & Trampolines**

Inflatables and trampoline activities include the use of personal trampolines, commercial inflatable games/obstacles, and commercial trampoline facilities.

### **Age Recommendation**

Trailmen of all ages can participate in Inflatables and Trampolines subject only to any commercial or facility restrictions on age, height, or weight to participate.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety criteria for supervision, training, and youth to leader ratios apply to any activity involving inflatables and trampolines.

### **Restrictions**

Trail Life Troop leaders must follow all restrictions imposed by the commercial vendor or facility or owner of the trampolines.

## **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

### **• Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow directions
- Smaller Trailmen may be injured by larger or stronger Trailmen if they are allowed to participate on the same equipment simultaneously.
- Inability or unwillingness to recognize appropriate boundaries and physical limitations
- Smaller Trailmen may be bounced or projected higher than others.

### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperience or a bad prior experience could cause fear.
- Lack of knowledge could cause Trailmen to misuse equipment.
- Trailmen may not know how to land safely from high jumps.

### **• Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- The facility may not adequately inspect their equipment and safety gear.
- The facility may not provide adequate staff to maintain safe control.
- Inflatable games and activities use electrical pumps, fans, and motors. Troop leaders should be aware of risks associated with electrical equipment.
- Personal trampolines could contain rusted or jagged metal pieces.
- Trailmen could injure themselves on metal stakes or security ropes on inflatable equipment.

### **• Activity-Specific Factors**

Inflatables and trampolines have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Severe head, neck, and back injuries causing paralysis
- Multiple Trailmen jumping or participating at the same time can collide heads and bodies causing injuries.
- Broken bones
- Torn tendons or ligaments from falls
- Bumps and bruises from the walls of the apparatus
- Pulled or strained muscles due to overexertion on equipment
- Injuries resulting from Trailmen being bounced or projected against their control

## **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Troop leaders and facility personnel should ensure that all clothing and safety gear properly fits each participant.
- Troop leaders should inspect every inflatable and trampoline, even commercial facilities, before allowing Trailmen to use them.
- Troop leaders should impose rules that Trailmen should not attempt flips, somersaults, or dives from trampolines or inflatables.
- Troop leaders should train and coach Trailmen on how to safely jump and land on both inflatables and trampolines.

## **Laser Tag**

Laser tag activities include the use of personal laser tag equipment, private group laser tag facilities, and/or commercial laser tag facilities.

### **Age Recommendation**

Trailmen of all ages can participate in laser tag activities subject to any facility restrictions.

### **Qualified Supervision**

This activity requires at least one supervisor who is at least 18 years of age and who is knowledgeable in the laser tag sport and its equipment and can ensure that all equipment is in safe, working order. Commercial facility employees can count as this supervisor.

General Health and Safety criteria for supervision, training, and youth to leader ratios apply to any laser tag activity.

### **Restrictions**

Trail Life Troop leaders must follow all restrictions imposed by the commercial vendor or facility or owner of the laser tag equipment or facility.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inability or unwillingness to follow directions
- Smaller Trailmen may be injured by bigger or stronger Trailmen.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Injury due to not knowing how to properly handle equipment or navigate in the dark.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Laser guns causing eye damage due to shining lasers in your or other's eyes.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Laser Tag has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injury from tripping, falling, or bumping into things or other people when running in the dark.
- Trailmen being separated from their buddy group in the dark

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Trailmen should be instructed to take extra caution both when running in the dark and to avoid exposure of anyone's eyes to laser shots..
- Troop leaders should inspect any private facility or location for hazards before Trailmen play laser tag.

## Mountain Biking

Mountain Biking is defined as an activity where Trailmen use a specialized bicycle to traverse trails and different terrain with obstacles.

### Age Recommendation

Trailmen of all ages can enjoy Mountain Biking.

### Qualified Supervision

An adult with knowledge of skills and equipment used in Mountain Biking must be present. There must be an adult positioned at each of the front and rear of the group.

### Restrictions

Use of proper fitting helmets in good condition is required.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen riding a distance or difficulty beyond their abilities
- Younger Trailmen riding erratically or in an uncontrolled manner

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Lack of knowledge of the proper use of gearing on a bicycle can cause increased fatigue or lack of being able to keep up with the group (walking up hill, etc.).
- Road Cycling rules including hand signals may not be known or learned.
- A Trailman could stop at a dangerous spot on a Trail unseen by those coming behind.
- Inexperienced Trailmen may ride at speeds that are too fast or slow or out of sync with the rest of the group.
- Trail information may be out of date or trail conditions may have changed since last trip.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Equipment failure during a ride (flat tire, missing or dysfunctional air pump, broken chain, chain slipping off of gears, etc.)
- Gear shifters not functioning properly
- Using a non-certified helmet, an unsecured or improperly fitted helmet, or a helmet for another sport.
- Using an improperly sized bicycle or one that is not adjusted for height properly causing increased fatigue or injury
- Improperly adjusted brakes or gears causing issues or injuries

#### • **Activity-Specific Factors**

Mountain Biking has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailman may become lost on the route.
- Collision with objects (trees) or other riders
- Surface hazards (mud, loose soil, rocks, etc.) and trail irregularity (sharp turns, drops, etc.)
- Dangers associated with man-made or natural jumps and stunts



- Water and mud hazards
- Weather hazards
- Poison ivy
- Wild animals
- Pedestrians or Equestrian participants on the Trail.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be present and have access to a First-Aid kit
- Ensure that your trip will both begin and end in daylight.
- Know where emergency services are located along your route.
- Riders should maintain a safe distance between those in front of and behind them.
- Riders should give proper notice and maintain a safe distance while passing other riders.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and the presence of other cyclists, pedestrians, and other possible hazards (rocks, roots, holes, etc.).
- Make sure all participants are familiar with and aware of the designated route and preplanned meet-up points. Participants should each have a map of the bike route, when applicable.
- When approaching a trail, road, or railroad crossing, slow down and stop if necessary, look left, right, back and ahead. It may be necessary to walk your bike across a crossing.
- Check equipment such as tires, brakes, chains, seat position, handlebar positions, and gears. Adjust reflective mirrors.
- Ensure that bike is the proper size and type for the rider and the conditions.
- Make sure equipment is brought on trips for minor repairs and adjustments including first aid kit, small tool kit, tire repair kit, lubricant, air pump, locks to secure the bicycle, helmets, ID tags, emergency cash, and weather-appropriate gear.
- When traveling long distances carry fluids and energy snacks. Periodically stop and rest before re-summing journey. Each youth must have access to his own water.

## **Moving-Water Boating - Class II-IV**

Moving-Water boating activities include traversing any body of water that is rated by the [American Whitewater Association](#) as any of Class II through Class IV using a canoe, kayak, or boat/raft.

### **Age Recommendation**

Any outfitter or guide will have its own rules, regulations, and age limitations that must be followed.

Trail Life recommends that moving-water Boating activities be limited to Navigators and Adventurers, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. See the restrictions section for further details.

It is highly recommended that Woodlands Trailman not participate in moving-water boating activities.

### **Qualified Supervision**

At least two qualified adults must be present, either

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications for any trip on Class II waters.
- Any boating activity done on Class III or IV rapids should be guided by a certified outfitter.

If a certified lifeguard or certified instructor is provided, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when boating or tubing in open water at all times.

