

The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

These 16 safety points, which embody good judgment and common sense, are applicable to all activities:

- 1. Qualified Supervision.** Every BSA activity should be supervised by a conscientious adult who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children and youth in his or her care. The supervisor should be sufficiently trained, experienced, and skilled in the activity to be confident of his or her ability to lead and teach the necessary skills and to respond effectively in the event of an emergency. Field knowledge of all applicable BSA standards and a commitment to implement and follow BSA policy and procedures are essential parts of the supervisor's qualifications.
- 2. Physical Fitness.** For youth participants in any potentially strenuous activity, the supervisor should receive a complete health history from a health-care professional, parent, or guardian. Adult participants and youth involved in higher-risk activities (e.g., scuba diving) may have to undergo professional evaluation in addition to completing the health history. The supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate potential risks associated with individual health conditions. Neither youth nor adults should participate in activities for which they are unfit. To do so would place both the individual and others at risk.
- 3. Buddy System.** The long history of the "buddy system" in Scouting has shown that it is always best to have at least one other person with you and aware at all times of your circumstances and what you are doing in any outdoor or strenuous activity.
- 4. Safe Area or Course.** A key part of the supervisors' responsibility is to know the area or course for the activity and to determine that it is well-suited and free of hazards.
- 5. Equipment Selection and Maintenance.** Most activity requires some specialized equipment. The equipment should be selected to suit the participants and the activity and to include appropriate safety and program features. The supervisor should also check equipment to determine whether it is in good condition for the activity and make sure it is kept properly maintained while in use.
- 6. Personal Safety Equipment.** The supervisor must assure that every participant has and uses the appropriate personal safety equipment. For example, activity afloat requires that each participant properly wear a life jacket; bikers, horseback riders, and whitewater kayakers need helmets for certain activities; skaters need protective gear; and all need to be dressed for warmth and utility as the circumstances require.
- 7. Safety Procedures and Policies.** For most activities, common-sense procedures and standards can greatly reduce any risk. These should be known and appreciated by all participants, and the supervisor must assure compliance.

The online version of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is updated quarterly.
Go to <http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx>.

8. **Skill Level Limits.** Every activity has a minimum skill level, and the supervisor must identify and recognize this level and be sure that participants are not put at risk by attempting any activity beyond their abilities. A good example of skill levels in Scouting is the swim test, which defines conditions for safe swimming on the basis of individual ability.
9. **Weather Check.** The risks of many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. Potential weather hazards and the appropriate responses should be understood and anticipated.
10. **Planning.** Safe activity follows a plan that has been conscientiously developed by the experienced supervisor or other competent source. Good planning minimizes risks and also anticipates contingencies that may require an emergency response or a change of plan.
11. **Communications.** The supervisor needs to be able to communicate effectively with participants as needed during the activity. Emergency communications also need to be considered in advance for any foreseeable contingencies.
12. **Plans and Notices.** Council office registration, government or landowner authorization, and any similar formalities are the supervisor's responsibility when such are required. Appropriate notification should be directed to parents, enforcement authorities, landowners, and others as needed, before and after the activity.
13. **First-Aid Resources.** The supervisor should determine what first-aid supplies to include among the activity equipment. The level of first-aid training and skill appropriate for the activity should also be considered. An extended trek over remote terrain obviously may require more first-aid resources and capabilities than an afternoon activity in a local community. Whatever is determined to be needed should be available.
14. **Applicable Laws.** BSA safety policies generally parallel or go beyond legal mandates, but the supervisor should confirm and assure compliance with all applicable regulations or statutes.
15. **CPR Resource.** Any strenuous activity or remote trek could present a cardiac emergency. Aquatic programs may involve cardiopulmonary emergencies. BSA strongly recommends that a person (preferably an adult) trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be part of the leadership for any BSA program. This person should be available for strenuous outdoor activity.
16. **Discipline.** No supervisor is effective if he or she cannot control the activity and individual participants. Youth must respect their leaders and follow their directions.

