

# **Safety First** Learning for Life Guidelines

A Leader's Guide to Keeping Youth Safe in Learning for Life Activities

## Preface

The purpose of the *Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines* is to prepare adult leaders to conduct safe activities. These guidelines have been established **to protect participants from potential hazards**. Limitations on certain activities are best described as stepping-stones toward safe and enjoyable adventures.

Adult leaders should be aware of federal, state, or local government regulations that supersede Learning for Life guidelines. All health and safety issues contained within this publication are based on **qualified supervision** and **discipline**.

**Bold type throughout *Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines* denotes Learning for Life policies.**

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## Insurance Information for Learning for Life Volunteers

Listed below are brief outlines of insurance coverage provided by or through the local Learning for Life office:

### Accident and Sickness Coverage (Optional Coverage for Councils)

Accident and sickness insurance coverage for LFL participants provides medical expense reimbursement in case of death, accident, or sickness (Council Plan only) within the policy limits. Information regarding accident coverage is available through the local LFL office. There are two plans available to LFL volunteers: the **Council Accident and Sickness Plan**, and the **Learning for Life Accident Plan**. The **Council Accident and Sickness Plan** was developed to provide each council with the opportunity to insure all traditional, Exploring, and LFL participants under one accident and sickness insurance program. The plan extends coverage to all youth, including Explorers, and seasonal staff if not covered by workers' compensation. Coverage for adults and/or non-Explorers in Learning for Life is optional, and individual councils can elect to purchase it. Since the Council Accident and Sickness Plan is not mandatory, a few councils have elected not to purchase this coverage. Most councils that do not participate in the Council Plan give individual posts the opportunity to purchase accident insurance through the **Learning for Life Accident Plan**.

**Learning for Life Accident Plan.** This is an accident-only insurance policy and does not provide coverage for illnesses. **All registered youth participants** (Exploring or curriculum-based) must be insured. Leaders and committee members, as a group, may be insured at their option. If the council organizes LFL council events, the council should purchase coverage for those events through the BSA Campers and Special Events Plan for each event. These plans/policies are for expenses in excess of any and all other available sources of medical insurance or other health-care benefits. In the event there is no other primary insurance or health-care plan, these policies

generally pay as primary coverage subject to the plan limits and terms. LFL curriculum-based teachers are not provided coverage under either plan. Volunteers need to check with their local council to verify which plan/policy the council makes available.

### Automobile Liability Insurance

All vehicles used to transport participants to and/or from an official Learning for Life activity **MUST** be covered by a liability insurance policy. The amount of this coverage must meet or exceed the insurance requirement of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. (It is recommended, however, that coverage limits are at least \$100,000 combined single limit.) Any vehicle carrying 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of \$500,000 single limit. In the case of rented vehicles, coverage limit requirements can be met by combining the limits of personal coverage carried by the driver with insurance coverage purchased from the rental company. All vehicles used for travel outside the United States must carry a liability insurance policy that complies with or exceeds the requirements of that country.

### Comprehensive General Liability Insurance

General liability insurance provides coverage for costs that the insured person is legally obligated to pay to third parties because of bodily injury or property damage caused by, arising from, or occurring in the course of official Learning for Life functions and activities. This insurance provides primary general liability coverage for all LFL professionals and employees, participating organizations, and registered volunteer adult participants with respect to lawsuits and claims arising from an official Learning for Life activity or in the performance of their duties with LFL. Injuries or illnesses suffered by registered LFL participants are covered by a separate accident and sickness policy. In addition, this coverage is for expenses in excess of any insurance that may be available to a volunteer for loss arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle or watercraft. This coverage is available only when the vehicle or watercraft is actually being used for an LFL purpose. Coverage is more than \$5 million for bodily injury and property damage.

**Registered adults** are those district and council committee members, Exploring post and Middle School Explorer Club adult leaders who have completed a Learning for Life/Exploring Adult Registration form. The insurance provided to unregistered LFL volunteers (**including school teachers in the curriculum-based program**) through the general liability insurance program is for expenses in excess of any other insurance the volunteer carries—usually a homeowner's, personal liability, or auto liability policy. The general liability policy **does not** provide indemnification or defense coverage to those individuals who commit **intentional and/or criminal acts**. Learning for Life does not have an insurance policy which provides defense for situations involving allegations of intentional and/or criminal acts.

## **Participating Organizations of LFL Posts, Clubs and Groups**

The general liability policy provides primary liability insurance coverage for all participating organizations on file with LFL for liability claims arising out of their sponsorship of a Learning for Life group, Explorer post, or Middle School Explorer club. Automobile and watercraft liability coverage is provided on a secondary or excess basis. All vehicles used in LFL activities must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed the requirements of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. All boats/vessels used in LFL activities must be insured by the owner for liability exposures. The amount of coverage is determined by the size and usage of the boat. \$1 million is recommended. Participating organizations do not need a certificate of insurance. The participating organization endorsement is a part of the insurance policy contract and is enforceable under the policy contract. A copy of the participating organization endorsement is located in the Risk Management Notebook, Section 16. It should be attached to the participating organization memorandum of understanding, at renewal. These endorsements are part of the actual insurance policy contract and are binding documents. When you have a request from a participating organization for a certificate of insurance, offer them the endorsement.