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+



### TIP

Adults should be well versed in the use and training of the craft being used. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)

### Restrictions

- Swimming Competency
  - Participants in various boating activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
  - This test must be completed before a youth can participate in activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a “qualified adult” is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).
  - Participants must have shown at least a **Swimmer competence** in the swimming test. If any participant is unable to complete the Swimmer swim test, then he must ride in a boat with an adult who is a certified lifeguard or an adult trained in water rescue techniques
- PFD’s must be worn by all participants regardless of swimming competency.
- PFD’s must be inherently buoyant (NOT inflatable) and US Coast Guard approved.
- All moving-water boating activities must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- Moving Water activities above a Class IV as defined by the American Whitewater Association are not authorized and should NOT be attempted by any Trailman.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Overestimating swimming abilities of younger participants to handle river conditions
- Lack of strength to control the craft, remain in the craft, self-rescue, or assist others in need
- Shortness of stature affecting the fit of craft. E.g. foot braces, thigh braces in a kayak
- Lack of maturity to understand or disregard for the risks associated with moving-water activities
- Inability to resist peer pressure and attempt a paddle beyond their skill level
- Older Trailmen may be overconfident in their ability.
- Older adults may not have sufficient strength to control craft.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperience with river hazards and avoidance
- Inexperience with self-rescue may put others at risk.
- Lack of inner discipline/strength to voice concerns about safety matters
- Attempting a risky run rather than portage around
- Experience identifying difficulty of rapids (classification level of rapids changes with water levels)
- Portaging knowledge and ability to properly carry craft
- Supervisors may not have adequate water rescue techniques, including swift-water rescues.
- Insufficient knowledge to create a proper float plan
- Trailmen may not have proper knowledge to handle adverse weather or water conditions.
- Navigational skills may not be adequate.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Incorrectly fitted helmet or personal floatation device (PFD)
- Using the wrong type of kayak or canoe for the chosen river conditions (sit atop vs. closed, tracking vs. maneuverability)
- Proper helmet type and fit for whitewater activities
- Correct rescue gear and knowledge of its use
- Swimwear and/or wetsuits could become torn on sharp objects.
- Loss of paddles
- Crafts becoming damaged and leaking

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Moving-water Boating has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Drowning
- Underestimating the class of waters after rains
- Lack of a guide familiar with a particular stretch of water
- Coldwater immersion, spray, or cold weather can drain strength and cause hypothermia.
- High water flow (rain, snowmelt, or upstream dam releases) increases difficulty and risk.
- Unknown boating areas may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Hazards from going over waterfalls
- Weather-related factors such as lightning, wind, and rain
- Sunburn
- River conditions changing
- Route not properly scouted
- Unique first-aid related to activity
- Extended trips on the water increase the risks for exposure-related injuries.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone.
- Follow all guidelines imposed by any outfitter.
- Every Trailmen should wear a properly fitted, US Coast Guard approved PFD with a signaling whistle while participating in any boating activity.
- Trailmen should be familiar with the type of craft they are using for each activity and know how to properly correct an overturned craft.
- All Trailmen should receive prior instruction on how to properly handle all boating equipment.

- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible. (Reflected sun off of the water can cause sunburn also.)
- Trailmen should use a strap on their prescription glasses and/or sunglasses that floats when dropped in water.
- Avoid overcrowding.
- Supervising adults must stay with the youth when boating, tubing, or participating in other open water activities at all times.
- Youth Trailmen must not be allowed to travel on any water unsupervised.
- Set up a system of tracking all Trailmen prior to putting in.
- Review the [Safety Code of American Whitewater](#) including the Universal River Signals.
- Avoid upstream and downstream sides of dams. Know where they are on your route.
- Boats should have at least one extra PFD and a throwable tethered flotation device.



## NOTE

### Helpful Resources-

- [Windy.com](#) or the [Windy App](#) - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.
- [AmericanWhitewater.org](#) - the American Whitewater Association, creators of the *International Scale of River Difficulty* definitions for classes of whitewater. Includes a database of rivers and river segments with their class of difficulty.

## Outdoor Top-Rope Rock Climbing, Rappelling, and Mountaineering

Outdoor Top-Rope Climbing is defined as a climbing route where the climbing rope is anchored to stable objects on top of a boulder/outcropping such that the climber will be tied into a rope and harness and begin the climb on the ground and end the climb back on the ground where he began. Rappelling is defined as descending a rope from a fixed anchored position to the ground below. Mountaineering is defined as integrating hiking, climbing, and other trek-specific skills (snow traversing, backpacking, etc.) to scale mountains or high peaks.

### Age Recommendation

Any contracted guide or organization may set particular age restrictions, and Troop leaders should follow those guidelines.

The Trail Life Home Office highly recommends that these activities be limited to Adventurers and adults.

### Qualified Supervision

Required to be led by either a Trail Life leader or contracted instructor/guide who holds a nationally or regionally recognized certification for climbing/rappelling/mountaineering.

Examples of nationally/regionally recognized certifying agencies include: the American Mountain Guiding Association (AMGA), American Alpine Institute, National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Outward Bound, a Mountain Rescue Association (MRA), or a regionally based Climbing organization or school.

### Restrictions

**IMPORTANT**

A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.

Climbs can only be attempted that are rated on the Yosemite Decimal System as Class 4 and below. (see [www.climber.org/data/decimal.html](http://www.climber.org/data/decimal.html))

**IMPORTANT**

The following climbing activities are unauthorized activities and must NOT be part of any Trail Life activity:

- YDS Class 5 climbs
- “Big Wall” climbing
- Lead climbing
- Trad climbing
- Speed climbing
- Technical tree climbing using ropes and harnesses

Please see the unauthorized activity list for more details and reasons for each activity.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

These activities require a high level of maturity and self-awareness from EVERY participant. Trailmen need to be able to be trusted to know their own fears, strengths, limits, and abilities.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- A Trailman not having sufficient strength to complete the activity or assist another Trailman
- Trailmen may not take the safety considerations seriously
- Trailmen may not be mature enough or vocal to express fear or inability
- Trailmen may not have appropriate experience to know how to act/handle an incident

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Each of these activities requires very specialized knowledge about terrain, equipment, weather, and unforeseen scenarios.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Adult leaders may not have sufficient knowledge or experience leading a certain activity
- Trailmen and leaders may not know the proper knots, ropes, carabiners, and other equipment that is suitable for each particular activity.
- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected equipment failure
- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected weather event
- An injury or accident may occur requiring a new plan to be created “on the fly”
- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as loose/falling rocks, ice, water, mudslide, rockslide, avalanche, etc.

- **Equipment Factors**

Each of these activities requires specific equipment that has been maintained well and is in working order.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Equipment may not have been properly maintained, retired, or replaced when necessary
- Incorrect equipment is used. Ex. A decorative carabiner was used instead of a climbing carabiner, or a non-UIAA 106 certified helmet was worn
- Equipment usage records were not kept resulting in no or incomplete knowledge of damage to certain equipment
- Incorrect clothing can cause unnecessary injuries

• **Activity-Specific Factors**

- Top-rope Rock Climbing requires that Trailmen learn how to correctly belay their fellow Trailmen as well as know how to determine hand/foot hold reliability.

Unique risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not using correct belay technique and injuring themselves or others
- Trailmen may drop equipment or personal property from the top of the climbing structure.
- Trailmen not securing equipment properly
- Anchoring systems were installed improperly
- Climber injuries
- Rappelling requires that Trailmen know how to use specific equipment and have the strength and self-control to properly use it.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Backup belayers are not paying attention
- A Trailman gets injured and/or stuck during a decent
- A Trailman has an uncontrolled descent
- A piece of equipment either failing or not working properly
- Mountaineering has many unique factors beyond the ones previously mentioned. Specific factors to take into account are factors and risks related to weather, different terrains, and emergency situations.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- A sudden turn of weather without proper equipment
- Trailmen encountering unfamiliar or unplanned for terrain. Ex. Ice or Snow cravasses, Ice or snow bridges, high water crossings, loss of a trail, etc.
- Injuries that require evacuation
- Hypothermia
- Trailmen may not be adequately trained to climb as a team
- Trailmen may not have the skill or training to perform a self-arrest

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Certified instructors/guides must be present and should check all apparel and equipment for the suitability, including personally owned apparel and equipment.
- Proper commands for each activity should be used by all Trailmen.
- UIAA 106 certified helmets should be worn for each activity by all Trailmen.
- Troop leaders should maintain usage/damage logs for all Troop equipment and request to see the logs for any contracted outfitter's equipment.
- Troop leaders should not attempt any activity if any Trailman does not adequately demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to safely perform each activity.
- For outdoor bouldering (climbing without ropes), climbers should not climb higher than 10 feet above the ground.
- All gear should be regularly inspected and retired according to industry standards.

