

# SAFE SCOUTING

## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: ANNUAL HEALTH & MEDICAL RECORD

The BSA Annual Health and Medical Record (often known as the “medical form” or “annual physical”) is designed for several purposes but mostly to help assure that all participants in the Scouting program are healthy enough to participate in the adventure of Scouting. The form serves as a single place to document the medical history and recent medical examination plus consent to obtain treatment in the event a participant needs emergency care while traveling away from a parent or guardian.

The form comes in four parts: A, B, C, D. Most participants should complete the three form parts (A, B, C) and be sure that part D is printed and available to the examining health care provider at the time of the medical examination.

Parts A and B must be completed annually by *all participants* in the Scouting program—no exceptions. Leaders should have a copy for each participant on file and the forms should be taken along on every event—especially when the participant’s parent or guardian is not present. “All participants” includes leadership and parents along on the activity.

Part C must be completed annually by all participants in any event that exceeds 72 hours in duration—summer camp, national events, high-adventure base participation, AND anytime an activity may be physically demanding like a weekend backpacking trip or a strenuous service event or project. Note: This part is not just for high-adventure activities.

Part D is informational and must be reviewed by all participants and the examining medical professional to assure that participants in our national high-adventure bases are physically prepared for the strenuous activity in isolated areas where medical treatment may not be rapidly available. Each high-adventure base has specific health requirements based on the expected activities and the environment. Participants hiking at Philmont and those participating in scuba activities at the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base may have special requirements requiring additional testing and forms—please read Part D closely as participants who fail to meet the medical criteria will not be allowed to participate.

### Frequently Asked Questions

More than 95 percent of the questions received by the Health and Safety Team concerning the Annual Health and Medical Record can be found on the FAQ page on the Scouting Safely website.

**Question:** Where can I find the most current version of the AHMR? Why is it updated?

**Response:** The most current version and the standards for use can be found on the BSA website, [www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/ahmr.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/ahmr.aspx). The form is updated periodically to reflect new issues and understanding of the medical experts who volunteer to advise the BSA. Some updates are done to encourage your licensed health care provider (MD, DO, NP, or PA) to screen for specific indicators such as the potential of sudden cardiac death consistent with the recommendations by the American Heart Association. Others updates may be required to accommodate new programs or activities such as the Scuba Diving merit badge.

**Question:** Why is the form completed annually?

**Response:** There is the need—especially in growing boys and aging adults—for periodic examination and review to assure optimal health. Because our health status can change quickly, waiting longer than 12 months could be detrimental and put our participants at risk.

**Question:** Is this process intended to eliminate participants or restrict participation?

**Response:** No. The process is all about assuring safety. The process is intended to assure that the participant can safely enjoy the activity without risk to himself or herself and to help those who will be responsible for rendering aid should the participant suffer from some medical condition in a strenuous or remote area.

**Question:** Will there be separate forms for Philmont, Sea Base, Northern Tier, the Summit, or the jamboree?

**Response:** No. Volunteer and professional leaders from all BSA national events and high-adventure bases have collaborated to develop one form that meets all needs of the various Scouting activities and to meet all known standards of those states and areas where Scouting activities occur.

## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: AQUATICS SAFETY

Many units take advantage of summer weather to participate in aquatics activities. Swimming in the backyard pool, at the nearby lake, or at a municipal swimming pool are all fun summer activities. Some units may also be taking boating trips on lakes and rivers this summer. When participating in aquatics activities, unit leaders are reminded that they must follow the principles listed in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat.

Basic training introduces Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat procedures. The plans emphasize prevention, but they also cover emergency recognition and response. Such training is required whenever a unit goes swimming or boating. Awareness training for these policies may be provided by lectures or videos at various training events. Introductory training is also available at the Online Learning Center through [www.myscouting.org](http://www.myscouting.org). Unit leaders who attend summer camps are provided opportunities to practice the procedures with staff assistance.

**Aquatics Supervision: BSA Swimming & Water Rescue and BSA Paddle Craft Safety.** These training courses will help train unit leaders in the skills needed to conduct swimming and boating activities that are safe as well as fun, exciting, and rewarding. Contact your local council aquatics committee to find out how you can take one of these courses.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Where can I find information about Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat?

**Response:** Copies of both Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat can be found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* on the BSA's web page, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). Click on "Scouting Safely."

**Question:** Where can I get training in Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat?

**Response:** Online training is available for both Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat.

**Question:** What are the eight points of Safe Swim Defense?

**Response:** The eight points are:

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Safe area
4. Response personnel (lifeguards)
5. Lookout
6. Ability groups
7. Buddy system
8. Discipline

**Question:** What are the nine points of Safety Afloat?

**Response:** The 9 points are:

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Swimming ability
4. Life jackets
5. Buddy system
6. Skill proficiency
7. Planning
8. Equipment
9. Discipline

# ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: AGE-APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES

In its Age-Appropriate Guidelines, the BSA outlines those activities suitable for specific age groups. Age- and rank-appropriate guidelines have been developed based on the mental, physical, emotional, and social maturity of Boy Scouts of America youth members. These guidelines apply to Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews.

www.scouting.org, in the Guidelines/Policies area of the “Scouting Safely” page.