## **Unauthorized and Restricted Activities**

The general liability policy provides coverage for a bodily injury or property damage claim that arises from an official Learning for Life activity. The Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines contain a listing of unauthorized and restricted activities. Unauthorized activities are not considered official LFL activities. Volunteers, posts, clubs, groups, participating organizations, and local offices are jeopardizing insurance coverage for themselves and their organizations if they engage in unauthorized activities. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOURSELF AT RISK.

## **Tour and Activity Plan**

Times when a tour and activity plan must be submitted for council review include the following:

- Trips of 500 miles or more
  - Trips outside of council borders (unless the trip is to a council-owned property)
  - Trips to national conferences or regionally sponsored events
  - When a council requests the tour and activity plan (Contact your local council for additional guidelines or regulations concerning tour and activity plans; many have established guidelines for events or activities within council boundaries.)
  - Activities other than council or district events, including
    - Aquatics activities (swimming, boating, floating, scuba, etc.)
    - Climbing and rappelling
    - Orientation flights (process flying permit)
    - Shooting air guns or firearms training
    - Any activities involving motorized vehicles as part of the program (snowmobiles, boating, etc.)
- Regardless of whether a tour and activity plan is needed, the tour and activity plan is an excellent tool that should be included in preparation for all activities—even those not requiring it. The plan guides a tour leader through itineraries, travel arrangements, two-deep leadership, supervision qualifications, and transportation.

## Program Specific Guidelines

### Aviation

Aviation Explorer posts cannot operate aircraft as transportation. Basic orientation flights of 25 miles or advanced orientation flights of 50 miles are allowed, providing an approved flying permit is submitted. For more information, see the Aviation Exploring section at [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org).

### Fire and Emergency

Explorers may not be substituted for trained personnel. They can only be mobilized as a post, with leadership, and are not on call individually. When riding, Explorers must be seated with a seat belt (never standing on the back of a fire truck), and they cannot drive a department vehicle. Clear and specific departmental guidelines must be written regarding what an Explorer may do at the site of an emergency. Explorers who are 16 years of age or older may operate hydraulic rescue tools or equipment, unless prohibited from doing so by state or local laws. Specific policy details are found at [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org).

### Emergency and Health Careers

Explorers may ride in emergency vehicles, but must be seated and wearing a seat belt. Specific guidelines must be established as to what they are allowed to do at the site of an emergency. For more information, check the Fire & Emergency Services Career Exploring page at [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org).

### Law Enforcement

Explorers may not be substituted for trained personnel. They can only be mobilized as a post with leadership, and are not on call individually. Law Enforcement Explorers should never be placed in a situation in which anyone might mistake them for legal law enforcement officers. LFL Explorers should not drive a marked patrol vehicle (unless in an approved competition). Explorers under 18 cannot ride along after midnight. Explorers are prohibited from using or carrying offensive/defensive equipment (e.g., firearms, sprays, and handcuffs). All ride-along programs must be certified by the National Law Enforcement Exploring Committee. Explorers are not to be used to perform covert/undercover acts. If an individual participates in such acts, he or she does so as a private citizen, not as an Explorer. A post must have the approval of the local office to host events involving other posts. All shooting activities, including training, must be under the supervision of an NRA-certified instructor or the firearms instructor of a local, state, or federal agency. For more information, check [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org).

Learning for Life recognizes the importance of teaching Law Enforcement Explorers and adult leaders the safe and responsible handling and use of air guns and firearms in a controlled environment under the supervision of a specially trained law enforcement officer designated by his or her agency as a firearms instructor, or by a NRA certified law enforcement instructor or range safety officer. Air guns are defined as simulated firearms that use compressed air to discharge metal or plastic projectiles. There are special provisions for Law Enforcement Explorers for use of Non-Lethal Training Firearms (NLTF) and firearms that may be found in the Law Enforcement Exploring Program Guidelines and related documents listed in the Appendix Section of the Guidelines. The Guidelines may be found in the Law Enforcement Exploring section of the Learning for Life website at [www.learningforlife.org/lawenforcement](http://www.learningforlife.org/lawenforcement).

Learning for Life prohibits the pointing of a real or non-lethal firearm at any individual during any type of activity. The only exception to this policy is for Law Enforcement Exploring activities where Non-Lethal Training Firearms (NLTF) may be used for training purposes. NLTF are described as replicas of firearms that are designed to look and feel authentic and may discharge a non-lethal laser beam or solid projectile (i.e., paintball or plastic pellet such as used in the popular Airsoft simulated firearms). NLTF that discharge metal projectiles are prohibited. The use of NLTF is authorized for Law Enforcement

The use of chemical repellents (pepper spray, tear gas, etc.) by participants in Learning for Life activities is prohibited. The only exception to the policy, as set forth in Section 2.12 of the Law Enforcement Exploring Program Guidelines, is for Law Enforcement Explorers who are permitted to volunteer, with certain restrictions, to be exposed to Oleoresin Capsicum (pepper spray) for familiarization purposes in a controlled training exercise.

### Skilled Trades

Chainsaws and mechanical log splitters may be authorized for use only by trained individuals over the age of 18, provided they use proper protective gear and follow local laws. Mechanical and power tools are to be used only under the supervision of a trained adult advisor and only after training on proper operating techniques. For more information, see the Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines and the Skilled Trades page at [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org).