## Roller Activities

Roller activities are defined as any activity where Trailmen use roller skates, rollerblades, skateboards, scooters, and/or segways.

### Age Recommendation

Trailmen of all ages can enjoy Roller Activities. Segways may have certain age or height requirements that should be followed.

### Qualified Supervision

At least one of the adult supervisors must be experienced for the chosen activity or activities. This may include rink employees/referees.

### Restrictions

Helmets are required in outdoor areas. Wrist pads, elbow pads, and knee guards are highly recommended.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may not understand the risks associated with the activity.
- Younger Trailmen may not follow rules of the activity.
- Younger Trailmen may not be able to be aware of their surroundings including obstacles or other skaters.
- Younger Trailmen may not balance as well on equipment.
- Older Trailmen may overestimate their ability.

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Lack of skating experience increases the likelihood of injury.
- Youth may not know how to stop, safely fall, and how to get up.
- Youth may not know how to control their speed or balance.
- Trailmen may try to skate above their level when in a crowd with different ages and abilities.

#### • **Equipment Factors**

All participants should be familiar with how equipment is worn and how to secure properly.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Poor condition of equipment (includes laces, wheels, bearings, motor, etc.) increases the likelihood of injury
- Helmets may not meet the safety standards developed by SNELL, ANSI and/or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

#### • **Activity-Specific Factors**

Roller Sports have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Collision injuries with other skaters or other obstacles
- Skating on uneven surfaces increases the risk of falls
- Falls from elevated surfaces and collisions could break bones, dislocate joints, and leave bruises, abrasions, contusions, and/or cuts.

### Unique Safety Recommendations

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Roller activity injuries are not caused by overuse but by sudden twists or loss of balance which causes traumatic injuries.
- Wearing of protective gear will greatly reduce the risk of injury.
- Participants should be instructed on how to stop, fall, get up, and control their speed prior to beginning.

## **Shooting Sports - Airsoft/Paintball**

The shooting sports activities of Airsoft and Paintball include both classroom learning/demonstrations of the firearms as well as participating in any airsoft practice or game.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

An individual who is the designated Safety Officer who has read and understands the ASTM International Standards for Safe Field Operation as well as a Troop leader who has read and understands the Trail Life Shooting Sports Airsoft Mentor Guide (this guide can be found on Trail Life Connect).

### **Restrictions**

Trailmen must NOT be allowed to participate in any Airsoft or Paintball activity without having approved full face mask protection that is not damaged.

Restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### **• Participant Age Factors**

Trailmen need to be trustworthy and mature in order to handle any sort of firearm.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not take the safety considerations seriously
- Trailmen may not be mature enough or vocal to express fear
- Younger Trailmen may be more easily injured from airsoft BBs/paintballs while navigating a game course
- Trailmen may not be able to make appropriate decisions regarding who and when to shoot or not shoot.

#### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not have appropriate experience to know how to act around or handle an airsoft or paintball firearm.
- Trailmen may remove safety equipment in inappropriate areas.
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook



- **Equipment Factors**

Airsoft equipment is specialized and all participants should be familiar with how all equipment should work and when it's damaged or should not be used.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Airsoft/paintball firearms could malfunction for several different reasons
- Face masks may be damaged or not appropriate
- Game arena barriers may be damaged or malfunctioning endangering non-participants
- Firearms may be not calibrated correctly for appropriate projectile velocities

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Airsoft/paintball games and firearms have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Airsoft firearms look like real guns and can easily be confused for one
- Taking a shot from an airsoft/paintball firearm can cause bodily injuries of various degrees such as bruises and other soft-tissue damage.
- Trailmen may get injured from running and jumping. (ie. rolled/twisted ankle, bumping into obstacles or people, tripping, falling, etc.)

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- When a participant is not actively shooting or playing an airsoft/paintball game, that person's firearm should have the magazine or battery removed.
- Every Trailman participating should wear a full face mask with ear protection.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.

## **Shooting Sports - Archery**

The shooting sports activity of Archery includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of bow and/or arrow as well as using any type of bow and/or arrow for any purpose.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

An "Instructor" or "Coach" certified by USA Archery, National Field Archery Association (NFAA), International Bowhunting Association (IBO), Archery Shooter's Association (ASA), Archer in School Programs, or a recognized local or state organization.

### **Restrictions**

Restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

For archery activities using broadheads, Troops should follow local legal hunting age restrictions.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not knowing when it's appropriate to approach a target.
- More experienced Trailmen may be over confident or want to "show off."
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper equipment for the size and strength of Trailman increases the possibility for injury.
- Arrow ricochet
- Catastrophic failure of bow (frequently related to dry firing)
- Catastrophic failure of the arrow (impaled in bow hand)

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Archery has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen being accidentally shot
- Common minor injuries include abrasions and blisters
- Impalement, laceration, or severe bleeding
- Severe laceration due to injury by broadhead arrowhead

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Stop the Bleed Training
- Always carry target arrows with both hands.
- Broadheads should only be carried in a hard quiver designed to and completely covering the razor blades.
- Broadheads should only be used during hunting big game.
- A suitable arrow stop or 150 feet of level ground should be provided to stop arrows that miss the target.
- At least one Troop leader with current Wilderness First-Aid training.
- Always keep the bow and arrows pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Only draw the bow when ready to shoot.
- Always keep the bow unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.

## Shooting Sports - BB/Pellet

The shooting sports activities of BB Gun and Pellet Guns include both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of BB/Pellet gun and its corresponding ammunition as well as using any type of BB/Pellet gun for any purpose.

### Age Recommendation

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### Qualified Supervision

At least one designated Safety Instructor or Coach who possesses an in-depth understanding of and is well versed in following/teaching the NRA gold standard gun safety rules as well as NRA basic gun safety and the applicable basic firearm instructional book/video and those rulebooks most directly applicable to the activity being performed.

A youth NRA Apprentice Instructor can operate a range and lead instruction ONLY under the direct supervision of a certified Range Safety Officer.

### Restrictions

Restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### • **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

#### • **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not knowing when it's appropriate to approach a target.
- More experienced Trailmen may be over confident or want to "show off."
- Instructors inexperienced in leading youth.
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook

#### • **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper equipment for the size and strength of Trailman increases the possibility for injury.
- Misfire or jammed gun

#### • **Activity-Specific Factors**

BB/Pellet Shooting has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen being accidentally shot can cause bruises or other soft tissue damage, including damage to an eye.
- Common minor injuries include abrasions and blisters.

- Injuries related to ricochet

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Ensure that eye and ear protection are used.



### **TIP** **Helpful Resources**

Rulebooks: [rulebooks.nra.org](http://rulebooks.nra.org)

Safety Rules: [training.nra.org/nra-gun-safety-rules.aspx](http://training.nra.org/nra-gun-safety-rules.aspx)

## **Shooting Sports - Competition**

The shooting sports activity of Competition includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of firearm used in a competition and its corresponding ammunition as well as participating in any activity of a shooting competition.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

Certified instructors/coaches from a Nationally, Regionally, or State certified competitive shooting organization other than Trail Life;

**and/or**

At least two (2) qualified adults who are either a current certified instructor, certified coach, or a certified range safety officer certified by a National, Regional, or State organization in existence and issuing credentials for greater than ten years in the discipline the organization is certifying.

### **Restrictions**

Restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multi-

tude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not knowing when it's appropriate to approach a target.
- More experienced Trailmen may be over confident or want to "show off."
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper equipment for the size and strength of Trailman increases the possibility for injury.
- Misfire or jammed gun
- Items that hold guns: holsters, slings, dump tables/barrels should be serviceable and used properly so the firearm doesn't fall.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Competition has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen being accidentally shot
- Damaged hearing due to shooting happening throughout the competition
- Running, jumping, and climbing could result in trips, falls, or injuries.
- Switching between firearms could result in a dropped firearm.
- Timed competitions could lead to a lowering of an individual's awareness of safety protocols.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Ensure that eye and ear protection are used.