**Question:** Must a unit follow the Age-Appropriate Guidelines for all our unit activities?

**Response:** Yes. There is risk to any unit outing or activity; a unit must develop its tour and activity plan around the Age-Appropriate Guidelines to minimize injury and risk to the youth.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Where can I find the Age-Appropriate Guidelines?

**Response:** The chart is found as an insert in the printed and online editions of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and on the BSA’s web page,

<b>AGE-APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES FOR SCOUTING ACTIVITIES</b> <small>Age- and rank-appropriate guidelines have been developed based on the mental, physical, emotional, and social maturity of Boy Scouts of America youth members. These guidelines apply to Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews.</small>		 <b>TIGER CUBS</b> <small>(WITH ADULT PARTNER)</small>	 <b>WOLF/BEAR</b> <b>CUB SCOUTS</b>	 <b>WEBELOS</b> <b>SCOUTS</b>	 <b>BOY SCOUTS</b>	 <b>OLDER BOY SCOUTS,</b> <b>Varsity Scouts,</b> <b>AND VENTURERS</b>
 <b>OUTDOOR SKILLS</b>	Camporees			Visit Only		
	Conservation Projects					
	Cooking Outdoors					
	Fire Building					
	Fishing					
	Fueled Devices <small>(Stoves and lanterns)</small>					
	Hiking—Day					
	Hiking—Multiple Day					
	Horseback Riding					
	Hunting					Venturers Only
	Map and Compass	Map Only				
	Mountain Boards					
	Mountaineering/Scrambling/Cross-Country Travel					
	Orienteering					
	Pioneering					
	Rope Bridges/Pioneering Towers <small>(Check requirements for height restrictions.)</small>					
	Survival Training					
Winter Camping						

The full Age-Appropriate Guidelines chart can be found at <http://www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/Age-AppropriateGuidelines.aspx>.

## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: CHEMICAL FUEL AND EQUIPMENT POLICY

Safety and environmental awareness concerns have persuaded many campers to move away from traditional outdoor campfires in favor of chemical-fueled equipment for cooking, heating, and lighting. Be aware that chemical fuels and equipment create very different hazards than traditional wood, charcoal, and other solid fuels.

The BSA's Chemical Fuel and Equipment Policy directs BSA members on how to safely store, handle, and use chemical fuels and equipment.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Where can I find the BSA Chemical Fuel and Equipment Policy?

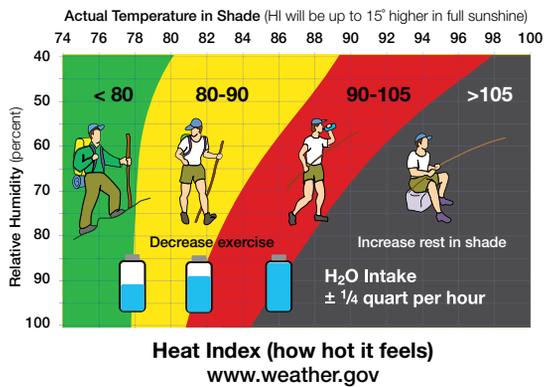
**Response:** The policy can be found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* or on the BSA's web page, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). Click on "Scouting Safely." Then look under Alerts.

**Question:** Must a unit follow the BSA's Chemical Fuel and Equipment Policy?

**Response:** Yes. There is a risk to any unit outing or activity. A unit must use the BSA's Chemical Fuel and Equipment Policy whenever appropriate. It is a unit leader's responsibility to minimize injury and risk to the youth and other adults.

# ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: HEAT AND HYDRATION

It's easy to get caught up in a Scouting activity on a hot summer day and not pay attention to how the heat is affecting your body. Heat index is defined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as "a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored with the actual air temperature." The heat index/urine color chart, No. 680-022, which can be downloaded and used to produce a sticker, pocket card, or hang tag, describes situations when you should increase your rest and water intake. Tools such as this will help you pay attention to the warning signs.



**Who is affected?** Scouts and Scouters exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat illness, especially during outdoor activities. Some Scouts and Scouters might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions.

**What is heat illness?** The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke can result in death and requires immediate medical attention.

**How can heat illness be prevented?** Remember three simple words: water, rest, shade. Drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness, and unit leaders should include these prevention steps in their unit activity planning. Unit leaders should also take steps that help Scouts and other adult leaders become acclimated to hot conditions. Gradually increase outdoor activity and allow more frequent breaks. It's important to know and look out for the symptoms of heat illness in yourself and others during hot weather. Plan for an emergency and know what to do—acting quickly can save lives!