### Middle School Explorer Clubs

Middle School Explorer Club participants may not participate in activities involving pistol, automatic or semi-automatic shooting, or non-lethal firearms. In regard to aviation activities, Middle School Explorer Club participants may participate only in the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Young Eagles activity with a certified pilot. In addition, middle school participants are not permitted to go on ride-alongs involving law enforcement or fire/EMS programs.

**Note: To learn more about liability insurance, contact your local LFL office. Some information may also be obtained by logging on to the LFL website at [www.learningforlife.org](http://www.learningforlife.org) via the Exploring/curriculum-based programs; each Exploring career field has vital information dealing with safety and policy issues. The Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines, the source of the tour and activity plan, may be viewed or downloaded via [exploring.learningforlife.org/safety-first](http://exploring.learningforlife.org/safety-first)**

# Adult Leadership

Each Learning for Life group/post shall have one adult, 21 years of age or older, who shall be approved by the participating organization.

## Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings

1. Two-deep leadership:

**Two adult leaders, or one adult and a parent of a participant, are required for all trips or outings. Coed overnight activities require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older. Parents used to fulfill the two-deep leadership must be approved by the participating organization.**

Definitions of outings:

**Outings are trips or meetings that occur at places other than the usual group/post meeting location and require preplanning of transportation. Outings may have an overnight component. All groups or posts planning an outing must read, agree, and comply with the requirements in the outing permit.**

2. During transportation to and from planned outings:

- a. Meet for departure at a designated area.
- b. Prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
- c. Plan a daily destination point.

**A common departure site and daily destination point are a must. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth participants—never one on one.**

3. **Male and female leaders require separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.**
5. **Male and female youth participants will not share the same sleeping facility.**
6. **When staying in tents, no youth will stay in the tent of an adult other than his or her parent or guardian. Youth and adults, other than the participant's parent(s), must have separate sleeping quarters.**
7. **If separate shower and bathroom facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted.**

**\*Flying activities are allowed only for Explorer posts in Learning for Life. For details, see the Aviation Exploring Web site. Two-deep adult leadership is required for Explorer flying activities. For basic orientation flights, the adult licensed pilot in control of the aircraft is sufficient for the flight while two-deep leadership is maintained on the ground. In advanced orientation flights, Explorers may stop at an airport different from the departure airport and even have an activity there, such as an outing at a flight museum. Because of this difference, two-deep adult leadership is required.**

# Aquatics Safety

## Who Can Instruct Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat Training?

Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training can be given by any person authorized by the Learning for Life local office, such as an aquatics resource person, a leader with aquatics skill, or any other person with aquatics knowledge or experience whom the local office has approved.

## Safe Swim Defense

Before a Learning for Life group may engage in swimming activities of any kind, a minimum of one adult leader must complete Safe Swim Defense training.

1. Qualified Supervision  
**All swimming activity must be supervised by an adult age 21 or older who understands and accepts responsibility for the safety of youth participants, who is experienced in the water and has the ability to respond in the event of an emergency, and is trained and committed to the eight points of the Safe Swim Defense.** (It is strongly recommended that all groups/posts have at least one adult or older youth participant currently trained as a lifeguard.)
2. Physical Fitness  
**A complete health history from a physician, parent, or legal guardian is required for swimming.** In the event of any significant health conditions, the leader should require proof of an examination by a physician.  
Youth with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions are taken.
3. Safe Area  
When swimming in lakes and streams, lifeguards should systematically examine the bottom of the swimming area to determine depths and hazards. **Mark off the area for three groups: not more than 3 1/2 feet deep for non-swimmers; from shallow water to just over the head for beginners; deep water not more than 12 feet for swimmers.** A participant should not be permitted to swim in an area where he cannot readily recover and maintain his footing, or cannot maintain his position on the water, because of swimming ability or water flow. When setting up a safe swimming area in natural waters, establish boundary markers. Enclose non swimmer and beginner areas with buoy lines (twine and floats) between markers. Mark the outer bounds of the swimmer area with floats. Clear-water depth is at least 7 feet before allowing anyone to dive. Diving is prohibited from any height more than 40 inches above the water surface; feet first entry is prohibited from more than 60 inches above the water. For any entry from more than 18 inches above the water surface, clear-water depth must be 10 to 12 feet. Only surface swimming is permitted in turbid water. Swimming is not permitted in water over 12 feet deep, in turbid water where poor visibility and depth would interfere with emergency recognition or prompt rescue, or in whitewater, unless all participants wear appropriate personal flotation devices and the supervisor determines that swimming with personal flotation equipment is safe under the circumstances.
4. Lifeguards on Duty  
Swim only where lifeguards are on duty. For group swims in areas where lifeguards are not provided by others, the supervisor should designate two capable swimmers as lifeguards. Station them ashore, equipped with a lifeline (a 100-foot length of 3/8-inch nylon cord). In an emergency, one carries out the line; the other feeds it out from shore, then pulls in his partner and the person being helped. In addition, if a boat is available, have two capable swimmers take it out—one rowing and the other equipped with a 10-foot pole or extra oar. Provide one guard for every 10 people in the water, and adjust the number and positioning of guards as needed to protect the particular area and activity.
5. Lookout  
Station a lookout on the shore where it is possible to see and hear everything in all areas. The lookout may be the adult in charge of the swim and may give the buddy signals.
6. Ability Groups  
**Divide into three ability groups: non swimmers, beginners, and swimmers. Keep each group in its own area.** Non swimmers have not passed a swimming test. Beginners must pass this test: jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, and swim 25 feet on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before, and return to the starting place. Swimmers pass

this test: jump feet first into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudge, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating. These classification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season.