## **Shooting Sports - Hunting**

The shooting sports activity of Hunting includes classroom learning/demonstrations of local hunting laws and guidelines, firearms and ammunition used, safety practices for any type of hunting, as well as participating in any type of hunting activity.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for hunting activities is determined by State and local regulations and the discretion of the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

**Qualified Supervision**

At least two veteran hunters experienced in the specific type of game being hunted as well as the terrain being hunted, who hold current instructor certifications from either the NRA, NMLRA, NFAA, or ASA for the firearm being used, are currently licensed in the state where the hunting takes place, and each holds a hunter education certification.

**Restrictions**

Unless a father and son are the only ones hunting, all Trail Life child safety and youth protection rules should apply.

**IMPORTANT**

All Trailmen should hold a state required hunter education certificate.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not having proper knowledge of or experience with the firearm or archery equipment used.
- Trailmen may not remember or know hunting signaling protocols.
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Firearm/Archery equipment malfunctions
- Defective or damaged stands, blinds, and covers could cause injury.
- Safety harnesses and straps may be damaged or defective.
- Vehicles used in hunting present the possibilities for injuries.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Hunting has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries or death resulting from a negligent discharge from a firearm.
- Falling off of a hunting stand or ladder
- Trailmen, youth and/or adult, could become lost
- Interacting with other hunters
- Injuries related to moving or transporting large game
- Injuries from using knives during the field dressing/cleaning of game

- Encountering wild predators (ex. Bear, coyote, wolf, Mountain Lion, Alligator, etc.)
- Snakebites
- Tick bites that could lead to Lyme disease

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Ensure that appropriate and adequate signalling clothing is used.
- Know and understand how to use any specific hunting equipment, such as tree stands and harnesses.

## **Shooting Sports - Muzzleloader**

The shooting sports activity of Muzzleloader includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of Muzzleloading gun and its corresponding ammunition and accessories as well as using any type of Muzzleloading gun for any purpose.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

For any instruction, at least one current and active Certified NRA or NMLRA Muzzleloading Instructor is required whether instruction takes place in a classroom or on a range.

When shooting at a range, at least one current certified NRA Range Safety Officer (RSO), NRA Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO), or NMLRA Range Officer is required to supervise.

Any Range Safety Officer must be intimately familiar with the type of Muzzleloaders present on the range or must find additional expertise to support.

A youth NRA Apprentice Instructor can operate a range and lead instruction ONLY under the direct supervision of a certified Range Safety Officer.

### **Restrictions**

Trailmen need to have completed the basic Trail Badge for the specific type of Muzzleloader being used (Pistol, Rifle, or Shotgun).

Hearing and Eye protection are required.

Non-Synthetic long sleeve shirts, pants, and shoes (not open-toed or open-heeled) are required.

Additional restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multi-

tude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper or incorrect knowledge of loading and usage of the firearm
- Trailmen not having proper knowledge of or experience with the firearm equipment used.
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Stray particles from guns, ammunition and targets
- Recoil bruising
- Firearm equipment malfunctions
- Firearms may not be operationally safe.
- Incorrect powder, primers, patching, and bullets could be used.
- Ramrods could be defective or not marked for “loaded” and “unloaded.”
- Incomplete accessory kit

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Muzzleloading has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries or death resulting from a negligent discharge of a firearm
- Loud Noise
- Burns
- Smashed, pinched, or otherwise injured fingers and/or hands
- Insufficient supervision to ensure proper loading of the firearm

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop’s Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Safety glasses and protective gloves should be used for cleaning firearms.
- All firearms should be inspected by the RSOs and instructors for operational safety.

## **Shooting Sports - Pistol**

The shooting sports activity of Pistol includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of pistol and its corresponding ammunition and accessories as well as using any type of pistol for any purpose.



### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the individuals identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

For any instruction, at least one current and active certified NRA instructor or coach is required whether instruction takes place in a classroom or on a range. Any other civilian, national, regional, or state credentialing organization older than 10 years old with pistol-specific training and a full or partial youth instruction emphasis can also suffice.

When shooting at a range, at least one current certified NRA Range Safety Officer (RSO) or NRA Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO) must also be present and is required to supervise.

Any Range Safety Officer and Instructor/Coach must be intimately familiar with the types of pistols present on the range or must find additional expertise to support.

Parents must be present if required by state law.

A youth NRA Apprentice Instructor can operate a range and lead instruction ONLY under the direct supervision of a certified Range Safety Officer.

### **Restrictions**

- All participants must attend a Safety and informational class before shooting on the range.
- License restriction as applicable per state
- Caliber restriction is based on the law of the applicable jurisdiction, as well as on the range standards and control capability
- Hearing and eye protection are required.
- Additional restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### **• Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

#### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper or incorrect knowledge of loading and usage of the firearm
- Trailmen not having proper knowledge of or experience with the firearm equipment used
- "Flagging" or pointing a pistol in someone's direction is more likely than with other firearms.
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook.

#### **• Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Stray particles from guns, ammunition, and targets

- Wrist recoil injury
- Firearm equipment malfunctions
- Holsters may cause injury or negligent discharges.
- Firearms may not be operationally safe.
- Misfire or jammed gun
- Ranges may not be properly set up.
- Incorrect ammunition for the type and caliber of pistol being used
- Ammunition age, condition, and load must be assessed and in good condition.
- Incomplete accessory kit

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Pistol shooting has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries or death resulting from a negligent discharge from a firearm.
- Loud noise
- Smashed, pinched, or otherwise injured fingers and/or hands
- Insufficient supervision to ensure proper loading of the firearm

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Safety glasses and protective gloves should be used for cleaning firearms.
- All firearms should be inspected by the RSOs and instructors for operational safety.
- Wash hands and face after shooting or cleaning firearms.

## **Shooting Sports - Rifle**

The shooting sports activity of Rifle includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of rifle and its corresponding ammunition and accessories as well as using any type of rifle for any purpose.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the individuals identified as providing qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

For any instruction, at least one current and active certified NRA, 4H, Project Appleseed (RWVA), or Civilian Marksmanship Program instructor or coach is required whether instruction takes place in a classroom or on a range. Any other civilian, national, regional, or state credentialing organization older than 10 years old with rifle-specific training and a full or partial youth instruction emphasis can also suffice.

When shooting at a range, at least one current certified NRA Range Safety Officer (RSO), NRA Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO), or NMLRA Range Officer must also be present and is required to supervise.

Any Range Safety Officer and Instructor/Coach must be intimately familiar with the type of rifle present on the range or must find additional expertise to support.

Parents must be present if required by state law.

A youth NRA Apprentice Instructor can operate a range and lead instruction ONLY under the direct supervision of a certified Range Safety Officer.

### **Restrictions**

- All participants must attend a Safety and informational class before shooting on the range.
- License restriction as applicable per state
- Caliber restriction is based on the law of the applicable jurisdiction, as well as on the range standards and control capability
- Trailman should be able to control and safely raise the rifle to the shoulder.
- Hearing and eye protection are required.
- Additional restrictions will be determined on an individual basis by the person(s) identified as being qualified supervision.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### **• Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

#### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper or incorrect knowledge of loading and usage of the firearm
- Trailmen not having proper knowledge of or experience with the firearm equipment used
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook.

#### **• Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Stray particles from guns, ammunition, and targets
- Recoil bruising
- Firearm equipment malfunctions
- Firearms may not be operationally safe.
- Misfire or jammed gun
- Incorrect ammunition for the type and caliber of the rifle being used
- Ammunition age, condition, and/or load may be unsatisfactory.
- Incomplete accessory kit

#### **• Activity-Specific Factors**

Rifle shooting has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries or death resulting from a negligent discharge from a firearm.
- Loud noise
- Smashed, pinched, or otherwise injured fingers and/or hands

- Insufficient supervision to ensure proper loading of the firearm

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Safety glasses and protective gloves should be used for cleaning firearms.
- All firearms should be inspected by the RSOs and instructors for operational safety.
- Wash hands and face after shooting or cleaning firearms.

