



4-H General Risk Management Checklist for Outdoor Activities

Risk Management

Risk management is a process of steps. These include:

1. Identify potential risks
2. Evaluate those risks
3. Determine what you can do to reduce the risks to an acceptable level
4. Continue to monitor the activity and make changes as needed

Overview

This checklist is intended to support 4-H volunteers when planning outdoor education/recreation opportunities for youth. While 4-H provides individual Risk Management Checklists for specific outdoor activities, this checklist is intended to cover general risk management considerations that apply to all scenarios and should be considered in addition to the activity-specific checklist items. Volunteers should always work closely with their county 4-H Program Coordinator when planning activities and have them reach out to the Outdoor Education and Risk Management Educators whenever there are questions or further guidance is needed.

Checklist

Please thoroughly read the checklist below each time a group is planning an outdoor recreation activity. Volunteers who review and act upon these items and those included in the checklist specific to their activity have done due diligence within the scope of a volunteer's duties to reduce or eliminate the potential and actual risk for everyone engaging in the activity.

☐ Key Logistics of the activity:

- Communicate your plans for the activity with the 4-H program coordinator.
- Ensure that the activity is accessible to all participants.
- Provide participants and parents/ guardians with a permission slip that includes an activity itinerary and emergency phone numbers, addresses, etc.
- Consider access to restrooms. Adults should not be alone with a single youth in restrooms. Always send young children in pairs, with an adult within hearing distance.
- Ensure that adults do not have a 1:1 situation with youth.
- Communicate with participants and parents/guardians about appropriate attire for the activity to ensure protection from the elements and avoidance of hypothermia.
- Ensure that you have a proper [first aid kit](#) on hand during the activity.
- Cancel the activity in extreme weather conditions.

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❑ Proper Supervision:

Work with the local 4-H program coordinator to have enough current, Active Gold level volunteers to help supervise the activity. Activities require a minimum of one adult for every eight youth, depending on the age of the youth and risk of the activity. Cloverbuds (youth ages 5-7) need a minimum of one adult for every six youth depending on the risk of the activity. Regardless of the number of youth, there should always be at least two Active Gold volunteers or MSU Extension staff members present and supervising at a 4-H activity.

❑ Accident Insurance:

An annual supplemental accident insurance policy through American Income Life covers 4-H activities for all current, Active Gold volunteers in Volunteer Central and youth enrolled in 4-H Online. In addition to this coverage, special activities accident insurance coverage can be purchased and is recommended for certain events. Work with your 4-H Program Coordinator to determine if this additional coverage is needed. More information can be found at: <https://www.aillife.com/specialriskdivision/activityreport>

*Downhill winter sports or activities are not included in our insurance coverage and additional special activities coverage is always recommended for these activities.

❑ Permission for Use of Private Property/Waivers:

- If using private property, be sure to obtain permission from the landowner. They may wish to address any need for increased property insurance.
- If a facility requires a waiver to be signed, the waiver should be handled between the participant's parent/guardian and the facility directly. Staff and volunteers must **NOT** sign any documents including contracts or agreements on behalf of a 4-H club/group or any MSU Extension 4-H Program unless otherwise directed by 4-H staff.

❑ If there is an incident, report it:

Volunteers and staff need to record all incidents (medical, property damage, etc.) to local MSU Extension staff using an MSU Extension Injury/Property Damage Report Form. This form can be found [here](#). Volunteers are encouraged to have copies of this form on hand at all activities.

❑ Health Form:

Through the 4-H Online registration process, a parent/guardian must complete a health form, which includes a youth medical release, prior to the child's participation in any 4-H activity. Volunteers and staff must be certain that printed copies of the health form are on hand at all 4-H activities. Keep the documents in a confidential file or notebook and carry them with you throughout the activity. Volunteers should work with their 4-H Program Coordinator to review these forms and familiarize themselves with any special medical needs of participants. Discuss with parents/guardians the procedures that will be followed in case of an incident.

❑ Medication Administration:

Be familiar with and follow [MSU Extension/4-H Medication Administration Policy and Procedures](#). For quick-relief emergency medications such as epi-pens and inhalers, youth 12 and older should carry these medications on their person. If younger participants require them, an Active Gold Volunteer or staff member must provide documentation of completing a first aid and anaphylaxis/epi-pen course.

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❑ Food:

- Follow all food safety guidelines including keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Maintain personal cleanliness. Encourage hand washing as often as possible.
- Utensils, food containers and surface areas should be kept clean.
- Food is used within a safe length of time or refrigerated.
- Know if participants have food allergies and plan refreshments and meals accordingly.
- Have water available.

❑ Transportation:

Youth and their families are expected to arrange personal transportation to attend MSU Extension-sponsored events and activities. Staff members and volunteers should not arrange for carpooling of program participants. In emergency situations, a staff member or volunteer may need to provide transportation to a minor. Adults cannot be in a 1:1 situation with unrelated minors in vehicles. When possible, obtain permission from the parent/guardian of the minor and the 4-H program coordinator to transport youth due to an emergency. If contact cannot be made, the incident must be recorded and shared with the parent or guardian of the minor and the 4-H program coordinator.

❑ Arrival/Departure:

Utilize a sign-in sheet that all participants fill in at the time of arrival, which indicates who will be picking up the youth at departure time. Personal transportation to and from 4-H program activities is the responsibility of the 4-H member, parent/guardian, or volunteer. Be aware of when youth leave and who they leave with. Do not allow youth to depart with unauthorized adults. Volunteers need to remain on-site until all youth have left.

❑ Activity-Specific Checklists:

Once you have completed this General Risk Management Checklist, please review additional information specific to activities such as paddling, backpacking, and overnight camping [here](#).

Support

For more information contact:

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Adapted with permission from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; *4-H Risk Management Checklist for Meetings and Events*, 4H-3039A, April 2018, https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/files/page/files/riskmgmtchecklist_rev4.18.pdf

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