7. Buddy System

**Pair every youth with another in the same ability group.** Buddies check in and out of the swimming area together. Emphasize that each buddy lifeguards his buddy. Check everyone in the water about every 10 minutes, or as needed to keep the buddies together. The adult in charge signals for a buddy check with a single blast of a whistle or ring of a bell and a call of "Buddies!" The adult counts slowly to 10 while buddies join and raise hands and remain still and silent. Guards check all areas, count the pairs, and compare the total with the number known to be in the water. Signal two blasts or bells to resume swimming. Signal three blasts or bells for checkout.

8. Discipline

**Swimming is allowed only with proper supervision and use of the Safe Swim Defense Plan.** Swimmers should respect and follow all directions and rules of the adult supervisor. When people know the reason for rules and procedures they are more likely to follow them. Be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

## Classification of Swimming Ability

### Swimmer Test

The swimmer test demonstrates the minimum level of swimming ability required for safe deep-water swimming. The various components of the test evaluate the skills essential to this minimum level of swimming ability:

**Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming. Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudge, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.**

The test administrator must objectively evaluate the individual performance of the test, and in so doing should keep in mind the purpose of each test element.

1. *"Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, and begin swimming...."*  
The swimmer must be able to make an abrupt entry into deep water and begin swimming without any aids. Walking in from shallow water, easing in from the edge or down a ladder, pushing off from side or bottom, or gaining forward momentum by diving do not satisfy this requirement.
2. *"... Swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudge, or crawl; ..."*  
The swimmer must be able to cover distance with a strong, confident stroke. The 75 yards must not be the outer limit of the swimmer's ability; completion of the distance should give evidence of sufficient stamina to avoid undue risks. Dog-paddling and strokes repeatedly interrupted and restarted are not sufficient; underwater swimming is not permitted. The itemized strokes are inclusive. Any strong side or breaststroke or any strong overarm stroke (including the back crawl) is acceptable.
3. *"... Swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke ..."*  
The swimmer must indicate the ability to execute a restful, free-breathing backstroke that can be used to avoid exhaustion during swimming activity. This element of the test necessarily follows the more strenuous swimming activity to show that the swimmer is, in fact, able to use the backstroke as a relief from exertion. The change of stroke must be accomplished in deep water without any push-off or other aid. Any variation of the elementary may suffice if it clearly provides opportunity for the swimmer to rest and regain wind.
4. *"... The 100 yards must be swum continuously and include at least one sharp turn. ..."*  
The total distance is to be covered without rest stops. The sharp turn simply demonstrates the swimmer's ability to reverse direction in deep water without assistance or push-off from the side or bottom.

5. *"... After completing the swim, rest by floating."*

This critically important component of the test evaluates the swimmer's ability to maintain in the water even though exhausted or otherwise unable to continue swimming. Treading water or swimming in place will further tire the swimmer and are, therefore, unacceptable. The duration of the float test is not significant, except that it must be long enough for the test administrator to determine that the swimmer is, in fact, resting and could likely continue to do so for a prolonged time. The drown-proofing technique may be sufficient if clearly restful, but it is not preferred. If the test is completed except for the floating requirement, the swimmer may be retested on the floating only (after instruction) provided that the test administrator is confident that the swimmer can initiate the float when exhausted.

## **Beginner Test**

**Jump feet first into water over the head in depth, level off, swim 25 feet on the surface, stop, turn sharply, resume swimming as before, and return to the starting place.** The entry and turn serve the same purpose as in the swimmer test. The swimming can be done with any stroke, but no underwater swimming is permitted. The stop assures that the swimmer can regain a stroke if it is interrupted. The test demonstrates that the beginning swimmer is ready to learn deep water skills and has the minimum ability required for safe swimming in a confined area in which shallow water, sides, or other support is less than 25 feet from any point in the water.

## **Pool and Surf Swimming**

The Safe Swim Defense applies to swimming at the beach, private or public pools, wilderness pond, stream, lake, or anywhere participants swim. Here are some additional points for the pool and the surf:

### **Pool**

If the swimming activity is in a public facility where others are using the pool at the same time, and the pool operator provides guard personnel, there may be no need for additional designation of youth lifeguards and the lookout.

The buddy system is critically important, however, even in a public pool. Remember, even in a crowd, you are alone without protection if no one is attentive to your circumstances.

The rule that people swim only in water suited to their ability and with others of similar ability applies in a pool environment. Most public pools divide shallow and deep water, and this may be sufficient for defining appropriate swimming areas. If not, the supervisor should clearly indicate to the participating youth the appropriate areas of the public facility. Although such procedures add a margin of safety, their use may not always be practical when the swim activity is conducted at a public facility where other people (not involved in Learning for Life programs) are present. A responsible adult supervisor, who understands his or her responsibility and the elements of safety, can exercise discretion regarding certain procedures while maintaining safety.