## **Shooting Sports - Shotgun**

The shooting sports activity of Shotgun includes both classroom learning/demonstrations of any type of Shotgun and its corresponding ammunition and accessories as well as using any type of Shotgun for any purpose.

### **Age Recommendation**

The age appropriateness for shooting sports activities is up to the discretion of the person(s) identified as providing qualified supervision.

### **Qualified Supervision**

For any instruction, at least one current and active certified NRA, Amateur Trap Association (ATA), National Skeet Shooting Association (NSSA), National Sporting Clays Association (NSCA), or USA Shooting Sports (USAS) instructor or coach is required whether instruction takes place in a classroom or on a range. Any other civilian, national, regional, or state credentialing organization older than 10 years old with shotgun-specific training and a full or partial youth instruction emphasis can also suffice.

When shooting at a range, at least one current certified NRA Range Safety Officer (RSO) or NRA Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO) must also be present and is required to supervise.

Any Range Safety Officer and Instructor/Coach must be intimately familiar with the type of shotgun present on the range or must find additional expertise to support.

Parents must be present if required by state law.

A youth NRA Apprentice Instructor can operate a range and lead instruction ONLY under the direct supervision of a certified Range Safety Officer.

### **Restrictions**

- All participants must attend a Safety and informational class before shooting on the range.
- License restriction as applicable per state.
- Caliber restriction is based on the law of the applicable jurisdiction, as well as on the range standards and control capability
- Trailman should be able to control and safely raise the shotgun to the shoulder.
- Hearing and eye protection are required.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen have unique risk factors according to their age, size, strength, maturity, and skill level. The qualified supervisor must determine with assistance from Troop leaders any specific risk factors that will need to be addressed and mitigated.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Improper or incorrect knowledge of loading and usage of the firearm
- Trailmen not having proper knowledge of or experience with the firearm equipment used
- Trailmen may not know or adhere to the Trail Life Shooting Sports safety guidelines in the Shooting Sports Guidebook.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Stray particles from guns, ammunition, and targets
- Recoil bruising
- Firearm equipment malfunctions
- Firearms may not be operationally safe.
- Misfire or jammed gun
- Incorrect ammunition for the type and gauge of shotgun being used
- Skeet and clay equipment could cause injury.
- Ammunition age, condition, and load must be assessed and in good condition.
- Incomplete accessory kit

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Shotgun shooting has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries or death resulting from a negligent discharge from a firearm.
- Loud noise
- Smashed, pinched, or otherwise injured fingers and/or hands
- Insufficient supervision to ensure proper loading of the firearm

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit and the Troop's Range Kit.
- Always check your range for their Emergency Medical Action Plan (EMAP), and select a different range if no plan is available.
- Always treat a firearm as if it was loaded.
- Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction, meaning that if it were to go off, it would not cause injury or damage.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Always keep the firearm unloaded until ready to use.
- Always be aware of what is behind, beyond, and beside your target before shooting.
- Safety glasses and protective gloves should be used for cleaning firearms.
- All firearms should be inspected by the RSOs and instructors for operational safety.

- Wash hands and face after shooting or cleaning firearms.

## **Snow Sledding / Tubing**

The activities of snow sledding and snow tubing are defined as using any type of sled, tube, or craft to slide down any incline covered in snow.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for all Trailmen of any age.

### **Qualified Supervision**

General Health and Safety Guide provisions for supervision apply. However, additional supervision should be provided (above the minimum youth/adult ratios) to maximize the safety and protection of the youth.

### **Restrictions**

There must be sufficient lighting for the activity. All activities must cease at nightfall if adequate lighting is not available.

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

#### **• Participant Age Factors**

Because any aged Trailman can participate in either of these activities, Troop leaders should assess each Trailmen, patrol, and buddy group to ensure that risks are assessed and mitigation efforts are made.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not have the maturity to follow safety guidelines

#### **• Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Injuries due to the inability to stop or turn to avoid collisions
- Injuring others due to crowding
- Injuries due to being run over

#### **• Equipment Factors**

- Splits or breaks in sleds/toboggans
- Warping of toboggans
- Rails and/or steering pins being bent, loose, or falling off of sleds
- Leaks or lacerations in tubes
- No or incorrect grade of toboggan wax
- Sharp edges on sleds, snow dishes, or other snow sledding equipment

#### **• Activity-Specific Factors**

Unique risks could include but are not limited to:

- Insufficient space left between sledders on a run
- Hypothermia
- Possible temporary vision impairment on bright days without eye protection
- Injuries due to collision with other sledders
- Running over fingers, hands, etc with steel runners or other undersurfaces of snow sledding equipment

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- The downhill course must not be in a street or have any obstacles that could present an opportunity for collision, including crossing streets. Inspect the course carefully prior to engaging in downhill activities.
- Given the difficulty in controlling toboggans, sleds or inner tubes, helmets are **strongly recommended** for all youth and adults participating in tobogganing, sledding, or tubing.
- Velocity and speed should be controlled, or controllable, in order to prevent 'runaway', out of control sledding.
- Use a behind-head band to hold prescription glasses and sunglasses in case they fall off.
- Clothing should be worn in layers that wick moisture away from the body to avoid hypothermia and/or overheating.
- If a sledder or slider becomes chilly, move that participant to a warm place to recuperate. Adults should stay with and constantly check that participant for signs of hypothermia.
- Sunscreen should be used for any exposed areas.
- The activity should always be on a definable track, or course, with no obstructions to well beyond the planned landing zone.
- Clothing should be worn in layers that wick moisture away from the body to avoid hypothermia and/or overheating.
- Sunscreen should be used for any exposed areas.
- Periodic headcounts must be done to ensure the safety of the youth.
- Equipment appropriate for the activity must be inspected for any safety issues.

## **Snowshoeing / Cross Country Skiing**

The activities of snowshoeing and cross country skiing are defined as hiking or trekking activities where Trailmen use specialized equipment (snowshoes or skis) to traverse on snow trails or other marked paths during the winter. The courses these activities could include hillside treks on slopes that are less steep than those of downhill skiing.

### **Age Recommendation**

The Trail Life Home Office recommends these activities for Hawk Trailmen or older.

### **Qualified Supervision**

A Troop leader or individual with above-average experience in the relevant activity (snowshoeing or cross country skiing) will accompany the Troop during the entire activity.

### **Restrictions**



#### **CAUTION**

**Backcountry snowshoeing or cross-country skiing where avalanche risks exist are unauthorized activities and should NOT be attempted by any Trailman.**

Trailmen should never ski or traverse closed areas. It is highly recommended to use existing ski trails or snowshoe paths.

**A current, complete High Adventure Medical Form is required for this activity.**

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Because most Trailmen can participate in either of these activities, Troop leaders should assess each Trailmen, patrol, and buddy group to ensure that risks are assessed and mitigation efforts are made.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen not maintaining the 3-person buddy system due to differing levels of experience
- Trailmen may not be aware or able to avoid other hazards around them (ex. Snow drifts, ice patches, drop-offs, etc.)
- Trailmen may overestimate their own abilities and attempt trails that are too advanced for their experience level
- Trailmen may not have the maturity to follow safety guidelines
- Trailmen may not have the physical stamina to keep up with other Trailmen or leaders

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Each of these activities requires very specialized knowledge about terrain, equipment, weather, and unforeseen scenarios.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen or leaders may encounter an unexpected weather events
- Trailmen could encounter various terrain risks such as ice, water, avalanche, etc.
- Injuries far from the trailhead
- Muscle and joint soreness afterward
- Falling injuries due to improper balancing or crossing your skis
- Injuring others due to crowding

- **Equipment Factors**

Skiing and snowboarding has unique equipment associated with these activities that each Trailman should be familiar with and understand how to operate safely.