Reference: The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety,
www.scouting.org/healthandsafety/sweet16.aspx

Service Project Planning Guidelines

These guidelines can be utilized for all Scouting service projects, not just those for an Eagle Scout service project. The guidelines must not be construed to be additional requirements for an Eagle Scout service project, but they do represent elements that should appear on the Eagle Scout candidate's final project plan from the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, No. 512-927. The next revision of the workbook will incorporate these guidelines.

Service Project Safety Planning Process

- 1. Take the necessary steps.** Define the scope of the project, assess the skill levels of the participants, indicate supervision and discipline needed, identify the equipment and personnel needed (including first-aid kits), and plan for proper tool instruction.

- 2. Review the site.** Make sure you know how to get there and have access, where to park, and what the access is for emergency vehicles. Include weather concerns and how to notify local emergency help. Identify overhead and underground utilities. Know which jurisdictional codes and ordinances will apply.

- 3. Determine suitable hours in which the service project will be performed.** For example, they could be daylight hours or from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., including short rest breaks every two hours, plus lunch with rest period for one hour. It is recommended that service projects do not exceed eight hours per day. Please keep in mind that youth attention spans may be a limitation.

- 4. Establish a service project review process.** Monitor work and tool usage, and ensure a leadership review of the project at its conclusion.

Use this section as a checklist for providing details about your service project plans.

Hazard Analysis and Recognition

1. **List possible hazards**, for example, overhead or underground utilities; overgrowth of trees, bushes, and grasses; or the animals, bugs, and reptiles present in the area.

2. **Consider the weather.** What are the forecasted conditions during the time of the project?

3. **Monitor tool usage.** Identify supervision, who has access, the proper handling of tools, and power supplies, etc.

4. **Prepare for emergencies** (access, shelters, weather monitoring, communications).

Tools and Equipment

See *Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations*, No. 680-028, for guidance.

1. List the type and number of hand and power tools necessary for the project and the skills required for their usage.

Tool	Quantity Needed

2. What skill level, training/certification, age, and physical conditions are necessary?

Tool	Age-Appropriate Certification Needed (Adult/Youth)	Training Needed/Completed (Y/N?)

3. List the personal protective equipment (PPE) needed (see Age Guidelines for Tool Use for guidance).

Tool	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Needed

4. Check the condition of all tools. Never use tools that are broken, needing repair, or missing safety features.

Tool	Condition—Acceptable?

5. Determine the clearances and barriers needed between users or for specific tools or equipment.

Tool/Work Area	Clearance/Barriers/Safety Circle

6. Where and how will tools be stored?

7. Review the proper use of tools.

Weather Considerations

1. Heat (heat index, periods of work, periods of rest, use of shade, water):

2. Cold stress (wind chill, periods of work, rest, water, heated area):

3. Weather forecasting information and evaluations:

4. List weather emergency procedures (for tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning, etc.) and training/awareness (first-aid kit, trained first-aid personnel). See the Hazardous Weather online training at My.Scouting.org.

Health/Sanitation Considerations

1. Health risks to participants (possible problems such as poison ivy, rodents, and mosquitoes):

Check the following:

___ Annual Health and Medical Record forms are available.

___ Participants with allergies or other health risks are identified.

___ Are medications/EpiPens® on hand?

___ Are parental permissions (for youth) secured?

2. Will snacks or foods be available? (List types, where they are positioned, etc.)

Type of Snacks/Foods (Note Allergies)	Where Food Will Be

3. Sanitation needs and provisions (restrooms, hand sanitizers):

4. Will you need sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.?

Assessment and Monitoring

- Who will provide supervision, monitoring of participants? _____
- What conditions will cause a Start, Stop, Continue process to occur?

What will define project success? Why?

If there are any accidents or injuries, complete a BSA Incident Information Report, No. 680-016. Submit it to the council service center as soon as possible. Immediately notify the council service center or Scout executive of any serious incidents requiring emergency or medical response. If there was a near miss, complete a BSA Near Miss Incident Information Report, No. 680-017, and submit it to the council service center.



