



# Key Information Statements for Scouters



**T**he Adult Development Network has developed new course training standards for Woodbadge I. One of the resources available to all leaders in preparation for this course is this four page supplementary information piece covering a range of important topics. We felt the information was important enough to share with all leaders, even if you have already completed your Woodbadge I.

This information is also available at: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=770>

This information is provided as a background for leaders on specific topics when participating in a Woodbadge 1 course.

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#### Risk Assessment

What is risk assessment? It's a systematic process to consider and evaluate risk that may be present when engaging in an activity. (*Webster's dictionary* defines risk as *the chance of injury, damage or loss.*) The fact that an activity carries some risk in itself is not necessarily bad, as it can motivate us to try something exciting (being away from home and sleeping in a tent in the middle of a forest can be, for a ten year old, risky and rewarding). From an operational standpoint, the key to many great activities is the feeling of perceived risk when the actual outcome is controlled and the likelihood of an injury is low.

As you plan and conduct your evening meetings and participate in outdoor activities away from your meeting place, such as hikes and overnight events, the leadership team needs to assess how to be prepared for the activity. A great way to think through how to assess risk is this statement: Leaders and participants are: in the right place, at the right time, with the right people and with the right equipment.

When you identify a risk, here is a useful formula:  
probability of risk x consequences = level of risk

A fall during an activity such as rock climbing can have very serious consequences. The probability of that occurring with the appropriate knowledge/training and equipment is remote (this is an example of the right people and the right equipment). Whereas with an activity such as paintball, the probability of an eye injury is high, the con-



Photo: Don Stephen

sequences are high, and the outcome is not favorable (this is in part a reason why paintball is not an acceptable Scouting activity).

- If you are at your regular meeting place, what possible hazards are present when conducting your program? For example is there a stage? Are there supporting poles in the room? Is there a climbing apparatus on the walls of the gym you need to ensure youth don't use? Immediately outside of your meeting place are there structures or features of the property that pose a danger (is there construction nearby, or poison ivy on the edge of the parking lot)?
- When planning for an outing, are you at the right place – have you considered the type of terrain or other natural features that impact the group? Are there tricky or technical elements of the route? Given the training and experience, are you within a reasonable distance to provide assistance and get help? Are you familiar with the route, natural dangers nearby (such as waterfalls or abandoned mines), the weather when you depart, ensuring you are moving at an appropriate pace for the group?
- The right time: this can vary from the impact a change of season can have in an area, how capable your participants are (winter camping is not the same as summer camping), to the best time of the day to do a specific activity and what to do if you are late.
- Right people: are there special skills needed for the activity (such as water activities)? Have you prepared yourself and your group to do the task? Are there resource people who can assist you?
- The right equipment includes ensuring you have the appropriate safety equipment for a canoe trip to making sure the stoves have been tested after sitting in storage for a period of time. Do all the participants know how to use the necessary equipment?

#### Resources:

*By Law, Policies and Procedures*, Section 10000 – Camping & Outdoor Activities.

Page 3 of the *Application for Camping and Outdoor Activity* form: Safety Checklist.

*Emergency Plan/Action Plan* form.

*By Law, Policies and Procedures* Section 13000 - Risk Management.

#### Trademarks, Logos, Website Guidelines for Leaders

Scouts Canada's logos and trademarks are vigorously protected. They are available for use by all Scouts Canada group web sites – low-resolution versions for this purpose are located on the Scouts Canada site: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=150>.

Hi-resolution versions are available from Production Manager Heather Downs-MacIntosh ([hdowns@scouts.ca](mailto:hdowns@scouts.ca)) by approval. You may write Heather with details of your request for use of the logo on publicity materials, etc. If approved, Heather will forward a hi-resolution logo to your group by e-mail. Logos are not for use by anyone except authorized Scouting groups. Requests from outside agencies (crest or banner companies, etc.) will not be accommodated. Logos may only be used on crests, hats, shirts and other merchandise commissioned from one of Scouts Canada's official suppliers: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=236>. Requests for hi-resolution logos for this purpose must also be made through Heather.

"Be Prepared" is also protected by trademark and the same guidelines apply.

Web site guidelines for group webmasters may be found on the Scouts Canada site at:

<http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=701>

#### Privacy/Confidentiality

We ask parents to fill out the *Program Participant Enrollment Form* at the beginning of each Scouting year. Over the course of working closely with parents and youth you will be privy to private information.



Photo: Mike Tennesco

It is important to respect private and sensitive information. We must take appropriate precautions when storing and providing access to this information on a “need to know” basis.

### Parental Custody

We must be conscious of who is taking home your youth when the activity is over. For example, on the enrollment form we ask if the emergency contact has permission to pick up youth from the meeting or activity.

### Crisis Response

In the rare event a crisis should occur in your section or group, that possesses either a direct risk to members or Scouts Canada, please note that the Council Executive Director or Council Commissioner should be notified immediately.

In any circumstances when members of the media contact you for comment, please direct them to the Director of Communications at the National Office in Ottawa. The phone number is 613-224-5131 ext. 271.

### Waivers/Hold Harmless

It is common practice for service providers to request participants to sign a waiver to participate in their activity.

Scouts Canada does NOT allow its members (or their parents/guardians) to waive their rights to participate in approved Scouting activities. Waivers can actually invalidate the Scouts Canada insurance program.

What to do should you be asked to sign a waiver:

- Check in advance if a service provider requests the participants to sign a waiver.
- Inform the service provider that we do not sign waivers. Ask that they consider removing the waiver for Scouting.
- Your local council office can engage a service provider with a reciprocal *Indemnification Agreement* form. This

form is signed by both Scouts Canada and the activity provider when they provide proof of their respective liability insurance coverages. This may resolve the provider’s need for a waiver.

### Inventory

All groups and sections should keep an active inventory of the equipment they own and any repairs or actions that may need to be taken.

Scouts Canada does not provide insurance for equipment; groups are encouraged to seek replacement insurance for their equipment.

### Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is something that every colony, pack, troop, company and crew should have in order that all participants get the maximum benefit from their Scouting program. An effective Code of Conduct will protect the quality of the youths’ experience, and also ensures leaders are treated respectfully and properly by their sections. Having a Code of Conduct is a criteria in Scouts Canada’s Program Standards.

A Code of Conduct is a set of “rules” that everyone in a section agrees upon. It ensures that your meetings and activities run smoothly and fairly. It encourages youth to focus on how they work, both as individuals and in a section. Every section has priorities for what they want to accomplish and in Scouting, these priorities revolve around the Promise and Law that all youth and leaders make and follow. As you can see, a Code of Conduct is a useful tool that lists specific actions and ways to accomplish your section’s and Scouting’s priorities.

### Resources:

[www.scouts.ca](http://www.scouts.ca) - search for Code of Conduct. Section specific JUMPSTARTS are available to help your section develop a Code of Conduct. X



Photo: Vance Cough