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Faulty boots, laces, bindings, snowshoes, poles, and/or skis
- Clothing getting caught, ripped, or broken exposing Trailmen to the weather
- Daypacks or backpacks with contents becoming wet
- Goggles not fitting or overly fogging
- Impaling oneself on a ski pole

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Skiing and snowboarding both have high risk of injury along with several outside risk factors that are unique to these activities.

Unique risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen getting lost
- Skis becoming crossed or spread too far apart causing bodily injury
- Twisting or rolling ankles
- Injuries to limbs, head, and/or neck due to falling
- Falling debris (ice, tree branches, dead trees, etc.)
- Hypothermia
- Snow blindness
- Sunburn
- Chapped skin
- Exhaustion or dehydration

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.



- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Clothing should be worn in layers that wick moisture away from the body to avoid hypothermia and/or overheating.
- Sunscreen should be used for any exposed areas of skin.
- Trailmen should be assessed according to their own ability and limited to trails according to their level of proficiency.
- Trailmen and buddy groups should plan out their paths of travel and submit to Troop leadership prior to beginning the activity so Troop leaders know where each group will be located. If groups of Trailmen are going to be out of sight or earshot of qualified supervision, every participant should know and have agreed upon predetermined boundary markers for each activity.
- If possible, all groups should stay within radio or cell phone contact.
- The 3-person buddy system should be utilized by all Trailmen while participating.
- Beginning skiers and snowshoers should be given instructions by qualified instructors.
- Troops should create a “lost plan” that is known and understood by all participants.
- Troop leaders should create a check-in system with periodic check-ins required.
- Rests should be scheduled to avoid exhaustion.
- Regular hydration and high energy foods should be provided.

## Swimming

Swimming may or may not be a part of other aquatic activities and could take place in any body of water where swimming is permitted by the owner or authorities, whether the site is natural or man-made.

### Age Recommendation

Trail Life youth of all ages may enjoy swimming, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. Limited swimming ability may impact supervision, site choices, etc.

### Qualified Supervision

At least two qualified adults must be present, either

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications

If the pool/lake/provider provides a certified lifeguard or certified instructor, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when swimming in open water at all times.

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Swimmers	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

### Restrictions

- Swimming Competency

- Participants in various swimming activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
- This test must be completed before a youth can participate in activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a “qualified adult” is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).

**Table 1. Swimming Competency Test Results**

Swimmer	May swim in all designated swim areas
Beginner	May only swim in the shallow end, or where he can touch
Non-swimmer	Must stay in the shallow end and utilize a Coastguard approved PFD when swimming. Must have an adult aquatics Supervising Adult or Lifeguard in his craft when boating.

- PFD’s must be inherently buoyant and NOT inflatable.
- All swimming activities must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.

**Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may not have as much stamina as older Trailmen.
- Older Trailmen may be overconfident in their ability.
- Peer pressure could coerce Trailmen into swimming beyond their ability.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not know when a swimming area is beyond their ability.
- Trailmen may not know the proper technique before attempting to dive.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- PFD’s might not fit properly or be US Coast Guard approved.
- Goggles and/or flippers (if used) might not fit properly.
- Swimwear could become torn on sharp objects.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Swimming has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Unknown swimming holes (in lakes, rivers, ponds, etc.) may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks/reefs, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Sunburn due to overexposure
- Man-made hazards such as debris, pollution, chemicals, etc. can cause injury or illness and should be assessed ahead of any swimming activity.

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity, including in public locker rooms.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to the First-Aid kit with a whistle.

- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone. There must be clear guidelines for how youth should enter the swimming area. Be sure that these guidelines also adhere to facility guidelines.
- Troop leaders must create a safe swimming environment by ensuring the following:
  - Qualified supervision is present
  - Troop leaders have inspected the swimming area and the surrounding area and its conditions prior to the activity.
  - The swimming area is large enough to accommodate all participants and avoid overcrowding.
  - Visibly defined areas for the different swimming ability groups are well marked and known by all participants.
  - Deep-end/areas are clearly identified using buoys, lane lines, etc.
  - All hazards such as debris, fish, and pollution have been assessed
- Running in the pool area is not allowed.
- “Dunking” other swimmers is not allowed.
- Dive only in areas that are approved for diving. Check the water depth before allowing the youth to dive. Diving is prohibited in water less than 10 feet in depth.
- Never jump into the water without checking to see if you might hit another swimmer.
- Throwing or pushing other swimmers into the water is not allowed as it may result in injury.
- Swimmers must be taught to call or wave for help if they are in trouble, i.e., cramps or fear.
- A swim break must be taken at regular intervals. This not only helps avoid swimmer exhaustion, dehydration, and excessive sun exposure, but also gives the lifeguard a break to ensure quality guarding.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when swimming in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible.
- Avoid overcrowding, especially in public facilities.



## NOTE

### Helpful Resources-

- [Windy.com](https://www.windy.com) or the Windy App - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.
- [AmericanWhitewater.org](https://www.americanwhitewater.org) - the American Whitewater Association, creators of the International Scale of River Difficulty definitions for classes of whitewater. Includes a database of rivers and river segments with their class of difficulty. This site can help you find flatwater sections for your Troop’s swimming activity.

## Unauthorized Activities

Certain activities, although fun, adventurous, and entertaining, carry significantly higher risk for serious injury or death and are unauthorized as Trail Life National or Troop activities. While certain Trailmen and Troop leaders may be skilled and knowledgeable in these activities, the safety of those individuals measured against the opportunity for furtherance of our mission impacts the decision to deem these activities as unauthorized.

Many times it is because there is no credentialing organization or certification process for leaders that would provide the confidence level necessary for the activity to be approved. Although there may be a high level of interest or experience, the activity does not meet the threshold of sufficient certification opportunities to permit the onsite supervision necessary to meet safety thresholds we need in order to satisfy our Core Value #4 of “Safety.”

**The following activities are not approved by Trail Life and should not be a part of any Trail Life function.** Any activity not specifically mentioned in this guide should be reviewed and approved by the Home Office before considering.

- **Outdoor Ice Skating and Ice Fishing on Open Water**

This unauthorized activity includes outdoor ice skating, ice fishing, and playing on frozen open water sources such as rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, swimming pools, or similar open water sources. Ice skating on land-based outdoor rinks or indoor rinks is permitted.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized because it is considered hazardous and poses a high risk of injuries or hypothermia and drowning due to falling through ice. At present, there are no known certification agencies that would allow effective and consistent evaluation of conditions.

- **Bungee/Shock Cord Jumping, B.A.S.E. Jumping, bridge Jumping, and Cliff Diving** This unauthorized activity includes all forms of bungee/shock cord jumping, jumping from a Building, Antenna, Span (bridge), Earth (cliff), or another fixed object utilizing a parachute or wingsuit to descend to the earth or into water.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity due to collisions with objects and/or equipment dependency.

- **Exploring Abandoned Mines and Quarries** This unauthorized activity includes the exploration of an abandoned mine, quarry, or similar facility.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extreme risk of falling/drop-offs, roof or floor collapse, unsafe air or unsafe gasses, water/flooding, structural timber rot, disorientation, sharp objects, explosives, animal life, and hazardous chemicals.

- **Vertical Caving**

This unauthorized activity includes exploring any type of cave where a person will need to vertically descend and ascend a rope into an open expanse.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the combination of extreme risk factors that are present in this activity, such as falling, losing light, ropes and safety gear tearing, the difficulty of extraction, and others.

- **Boxing or Martial Arts Involving Weapons**

This unauthorized activity includes boxing and martial arts activities involving the use of a weapon including but not limited to a sword, staff, knife, stick, kubotan, nunchaku, and bow and arrow.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious bodily injury, impalement, or death inherent with using weapons.

- **Non-Tethered Hot-Air Balloon Rides**

This unauthorized activity includes hot-air balloon rides that are launched to freely fly untethered to the ground.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the risks of injury and/or death from falling from or crashing the balloon.