### **Surf**

The surf swimming environment of wave action, currents, tides, undertow, run outs, and sea pests like stinging jellyfish requires precautions for safe swimming that are not necessary in other environments. A swimmer's physical condition is very important and should enable the swimmer to recover footing in waves, swim vigorously for at least five minutes without becoming exhausted, and remain calm and in control when faced with unexpected conditions.

Designated swimming areas are marked by flags or pennants that are easily seen. Beginners and non-swimmers are positioned inshore from the standing lifeguards equipped with reach poles.

Better swimmers are permitted seaward of the lifeguard but must remain shoreward of anchored



marker buoys. The lifeguard-to-swimmer ratio should always be 1:10, with a rescue team stationed at the beach area and supplied with a rescue tube or torpedo buoy.

## Safety Afloat

Safety Afloat has been developed to promote boating and boating safety and to set standards for safe activity afloat. **Before a group may engage in an excursion, expedition, or trip on the water (canoe, raft, sailboat, motorboat, rowboat, tube, or other craft), adult leaders for such activity must complete Safety Afloat training.**

1. **Qualified Supervision**
  - **Adult 21 years old (supervisor 21, other 18, ratio of 1 adult to 10 youth)**
  - **Experienced and qualified in watercraft skills and equipment**
  - **Trained in Safety Afloat and Safe Swim Defense**
  - **One trained lifeguard certified in CPR recommended**
2. **Physical Fitness**
  - **Present evidence of fitness with a health history from a physician, parent, or legal guardian**
  - **Supervisor should anticipate potential risks associated with health conditions and require an examination by a physician where needed.**
  - Youth with physical disabilities can enjoy and benefit from aquatics if the disabilities are known and necessary precautions taken.
3. **Swimming Ability**

**A person who has not been classified as a "swimmer" may ride as a passenger in a rowboat or motorboat with an adult "swimmer" or in a canoe, raft, or sailboat with an adult certified as a lifeguard or a lifesaver by a recognized agency. In all other circumstances, the person must be a swimmer to participate in an activity afloat. "Swimmers" must pass the swimmer test. (See [Aquatic Safety](#) in *Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines*.) This qualification test should be renewed annually.**
4. **Personal Flotation Equipment**

**Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be worn by all persons engaged in activity on the open water (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motor boating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, and kayaking). Type II and III PFDs are recommended.**
5. **Buddy System All activity afloat must adhere to the principles of the buddy system. (See Buddy System, [Aquatic Safety](#), in *Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines*.)**
6. **Skill Proficiency**

**All participants in activity afloat must be trained and experienced in watercraft-handling skills, safety, and emergency procedures.**

  - a. **For a post/club activity on white water, all participants must complete special training by an aquatics instructor or qualified white-water specialist.**
  - b. **Powerboat operators must be able to**
    1. **Demonstrate correct first aid for injuries or illnesses that could occur while motor boating, including hypothermia, heatstroke, heat exhaustion, dehydration, sunburn, insect stings, tick bites, blisters, and hyperventilation.**
    2. **Do the following:**
      - A. **Identify the conditions that must exist before performing CPR on a person. Explain how such conditions are recognized.**
      - B. **Demonstrate proper technique for performing CPR using an approved training device.**
    3. **Before doing the following requirements, successfully complete the swimmer test (See *Aquatic Safety* in *Safety First Learning for Life Guidelines*.)**
    4. **Demonstrate knowledge of safety laws for motor boating:**
      - A. **Have a permit to run a motorboat, if needed.**
      - B. **Explain state laws affecting pleasure boating.**
      - C. **Discuss how the hazards of weather and heavy water conditions can affect both safety and performance in motor boating.**
      - D. **Discuss the nautical rules of the road and describe national and state aids to navigation.**

- E. **Explain and show the correct use of equipment required by both state and federal regulations to be carried aboard a motorboat.**
    - F. **Explain the requirement on federal and state ventilation rules and state why this is needed.**
  - 5. **Show correct procedures for the following:**
    - A. **Boarding a boat**
    - B. **Fueling and checking the motor before starting**
    - C. **Starting the motor and getting under way from a dock or beach**
    - D. **Running a straight course for a quarter mile, making right-angle turns to the left or right, and making a U-turn**
    - E. **Stopping the boat, dropping and raising anchor, and getting underway.**
    - F. **Coming alongside a dock and tying up or beaching**
  - 6. **Show how to**
    - A. **Tie up or take the boat from the water**
    - B. **Store gear**
    - C. **Prepare the motor for the winter**
  - 7. **Except for white-water and powerboat operation as noted above, either a minimum of three hours' training and supervised practice or meeting requirements for "basic handling tests" is required for all float trips or open-water excursions using unpowered craft.**
- c. **Planning**
  - a. **Float Plan. Know exactly where the post/club will put in, where the post/club will pull out, and precisely what course will be followed. Determine all stopover points in advance. Estimate travel time with ample margins to avoid traveling under time pressures. Obtain accurate and current maps and information on the waterway to be traveled, and discuss the course with others who have made the trip under similar seasonal conditions. (Preferably an adult member of the group should run the course before the trip)**
  - b. **Rules. Determine which state and local laws or regulations are applicable. If private property is to be used or crossed, obtain written permission from the owners. All rules must be strictly observed.**
  - c. **Notification. The float plan must be filed with the parents of participants and a member of the committee. For any activity using canoes on running water, the float plan must be filed with the local service center. Notify appropriate authorities, such as the U.S. Coast Guard, state police, or park personnel, when their jurisdiction is involved. When the group returns from this activity, people given the float plan should be notified.**
  - d. **Weather. Check the weather forecast just before setting out; know and understand the seasonal weather pattern for the region; and keep an alert "weather eye." Imminent rough weather should bring all ashore immediately.**
  - e. **Contingencies. Planning must anticipate possible emergencies or other circumstances that could force a change in the original plan. Identify and consider all such circumstances in advance so that appropriate contingency plans can be developed.**
- d. **Equipment**

