

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SAFETY CHECKLISTS

BACKPACKING

Backpacking refers to long, self-contained, non-motorized trips, or hikes, in which the backpacker carries all the necessary equipment for one or more nights on the trail.

Risk Factor Rating

3

General Learning Outcome

The student will demonstrate safe and responsible behaviours to manage risks and prevent injuries in physical activity participation and for daily living.

Risk Management Strategies

Safety information and recommendations contained in this safety checklist are believed to reflect best practice to reduce risk. The suggested risk management strategies are considered minimum standards for physical activity in an organized or formal setting. They may not apply to all situations (e.g., home-based, recreational, or modified activities), and more stringent safety standards may be applied by instructors/coaches/program leaders of OUT-of-class physical activities in organized programs.

Instruction

Note: The amount and level of instruction/directions required by the student may vary based on circumstances such as the student's personal experience, skill level, and physical condition. The use of media resources, such as books and instructional videos, may replace direct instruction if deemed appropriate and safe.

Leader is experienced and knowledgeable, able to organize instruction, demonstrate skills, and supervise students on a backpacking trip (The more remote the trip, the more experienced the leader must be.)

Leader has recently traveled proposed trail

Student is aware of potential risks of backpacking

Safe hiking techniques, including buddy system, are learned

Skills/techniques that will be necessary for the trip are learned (e.g., low-impact camping)

Student's receive instruction on the use of a compass/GPS and on what they should do if they get lost

Student's receive instruction in proper hygiene, including foot care

Adequate drinking water is available and consumed as needed

Students are at an appropriate physical fitness level (including their freedom from injury or disability) suitable for the trip

Leader develops a detailed plan of trip, including itinerary, route, meals, and required group/personal equipment; plan of trip is made available to students/parents

Emergency action plan and lost student plan is developed and rehearsed

* See camping checklists for safety information when camping overnight.

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Supervision

Note: The level of supervision is provided as is appropriate, depending on various factors such as level of risk, intensity, accessibility, experience, and skill.

Recommended level of supervision: **in-the-area supervision; constant visual supervision** may be required for specific hazards

Person in the group has training in first aid

Buddy system is in place as it is safest to camp/hike with at least one companion (If entering a remote area, the group should have a minimum of four people, allowing one to stay with an injured person while two go for help.)

Local weather conditions/forecasts and fire restrictions are checked before the start of trip

Safety rules and procedures are enforced

Emergency action plan is in place to deal with accidents/injuries

Detailed plans for contingency and inclement weather are recorded in writing

A lost student plan is in place in case someone gets separated from the group; a head-count system is developed and used to ensure all students are present and accounted for

Copy of itinerary is left with a responsible adult, including such details as the make, year, and license plate of each vehicle, the equipment being brought, the route plan, the weather anticipated, and the anticipated date/time of return

Environment

Designated trails are used or permission is obtained from appropriate authorities to access the trail

Detailed maps are provided of the area in which the students will be hiking

Location of local emergency services have been identified

Equipment

Equipment to be used is suitable and in good condition

Equipment is checked by qualified person prior to trip departure

Instructions are given regarding the proper maintenance of equipment

Students each carry their own backpack, which is properly fitted and adjusted; contents of the backpack are verified for weight and distribution

A detailed map and working compasses are available

Students each carry a whistle and their own survival kit

First aid kit and phone or alternatively, an emergency communication system are available. (GPS [Global Positioning System] is now affordable. Walkie-talkies are a good way to keep the leader and the tail of the group in contact.)

Portable music players are discouraged/restricted as they cause distractions

Clothing/Footwear

Properly fitted shoes/boots are worn, depending on trail type, with no open-toed shoes

Clothing is worn in layers with extra clothing carried as appropriate

Suitable clothing and protection is used to protect against weather, sun (e.g., hat), insects (e.g., long-sleeved shirts and long pants to guard against wood ticks do buddy checks), animals (e.g., bear repellent if going into bear country), and plants (e.g., poison ivy)

Jewelry is removed/secured when safety is a concern

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Other Considerations

The student has completed a regular medical checkup and a medical history prior to starting the program

The student has submitted the signed Parent Declaration and Consent & Student Declaration Form (student under 18) or Student Declaration Form (student 18 and over) prior to beginning the program

Registration in an accident insurance plan has been encouraged

Students who suffer an injury are referred to appropriate medical personnel for treatment and rehabilitation, and should not return to training until cleared by a qualified medical professional

The activity is suitable to the student's age, ability, mental condition, and physical condition

The student demonstrates self-control at all times and avoids any behaviour deemed inappropriate

The student's choice of this activity as part of the OUT-of-class component of the physical education/health education course has been presented to the parent/guardian (student under 18 years of age) and to the teacher