- **Using Mopeds or Motorcycles**

This unauthorized activity includes the use of mopeds or motorcycles as either a driver or passenger.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the inability to maintain child safety standards as well as the increased risk of injury or death from a collision or wreck due to no safety restraint system and no exterior framing.

- **Motorized Speed Events (Auto-Racing, Motorcycle Racing, Boat Racing, Drag Racing, Demolition Derbies, and/or Related Events)**

This unauthorized activity includes participation in motorized speed events including but not limited to Auto-Racing, Motorcycle Racing, Boat Racing, Drag Racing, Demolition Derbies, and/or Related Events. Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity because of extremely high rates of speed.

Motorized go-carts are allowed only if they are used at a commercial facility that provides equipment, liability insurance, and proper supervision of cart operation.

- **Fireworks**

This unauthorized activity includes the sale or use of fireworks unless done by a licensed certified fireworks specialist. While fireworks are entertaining to watch and even use, Trail Life has deemed the personal or group use of fireworks as unauthorized due to the rates of injury, unpredictable nature of personal fireworks, and risk of extreme burns.

- **Water Chugging and Related Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes water or other liquid chugging activities and contests. Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extreme risk of hyponatremia, or dilution of the blood sodium level because of too much water, which can result in serious injury or death.

- **Personal Watercraft, Parasailing, and Related Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes the use of personal watercraft and parasailing. Personal watercraft (aka Jet Skis, Sea-Doos, WaveRunners) includes recreational watercraft that the rider stands or sits on rather than inside of, as in a boat. Parasailing includes any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, or other devices that are towed by a motorboat.

Trail Life has deemed these activities as unauthorized due to the risks of serious injury or death due to high speeds and length of falls.

Water skiing, wakeboarding, and kneeboarding are considered "Water Tow Sports" and are authorized.

- **"Big Wall," Lead, Trad Climbing, and Speed Climbing**

This unauthorized activity includes "Big Wall", Lead, Trad, Speed climbing, and Ice or waterfall climbing. Big Wall climbing could involve more than one day and requires living on the route and engaging the use of portaledge or other equipment to sleep and rest. Lead climbing involves a roped party of climbers where only the lead climber is connected to safety equipment such as bolts, the others are attached to him by the rope. Trad (traditional) climbing involves the climber or group of climbers placing and removing their own safety anchors as they go up a rock face. Speed climbing is typically competitive and involves ascending a vertical face as quickly as possible and may include jumping from hold to hold.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with the length of falls and equipment dependency.

- **Class 5 and Grade V or above Outdoor Rock Climbing as Rated by the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS) Scale**

This unauthorized activity includes climbs at Class 5 (difficulty) and Grade V (length) or above.

Trail Life has deemed these climbs as unauthorized due to the high risks of severe falls and potential for serious injury.

- **Participating in Rodeo Events**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in either amateur or professional rodeo events as Trail Life activities. Troops are also prohibited from sponsoring rodeo events.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious back, neck, and head injury or death associated with participating in this activity.

Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted.

- **Cannons and Large-Bore Artillery**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in loading or firing cannons and other large-caliber artillery. This is further defined to include "guns, howitzers, artillery pieces, combining the characteristics of a gun, howitzer, mortar, or multiple-launch rocket system, capable of engaging surface targets by delivering primarily indirect fire, with a caliber of 75 millimeters and above." Observing and attending these events as a spectator, if done from a safe distance and adhering to all other Trail Life Health and Safety guidelines, as well as the guidelines imposed by event coordinators, is permitted. Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to an extremely high risk of serious injury or death due to explosions, shrapnel, or flying projectiles.

- **Varsity, Interscholastic, and/or Club Football, Rugby, or Lacrosse**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in football, rugby, or lacrosse at any level as a Trail Life activity.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of head trauma and/or brain injury. This includes using these sports as Elective Hobbies Trail Badges or Freedom Experiences.

- **Technical Tree-Climbing with Ropes and/or Harnesses**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in technical tree climbing using ropes and/or harnesses to ascend a tree for extended periods of time or to perform work.

Trees are less stable of an environment to connect to and suspend from and include many elements that are not easily perceived that can lead to tree limb breakage, such as hollow limbs, interior rot, insect/animal damage, etc. In the event of a fall, there is a very high likelihood of bodily impalement. Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to the extremely high risk of serious injury or death inherent with this activity.

- **Gliding, Hang-Gliding/Paragliding, Ultralights, Paraplanes, or Outdoor Skydiving**

This unauthorized activity includes participating in activities involving the use of non-powered gliders, hang-gliders, parachutes, ultralight aircraft, paraplanes, as well as outdoor skydiving.

Trail Life has deemed these activities as unauthorized due to extremely high risks of serious injury or death inherent with these activities. Due to the length of descent and high rates of speed, accidents and/or crashes carry a high rate of serious injury and/or death.

- **Carrying Firearms on Trail Life Activities**

This unauthorized activity includes the carrying of firearms, including open or concealed by youth and adults, at Trail Life activities and meetings. For further information and qualifying exceptions, please see the Personal Weapons Policy.

Trail Life has deemed this as an unauthorized activity/action outside of the qualifying exception described in the Personal Weapons Policy in order to create a safe and welcoming environment for all families and Charter Organizations and to ensure that any firearms that are carried according to the Personal Weapons Policy are done so with the highest standard of safety and responsibility possible.

- **Youth Trailman use of Power Tools and Motorized Equipment**

This unauthorized activity includes the operation of powered equipment and tools by youth at Trail Life activities and events with the exception of power drills/drivers and power sanders with adult supervision. Trained adults over the age of 18 are the only persons allowed to operate power tools and motorized equipment. This includes but is not limited to chainsaws, log splitters, wood chippers, drill presses, nailers, and power saws of all types. Troops that have properly trained adults can train and allow certain Trailmen to operate a power drill/driver or power sander. These Trailmen must be supervised by trained adults when using these two types of power tools.

While many youth have know-how and have used power tools, Trail Life has deemed the use of these types of tools as unauthorized due to the high risk of serious bodily injury associated with mishandling of these tools.

- **Backcountry or Out-of-bounds Winter Sports**

This unauthorized activity includes all forms of backcountry or out-of-bounds winter sports including skiing (downhill or cross country), snowboarding, snowshoeing, and sledding. Backcountry is defined as unmarked or unpatrolled areas either inside or outside a ski resort's boundaries. See listings in the activity guide for authorized forms of these activities and their specific guidelines.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to extremely high risks such as getting lost, getting caught in a snowstorm, being caught in or triggering an avalanche, and being injured far from assistance.

- **Moving Water activities classified above a Class IV by the American Whitewater Association**

This unauthorized activity includes rafting, canoeing, kayaking or similar activities on moving water above Class IV according to the American Whitewater Association. See listings in the activity guide for authorized forms of these activities and their specific guidelines.

Trail Life has deemed this activity as unauthorized due to extremely high risks associated with these activities including drowning or other serious situations requiring rescue or life-threatening injury.

- **Moving Water/Whitewater Tubing or Powerboat Tubing**

This unauthorized activity includes float tubing on open moving water above a Class II according to the American Whitewater Association as well as riding on tubes that are being pulled behind powerboats.

Trail Life has deemed these two types of tubing activities as unauthorized due to the lack of ability to control and steer the tube when floating through larger rapids or being pulled behind a powerboat. The lack of the individual to control the direction and speed in which they are going can result in a high risk of injury or drowning.

## Water Tow Sports

Water Tow Sports include activities such as waterskiing, wakeboarding, and kneeboarding, where Trailmen are holding a handle and being pulled behind a powerboat while traveling on any body of water that is rated by the American Whitewater Association as Class A to Class I.

### Age Recommendation

Trail Life recommends that moving-water boating activities be limited to Navigators and Adventurers, though swimming competency must be considered prior to the activity. See the restrictions section for further details.

It is highly recommended that Woodlands Trailman not participate in moving-water boating activities.

