

Safety – Practical Tips



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0845 300 1818

This guidance is to help clarify some of the administrative needs surrounding your provision of safer Scouting. Additional resources and information can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/safety.

Leader in charge

All meetings, events and activities must have a leader in charge who has responsibility for co-ordinating all adults and young people.

Recent experience has shown that accidents can happen when there isn't a leader clearly designated as being in overall charge, or when that person makes an assumption that other people are looking after safety issues. Responses to accidents are also impaired in such circumstances.

The leader in charge is, simply put, the adult present at an evening meeting, event or activity who has the role of co-ordinating the work of all adults towards delivering the programme or activity in a safe manner.

Scouting safely is not just about ensuring that risk assessments and safety checks are conducted; all adults need to be clear on what they need to do and young people should be given clear instructions, guidance and rules.

The leader in charge does not have to personally fill in every risk assessment; this can be done by someone else in discussion with other adults. Nor do they have to give rules or guidance to either young people or adults personally. Being the leader in charge is about being the person with an overview of safety in the given situation.

It is extremely important that anyone who has been designated as the leader in charge fully understands their responsibilities. There should be no assumption that other adults are in charge. The leader in charge is responsible for overseeing the activity and all adults and young people. This includes responsibility for registers, headcounts, allocation of roles to specific adults and checking they are aware of their specific responsibilities. The best way to do this is for all adults involved in the activity to agree which one of them will undertake this function.

Checks could include a discussion about risk assessments, selecting who will give guidance and instructions to young people, and when and where head counts will be conducted. The leader in charge should also actively participate by keeping an overview of any activity.

Near misses

Reporting potential accidents:

If we see something that looks potentially unsafe then we all have a responsibility to do something about it. The initial step should be to ensure that the potential danger is removed, whether this is something physical or by changing the way that the activity is run or the conditions present.

This will generally be done through talking to those responsible for the activity or the premises. If this doesn't produce a result then it should be escalated to their line manager.

Reporting near misses:

If you experience a near miss (an accident or unplanned event that didn't result in a normally reportable injury or damage, but had the potential to do so) then it is important that this is reported. This is to help ensure that this incident won't happen again to someone else, leading to injury or damage.

Reporting near misses will allow The Scout Association to identify patterns of incidents and update best practice advice and guidance for members to support future activities.

The reporting of near misses is not to place any blame on those involved, but an important part of safeguarding others from harm in similar incidents in the future.

You can report near misses through the Scout Information Centre or at www.scouts.org.uk/nearmiss.

Safety on the agenda

It's important to keep safety on the agenda of meeting at all levels of Scouting. Below is a short guide to the sort of items that might come up in the name of safety. Some things are shown under one heading, purely as an example, but may also apply to other meetings.

Executive Committee agenda - safety items:

Group HQ buildings:
Fire safety, assessment and evacuation plan
Electrical testing, water testing and gas appliance testing
Asbestos management
Review of risk assessments

District campsite:
Management of safe water source and control of Legionella
Gas boilers and cookers and electrical testing
Fire safety and asbestos management
Maintenance and recording of all machinery
Running safe activities, safe equipment and instructors with appropriate permits

Emergency procedures
Risk assessments for tasks and activities on site

County meeting:
Reviewing incidents and accidents around the County
Ensuring good provision of training for leaders and managers to encourage safe Scouting
Supporting statutory compliance for campsites/premises

Commissioners' agenda - safety items:

District/County activities and events:
Risk assessments and control measures
Leader in charge/camp chief
Age appropriate activities
Safe equipment
Prompt reporting of incidents and accidents
Keeping parents informed

Leaders' agenda - safety items:

Review of activities since last leaders' meeting

Running an activity:
Age appropriate activity for section
Leader in charge

Being away from the HQ:
Road safety
Weather conditions
Headcounts and registers of young people
Transport

Setting up camp:
Lifting and moving equipment
Gas

Running a camp:
InTouch process
Knife, axe and saw
Food storage and handling

Remember, everything has an element of safety. Sometimes it seems so obvious we forget to mention it to others to whom it may not be so obvious.

Accident books

This guidance is to help you understand the appropriate way to record any accident information and when you may need to further report this to UK Headquarters.

Accident recording

You should make sure that you have an accident book in your first aid kit and that all leaders are aware of it. Any accident that occurs during a Scouting activity, or where medical treatment is given, as well as details of the treatment given, should be recorded in your accident book.

Executive Committees and leaders should review the accident book as part of their regular meeting agenda (under 'safety items').

This helps to both identify any common accident trends that you may need to address, and potential safety issues within your meeting place, as well as keeping a clear account of any incident should you need to refer back to it.

Accident reporting

Requirements are described in POR, [rule 7.4](#). An example accident report form can be found at Appendix A.

More serious accidents

In the event of more serious accidents, refer to your Safe Scouting and Emergency Procedures (purple) card. This will act as a short guide through the process. Ensure you are familiar with it and that all leaders have a copy to carry with them.

Data Protection

It is important to note that under the regulations of the Data Protection Act (1998), you must ensure that any personal or medical information regarding your members is not available for others to view. It is suggested therefore that you use a book with detachable pages. In practice, this means that entries

can be recorded as usual, but that after an incident the page is removed from the book and then stored securely by, for example, the Executive Committee.

Use of this system ensures that records will still be available where necessary but that the information will only be accessed by the relevant adults. This information may also be helpful in the event of any insurance claim made.

When any treatment is given, a record should be kept in an accident book, kept at the meeting place. If further treatment is required by a hospital or doctor, The Scout Association Information Centre should be notified (for further guidance please refer to the factsheet FS120079 Accidents – A Guide to Reporting for Leaders and Commissioners).

For further information regarding the Data Protection Act (1998) and how it affects the management of your section, please refer to the factsheet FS270001 Data Protection.

Appendix A: example accident report form:

Accident or incident report form

Use BLOCK capitals and please write carefully and neatly

Details: injured person

Name	Age
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Accident or incident

Date:	Time:
Location:	
What was the activity being undertaken and brief description of the accident:	
Details of injury and medical treatment received:	
Continue overleaf if necessary...	
Name of attending first aider:	

Please check if this incident needs to be reported to UK Headquarters via the Scout Information Centre at Gilwell Park on 0845 300 1818. Retain a copy for your records.