**All equipment must be suited to the craft, to the water conditions, and to the individual; must be in good repair; and must satisfy all state and U.S. Coast Guard requirements.** To the extent possible, carry spare equipment. On long trips or when spare equipment is not available, carry repair materials. Have appropriate rescue equipment available for immediate use.
- e. **Discipline**

All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe unit activity afloat. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed for all participants.

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

**Only U.S. Coast Guard-approved equipment (Types I, II, or III) is acceptable for use in Learning for Life aquatics.** Ski belts are not acceptable. Youth and post/club leaders should learn which type is appropriate for each specific circumstance and how to wear it and check for proper fit.

## Water Clarity

**Swimming activity in turbid water should be limited to surface swimming. Turbid water exists when a 12-inch white disk at the depth of 3 feet is not visible from above the surface of the water. Underwater swimming, headfirst entry (except for racing dives), and board diving are not permitted in turbid water.** Supervised instruction in lifesaving skills and surface diving may be conducted in confined areas of turbid water not exceeding 8 feet in depth and free of bottom hazards.

**Snorkeling and scuba skills are taught and practiced only in clear water. Clear water exists when a 12-inch white disk at a depth of 8 feet is visible from above the surface of the water.**

## Lifeguard

Lifeguard training has been established to provide posts with qualified individuals within their own membership to give knowledgeable supervision for activities on or in the water. The first standard in the Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat guidelines establishes a need for qualified supervision. An adult currently trained as a lifeguard or an adult leader assisted by a youth holding lifeguard training meets this requirement. To enroll in the Learning for Life lifeguard course, you must be at least 14 years of age or have completed the eighth grade. Contact your local Learning for Life office for the latest requirements for lifeguard training. Every leader is encouraged to become trained or to ensure that at least one youth or adult member has this training.

## Swimming

Swimming areas should be large enough to avoid crowding (minimum of 40 square feet per swimmer). Note the following in accordance with Safe Swim Defense rules. **Mark off the area for three groups: not more than 3.5 feet deep for non-swimmers; from shallow water to just over the head for beginners; deep water not more than 12 feet for swimmers.**

## Diving and Elevated Entry

**"Diving" refers to any water entry where the feet are not making first contact with the water. "Elevated entry" refers to any water entry from a height more than 18 inches above the water. According to Safety Afloat standards, no diving or swimming activity of any kind is done in water with a depth greater than 12 feet.**

**All water entry must be feet first where the water has less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth. A leaping entry is recommended where water is at or above head level; a step-down or jump-down entry from a sitting position is recommended for shallower water.**

**No diving is permitted in water with less than 7 feet of unobstructed depth. Diving is permitted in clear water over 7 feet deep from a dock, pier, or platform that is no more than 18 inches above the water surface. For elevated entry from 18 inches high but less than 40 inches above the water surface, clear and unobstructed water depth must be at least 9 feet. The water must be clear enough to enable supervisory and guard personnel to see the diver at the deepest part of the plunge.**

Board diving is permitted only from boards, mounted on a fixed (not floating) platform or deck, no more than 40 inches (approximately 1 meter) above the water surface. Clear water depth below the board should be 9 feet to 12 feet. A guard or supervisor should be positioned where the diver can be seen at all times beneath the surface. There should be no other surface or underwater activity or obstruction for at least 15 feet on either side of the board and 25 feet in front of the board. Diving should always be done straight ahead from the board, never to the sides.

Any elevated entry from a height greater than 40 inches must be feet first and only from a fixed platform or solid footing no more than 60 inches above the water surface. Clear-water depth should be 10 feet to 12 feet. Other protective measures and distances are the same as for board diving.

## **Scuba**

Any person possessing, displaying, or using scuba equipment in connection with any Learning for Life activity must be currently certified by the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) or the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). These two agencies are recognized by Learning for Life for scuba training and instruction. Alternatively, if PADI or NAUI training and instruction is not available, certification may be accepted from other agencies that comply with Recreational Scuba Training Council (RSTC) guidelines, provided that such acceptance has been expressly approved by the local office in consultation with the National Health and Safety Service.

Scuba programs may be a part of Learning for Life or Exploring activities for participants who are 14 years of age or older. Persons meeting the age requirement and properly certified may participate in group dives under the supervision of a responsible adult who is currently certified as a dive master, assistant instructor, or any higher rating from NAUI or PADI. Student divers must be under the supervision of a currently certified NAUI or PADI instructor. No exceptions to the age requirement are permitted, and any NAUI or PADI age requirements for those 14 and older shall be followed in all program-related activities. A 14-year-old participant with a junior diver certification may dive only when accompanied by a buddy who is a certified open-water diver at least 18 years old.