### Qualified Supervision

Qualified supervision must include both a skilled and experienced boat driver and a separate adult observer focused on observing the participant with binoculars and a whistle.

Also, at least two qualified adults must be present, either:

- a certified lifeguard, plus an additional Supervising Adult OR
- two Supervising Adults trained in water rescue techniques with CPR and First-Aid certifications

If a certified lifeguard or certified instructor is provided, he/she may be counted into the ratio, detailed below. Lifeguards and designated Supervising Adults must remain out of the water, except in the case of emergencies, and must refrain from other activities (cell phone, applying sunscreen, etc.) and remain actively watching.

Supervising adults **must** stay with the youth when boating or tubing in open water at all times.

Supervising adults should have a count and list of all Trailmen swimming with their swim test status.

Please refer to the Ratio chart below for recommended ratios of leaders for larger groups of Trailmen:

# of Boaters	Either # of Lifeguards	Or # of Trained Adult Responders
1-10	1+ supervising adult	2+
11-25	1+ supervising adult	3+
26-35	2+ supervising adult	4+
36-50	2+ supervising adult	5+

Adults should be well versed in the use and training of the craft being used. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)

### Restrictions

- Swimming Competency
  - Participants in various water tow sports must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability. This competency must be documented using the Swimming Competency Test, kept on file at the Troop level, and recorded on TrailLifeConnect.com for each Trailman.
  - This test must be completed before a youth can participate in activities that involve water more than knee-deep and must be supervised by an adult certified lifeguard, swim instructor, swim coach, or a properly qualified adult (a "qualified adult" is one who has a recognized certification, training, license or accreditation and experience in supervising/educating youth).

**Table 2. Swimming Competency Test Results**

Swimmer	May swim in all designated swim areas
Beginner	May only swim in the shallow end, or areas where he can touch
Non-swimmer	Must stay in the shallow end and utilize a Coastguard approved PFD when swimming. Must have an adult aquatics Supervising Adult or Lifeguard in his craft when boating.

**Participants must have shown at least a Swimmer competence in the swimming test. If any participant is unable to complete the Swimmer swim test, then he must ride in a boat with an adult who is a certified lifeguard or an adult trained in water rescue techniques.**

- PFD's must be inherently buoyant and NOT inflatable.
- All water tow sports must cease if lightning or thunder is in the area and not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
- No pier or land takeoffs or landings should occur. All towing should originate and end in water of a depth appropriate for the participating youth.
- Towing boats must meet all registration and legal requirements and have liability insurance of at least \$500,000.
- Towing boats may tow only one water-skier, wakeboarder, or kneeboarder at a time.



### **WARNING**

**Powerboat tubing, jet skis and other personal watercraft, parasailing, and related activities are unauthorized activities and should NOT be attempted by any Trailman.**

### **Risks**

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Younger Trailmen may not have sufficient strength to lift themselves out of the water.
- Older Trailmen may try speeds or maneuvers that they are unfamiliar with.
- Adults may be more susceptible to injury from falls.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperience or improper technique could result in arm or shoulder injury.
- Not letting go of the tow rope when falling or losing control.
- Improperly holding the tow rope that could cause injury.
- What conditions are suitable for the group going.
- Supervisors may not have adequate water rescue techniques or knowledge.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Old tow rope failures
- Improperly sized skis/boards



- Mechanical issues with the boat and motor.
- PFD's might not fit properly or be US Coast Guard approved
- Swimwear could become ripped or removed by hard or fast falls.
- A tow rope could become entangled around part of a Trailman's body.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Water Tow Sports have unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Concussion
- Ankle injuries
- Shoulder/arm/wrist injuries.
- Neck injuries
- Sudden weather changes can affect water conditions.
- Motorized boat traffic can cause extra hazards.
- Unknown boating areas may contain unseen risks such as hidden rocks/reefs, bacteria, unseen currents, animals, underwater plants, etc.
- Crossing or creating large wakes could overturn a watercraft.
- Hypothermia
- Sunburn due to overexposure.
- Man-made hazards such as debris, pollution, chemicals, etc. can cause injury or illness and should be assessed ahead of any boating activity.

### **Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit with a whistle.
- Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to ensure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone.
- Every Trailmen should wear a properly fitted PFD with a signaling whistle while participating in any boating activity.
- Trailmen should be familiar with the type of craft/board they are using for each activity and know how to properly start, stop, and fall.
- All Trailmen should receive prior instruction on how to properly handle all boating equipment including tow ropes.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- All Trailmen should receive prior instruction on how to properly handle all boating equipment.
- Non-skid water shoes should be used when boating in rivers.
- Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen should be worn whenever possible.
- Trailmen should use a strap on their prescription glasses and/or sunglasses that floats when dropped in water.
- Avoid overcrowding on the boat and with other watercraft.
- Avoid crossing other watercraft's wake.
- Supervising adults must stay with the youth when boating, tubing or participating in other open water activities at all times.
- Youth Trailmen must not be allowed to travel on any water unsupervised.
- Set up a system of tracking all Trailmen prior to putting in.
- Boats should have at least one extra PFD and a throwable tethered flotation device.

**NOTE****Helpful Resources-**

- [Windy.com](https://www.windy.com) or the [Windy App](#) - Wind speed and direction, rain/thunder, wave height/swell, air and water temperature, and more to help evaluate current and upcoming conditions for your float trip or aquatics event.

## Woods Tools

Woods Tools as an activity refers to any Troop or patrol activity that includes the demonstration of or the use of any hand-held, non-powered sharp tool such as a knife, axe, hatchet, tomahawk, and/or saw.

### Age Recommendation

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that Trailmen who have NOT received their Woodsman Card and/or their Woods Tools Trail Badge NOT use any sharp edge or woods tool of any kind except while earning that card or Trail Badge.

### Qualified Supervision

Two registered adult leaders who have the safety knowledge and experience using the type of woods tool being used

### **OR**

An older Trailman who has his Woodsman Card and/or Woods Tools Trail Badge plus two registered adult leaders who have the safety knowledge and experience using the type of woods tool being used

### Restrictions

The Trail Life Home Office recommends that Trailmen who have NOT received their Woodsman Card and/or their Woods Tools Trail Badge NOT use any sharp edge or woods tool of any kind except while earning that card or Trail Badge.

### Risks

The following factors should be thoroughly considered by every Troop and patrol leader before deciding on whether or not this activity should be attempted by the Trailmen they lead. Each factor has a multitude of risks that are associated with them that must be addressed by each Troop or patrol participating in this activity.

- **Participant Age Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Trailmen may not possess the maturity or trustworthiness to use a woods tool even if they have their card/Badge.
- Young Trailmen could find and injure themselves on tools.

- **Knowledge and Experience Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Inexperienced Trailmen, even with their card/Badge, may not handle each tool appropriately and could injure themselves or others.

- **Equipment Factors**

Risks could include but are not limited to:

- Patrols may not have enough rope/tape to properly mark an axe yard.
- Tools could break if they are old or damaged causing injury.
- Sheaths, covers, or other protective equipment could be missing or damaged.
- Tools may be dull.
- Inappropriate clothing or shoes.

- **Activity-Specific Factors**

Has unique risk factors that could include but are not limited to:

- Limited space for an axe yard
- Stinging insects can reside in wood being used.
- Possible state restrictions on importing wood from other locations
- Cutting one's hands or fingers with knives, saws, tomahawks, or hatchets
- Cutting one's feet or legs with an axe or hatchet
- Using the wrong tool for a particular activity (ex. Using a hatchet or axe when a saw is appropriate)
- Axe yards may be inappropriately positioned (ex. Overhanging limbs, space too small, not level, etc.).

**Unique Safety Recommendations**

- Youth protection guidelines must be followed to, from, and during the activity.
- A First-Aid and CPR certified adult leader should be able to be contacted easily, quickly, and have access to a First-Aid kit.
- Trailmen and adult leaders should ensure that all safety guidelines listed in the Outdoor Skills Guide and the Woodsman Card Requirements are followed by all involved.