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680-027
2012 Printing

Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations

Training and Supervision

The use of tools, by any youth or adult, requires training in the proper use of those tools before a project starts and continuous, qualified adult supervision and discipline during the project. Manufacturers' literature and age and skill restrictions shall supersede the recommendations on the chart below. If there is a conflict, leaders shall follow the most restrictive guidelines. The table below is not comprehensive; if in doubt, adults should be recruited for all tool use or job functions that might be dangerous.

Note on Personal Protective Equipment

Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used at all times when using hand or power tools. Types of personal protective equipment include the following:

- Work gloves
- Safety glasses
- Safety helmets
- Earplugs or muffs
- Steel-toed shoes
- Protective aprons
- Safety face shields
- Other personal safety equipment as defined by OSHA standards

Hand Tools

Type of Tool	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth 14 Years and Older	Youth 16 Years and Older
Leaf/grass rake			
Hoe			
Shovel			
Hand clipper (small)			
Screwdrivers			
Nail hammer			
Handsaw			
Trowel			
Hose spray washer			
Wood sanding block (handheld)			
Wood chisel (Scouts with Totin' Chip)			
Pocketknife (Scouts with Whittling Chip or Totin' Chip)			
Pickaxe			
Mattock			
Posthole digger			
Wheel cart (1-, 2-, or 4-wheeled)			
Paint roller with extension pole			

Note: Shaded areas indicate age-appropriate use.

Power Tools

Type of Tool	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth 14 Years and Older	Youth 16 Years and Older
Screwdriver (electric)			
Handheld sander (small)			
Cutting tools (e.g., Dremel®, small)			
Paint sprayer (small, less than 50 psi)			
Residential lawn mower (self-propelled, riding)			
Commercial lawn mower (push, self-propelled, riding)			
Line trimmer (electric, gas-powered)			
Edger (electric, gas-powered)			
Leaf/grass blower (electric, gas-powered)			
Hedge trimmer (electric, gas-powered)			
Belt sander (electric, cordless)			
Pressure washer (>50 but <100 PSI)			
Circular, reciprocating, jig, or radial saw			Age 18 and older
Band and scroll saws			Age 18 and older
Router/planer			Age 18 and older
Chain saws			Age 18 and older
Log splitters			Age 18 and older
Wood chippers			Age 18 and older

Note: Shaded areas indicate age-appropriate use.

Working at Heights and Elevations

Heights and elevations are measured from the bottom of the shoes or boots above the ground level or floor.

Elevation of Work	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth Age 14 or Older
Up to 4 feet	Step stools*	
Above 4 feet	Not permitted	A 6-foot ladder is permissible with the manufacturer's recommended practices.
On scaffolds (above 4 feet)	Not permitted	Age 18 or older
Open platforms (above 4 feet) with proper fall protection**	Not permitted	Age 18 or older

Fall Protection Requirements According to OSHA Standards

29 CFR—Subpart M, 1926.500, 1926.501, 1926.502, and 1926.503

*Step stools, with one or two steps, are permissible for use by youth if the total height is 4 feet or less.

**Proper fall protection would require the use of full-body harnesses, helmets, and the ability to be anchored to a stable object. Refer to safety practices from the BSA's Project COPE and climbing national standards.

Note: Pioneering projects, such as monkey bridges, have a maximum height of 6 feet. Close supervision should be followed when Scouts are building or using pioneering projects.

Excavations

Youth or adults are not permitted to work in any excavation areas greater than 4 feet in depth, such as trenches for plumbing, digging wells, or building foundation work.

Youth can work on hiking and biking trails or other similar work where the depth of digging is not greater than 4 feet. Digging postholes for fences, gates, etc., is permissible if the depth is limited to 48 inches (4 feet) and the width is limited to 18 inches (1.5 feet).

It is critical to locate all underground utilities (e.g., water, gas, electric) at the site before any work begins. Most states have "call before you dig" call centers to assist with this effort.



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