Due to lack of frequency of diving by most sport divers, it is important that any certified divers be screened and evaluated by a certified diving instructor before participating in program-related activities. The skills to be evaluated include the following:

- f. **Use of a buoyancy control device**
- g. **Giant stride entry**
- h. **Removal and replacement of weight belt**
- i. **Neutral buoyancy**
- j. **Snorkel to regulator exchange**
- k. **Removal and replacement of scuba post/club under the water**
- l. **Face mask removal, replacement, and clearing**
- m. **Emergency swimming ascent**
- n. **Alternate air source ascent**
- o. **Pre-dive safety drill**
- p. **Five-point ascent and descent**
- q. **Deepwater exits**
- r. **Simulation of surface procedures**

## **Policy on Asthma/Reactive Airway Disease as Related to Scuba Activities**

19. Persons with symptomatic or active asthma/reactive airway disease (commonly known as RAD) should not be allowed to scuba dive. This would include, at a minimum, anyone who
  - . Is currently taking medication for asthma/RAD
  - a. Has received treatment for bronchospasm in the past five years
  - b. Has exercise-induced bronchospasm
  - c. Has cold-induced bronchospasm
20. Persons with asymptomatic asthma/RAD who wish to scuba dive should be referred to a pulmonary medical specialist who is also knowledgeable about diving medicine for a complete medical examination, including exercise and bronchial challenge testing.

## **Snorkeling**

The snorkeling requirements have been developed to introduce youth to the special skills, equipment, and safety precautions associated with snorkeling; to encourage the development of aquatics skills that promote fitness and recreation; and to provide a solid foundation of skills and knowledge for those who later will participate in more advanced underwater activity.

Trained aquatics instructors may serve as a counselor. A person recognized and certified as a snorkeling instructor by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI), or the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) also qualifies as a snorkeling counselor.

Instruction must be conducted in clear, confined water with a maximum depth of 12 feet. A swimming pool is recommended. All requirements must be completed as stated on the application form. The counselor may not omit, vary, or add requirements. The requirements are presented in the order in which they should be taught. The completed application should be submitted to the local Learning for Life office by the counselor or adult leader.

## **Waterskiing**

Safe waterskiing starts with safe equipment; a thorough knowledge of techniques; competent instruction; an efficient, careful towboat operator; and a conscientious observer. A life jacket is a must for all water-skiers. Skis should be in good shape and free from sharp or protruding edges. The boat operator should be driving solely for the benefit, satisfaction, and safety of the skier. The boat and skier should stay away from docks, swimmers, boaters, people who are fishing, and other objects.

## **Boardsailing**

The boardsailing program has been developed to introduce youth to basic boardsailing skills, equipment, and safety precautions; to encourage development of skills that promote fitness and safe aquatics recreation; and to lay a skill and knowledge foundation for those who will later participate in more advanced and demanding activities on the water.

Persons recognized and certified as an instructor by Windsurfer International or the U.S. Board Sailing Association may serve as a counselor for the Boardsailing Award with the approval of the local service center. Any person trained and experienced in boardsailing skills and safety may serve as a counselor for this award in a camp program under the direction and supervision of a currently trained aquatics instructor.

## Whitewater Safety Code

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) Safety Code:

21. Be a competent swimmer.
22. Wear a PFD.
23. Keep your canoe or raft under control always!
24. Be aware of river hazards and avoid them.
25. Boating alone is not recommended; the preferred minimum is three to a craft.
26. Be suitably equipped.
  - . Wear shoes (tennis shoes or special canoeing shoes are best).
  - a. Tie your glasses on.
  - b. Carry a knife and waterproof matches (also compass and map).
  - c. Don't wear bulky clothing that will waterlog.
  - d. Wear a crash helmet where upsets are likely.
  - e. Carry an extra paddle and canoe-repair tape.
  - f. Open canoes should have bow and stern lines (painters) securely attached. Use at least 15 feet of 1/4- or 3/8-inch rope. Secure them to the canoe so that they are readily available but will not entangle feet and legs in case of a spill.
27. Swim on your back in fast water, keeping your feet and legs downstream and high. Keep watching ahead.
28. When you start to spill, keep the upstream gunwale high.
29. If you do spill, hang on to your canoe and get to the upstream end. (Note: If you are heading into rough rapids and quick rescue is not expected, or if the water is numbing cold, then swim for shore or a rock where you can climb out of the water.)
30. When you are with a group:
  - . Organize the group to even out canoeing ability.
  - a. Keep the group compact for mutual support.
  - b. Don't crowd rapids! Let each canoe complete the run before the next canoe enters.

Each canoe is responsible for the canoe immediately behind it.

## Camping and Hiking

### Age Guidelines

Learning for Life has established the following guidelines for participation in camping activities:

- **Overnight camping by pre-K, kindergarten and first-grade Learning for Life groups is not approved, and certificates of liability insurance will not be provided by Learning for Life.**
- **Second- to eighth-graders may participate in a resident overnight camping program covering at least two nights and operating in an established camp approved by the participating organization connected with the Learning for Life group or post. (Groups/posts with coed camping must provide coed leadership.)**
- **High school-age Learning for Life participants and Explorers may camp in an established camp approved by the participating organization connected with the Learning for Life group or post. (Groups or posts with coed camping must provide coed leadership.)**
- **All participating youth in Exploring are eligible to participate in post, club, local Learning for Life, and national Exploring activities.**

Leaders should not bring along a child who does not meet these age guidelines.