Unit leaders are encouraged to follow the BSA's heat index/color chart to minimize heat illnesses in youth and adults.

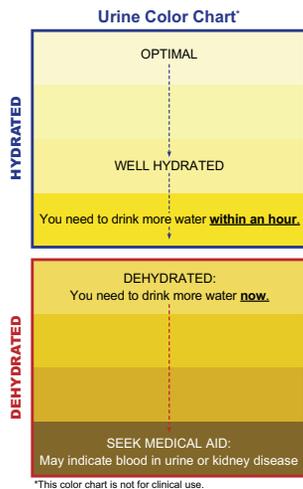
## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Where can I find the heat index/urine color chart?

**Response:** The heat index/urine color chart is found on the BSA's web page, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). Click on "Scouting Safely." Then look under the Alert Section.

**Question:** Must a unit follow the heat index/urine color chart for all outdoor activities?

**Response:** There is always some level of risk in any unit outing or activity. A unit that develops its tour and activity plan and incorporates the heat index/urine color chart can minimize heat illness to the youth and adults.



## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: LEADERSHIP/SUPERVISION ON TRIPS AND OUTINGS

It is the responsibility of the chartered organization of any Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew or ship to inform the committee and leadership of the unit that sufficient adult leadership must be provided on all trips and outings (coed overnight activities require both male and female adult leaders).

**Two-deep leadership**—Two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Can a patrol of Boy Scouts camp out overnight by themselves?

**Response:** Adult leadership is required for any overnight activity. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when the presence of adult leaders is not required and adult leadership may

be limited to training and guidance of the patrol leadership. With the proper training, guidance, and approval by the troop leaders, the patrol can conduct day hikes and service projects.

**Question:** Can the father of a female crew member stand in for the requirement to have both male and female adult leadership for an overnight activity?

**Response:** No, an adult female over the age of 21 must be present.

**Question:** Does the two-deep leadership policy mean we have to have two adults in every vehicle when transporting Scouts?

**Response:** During transportation to and from planned Scout outings two-deep leadership can be maintained by meeting for departure at a designated area, periodic checkpoint stops as a group, and a daily destination point.

If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members—never a one-on-one ratio.

## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: SWEET 16 OF BSA SAFETY

Few youth organizations encompass the breadth, volume, and diversity of physical activity common to Scouting, and none enjoys a better safety record. The key to maintaining and improving this exemplary record is the conscientious and trained adult leader who is attentive to safety concerns.

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

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Where can I find the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety?

**Response:** The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety is found on the BSA's web page, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). Click on "Scouting Safely" at the top of the blue banner. Then click on "Guidelines/Policies."

**Question:** Must a unit follow the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety for all activities?

**Response:** Yes. There is a risk to any unit outing or activity. A unit that develops a tour and activity plan that follows and adheres to the Sweet 16 points can minimize the injury and illness risk to the youth and adults.

**Question:** What are the Sweet 16 points?

**Response:** The 16 points are:

1. Qualified supervision
2. Physical fitness
3. Buddy system
4. Safe area or course
5. Equipment selection and maintenance
6. Personal safety equipment
7. Safety procedures and policies
8. Skill level limits
9. Weather check
10. Planning
11. Communications
12. Permit and notices
13. First-aid resources
14. Applicable laws
15. CPR resource
16. Discipline

## ROUNDTABLE SAFETY MINUTE: THE *GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING*

The purpose of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is to prepare members of the Boy Scouts of America to conduct Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. The policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards that have been identified through 100 years of experience. Limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as stumbling blocks; rather, policies and guidelines are best described as stepping-stones toward safe and enjoyable adventures.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is a compilation of policies and procedures from various documents and publications of the BSA. The purpose of the publication is to familiarize the reader with the information needed to plan safe and enjoyable activities. Note that the *Guide to Safe Scouting* does not contain all the information available on a particular subject or topic and information in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is not the only source; complete information on a subject or topic can be found in the main source documents and other reference materials.

All participants in official Scouting activities should become familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and be aware of state

or local government regulations that supersede the Boy Scouts of America policies and guidelines. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* provides an overview of Scouting policies and procedures rather than comprehensive, standalone documentation. For some items, the policy statements are complete. Unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting such activities.

In situations not specifically covered in this guide, activity planners should evaluate the risk or potential risk of harm and respond with action plans based on common sense, community standards, the Boy Scout motto, and safety policies and practices commonly prescribed for the activity by experienced providers and practitioners.

In addition to the printed version, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available online at [www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/gss.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/gss.aspx). The online version provides a print-friendly version in PDF format. Any changes that are made between printings are noted on the webpage with the online version. The online version is updated quarterly.