## Wilderness Camping

Wilderness camping can be a great experience for your post or group. However, you must plan well and anticipate any potential problems that might occur. Safety first should be the prime objective in your post plans. Inform all contacts in writing of your plans, including dates, times, routes, and most important, the time of return.

## Trail Safety

Alertness and care in all that is done on the trail, and performing within the group's known capabilities, are among the best preventive measures against accidents. Most common outdoor injuries are blisters, cuts, sprains, strains, bruises, and fractures. Hikers also may become lost or get caught in storms, and they often panic as a result. Avoidable tragedies may occur if campers and leaders lack the skills and knowledge to deal with the problems encountered. Leaders must alert youth participants to the dangers of unusual environment with proper instructions on fire safety, orienteering, and safe travel.

Leaders must instruct those in their groups to stay together on well-established trails, avoid loose rocks (especially on descent), and avoid dangerous ledges, cliffs, and areas where a fall might occur.

It is required that at least one person in the group be currently certified in first aid through the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association, city and county health departments, hospitals, or fire departments for a trek lasting overnight.

Your Learning for Life office has an abundance of literature related to proper procedures and guidelines for a group on a trail.

## Beware of Lightning

There are more fatalities from lightning strikes than storms such as tornados, etc. Be aware when in an area of danger when lightning is present.

## Lightning Safety Rules

- Stay away from open doors and windows, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks, and plug-in electrical appliances.
- Don't work on fences, telephone lines, power lines, pipelines, etc. Don't use the telephone; lightning may strike telephone wires outside.
- Don't handle flammable materials in open containers.
- Don't use metal objects, such as fishing rods and golf clubs. Golfers wearing spiked shoes are particularly good lightning rods.
- Stop tractor work, especially when the tractor is pulling metal equipment, and dismount. Tractors and other implements in metallic contact with the ground are often struck by lightning.
- Get out of the water and off small boats.
- Stay in the car if you are traveling. Automobiles offer excellent lightning protection.
- When no shelter is available, avoid the highest object in the area. If only isolated trees are nearby, the best protection is to crouch in the open, keeping twice as far away from isolated trees as the trees are high.
- Avoid hilltops, open spaces, wire fences, metal clotheslines, exposed sheds, and any electrically conducted elevated objects.

## Pure Drinking Water

A constant supply of pure drinking water is essential. Serious illness can result from drinking unpurified water. Protect your health. Don't take a chance on using water that you are not sure of.

## Treatment of Questionable Water

In addition to having a bad odor or taste, water from questionable sources may be contaminated by microorganisms, such as Giardia, that can cause a variety of diseases. All water of uncertain purity should be purified before use. Don't take a chance on using water that you are not sure of. To purify water, follow these steps: boil for one full minute; use iodine tablets, or water filters such as PUR, MSR, etc., found at outdoor stores.

## Safety Practices and Emergency Preparedness

### *The 16 Safety Practices*

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

1. Qualified supervision. Every 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 Learning for Life standards and a commitment to implement and follow Learning for Life policy and procedures are essential parts of the supervisor's qualifications.
2. Physical fitness. For each youth participant 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 "buddy system" 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 supervisor's 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 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 ensure that every participant has and uses the appropriate personal safety equipment. For example, activity afloat requires that each participant properly wear a personal flotation device (PFD); 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 ensure compliance.
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.
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. Permits and notices. Learning for Life outing permits, 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 also should 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 needed should be available.
14. Applicable laws. Learning for Life safety policies generally parallel or exceed legal mandates, but the supervisor should confirm and ensure compliance with all applicable regulations or statutes.
15. CPR resources. Any strenuous activity or remote trek could present a cardiac emergency. Aquatic programs may involve cardiopulmonary emergencies. It is strongly recommended that a person (preferably an adult) trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be part of the leadership for any Learning for Life 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.

The general policy of Learning for Life is to train youth to do safely the many things they normally do, such as swimming and boating, handling firearms, and outdoor equipment while hiking and camping.

Perhaps the most critical test of your preparedness will be in a time of emergency. Developing and rehearsing an emergency action plan will add precious time needed for response to a crisis. This is true on a day trip and all other activities. A plan should include

1. The name of the person in charge
2. Action to be taken
3. Alternatives
4. The names of the people and agencies to notify
5. Location of law enforcement
6. Fire and health facilities information
7. Evacuation procedures.

Whenever an emergency occurs in which a person needs medical care beyond simple first aid, leaders should immediately notify the parent or next of kin. In case of a missing participant or a fatality, notify the Learning for Life executive after notifying local authorities and emergency medical services. A list of emergency telephone numbers should be kept as a part of the first aid kit.

## **Reporting Deaths or Serious Injury**

Adult leaders are responsible for informing their local Learning for Life executive, as soon as possible, of a death or serious injury or illness. A serious injury or illness is defined as unconsciousness, hospital admission, or surgical intervention.

Leaders should be prepared to give these specific facts:

- WHO?—The name and age of the subject and the name and complete address of parent(s) or next of kin
- WHEN?—Date and time of day
- WHERE?—Location and community
- WHAT?—Nature of illness or accident
- HOW?—How the injury occurred, if known, e.g., swimming, boating, hiking, etc.

The local Learning for Life executive has the responsibility to speak to the media. Parents or next of kin will be informed by personal contact before any release is made to the public.

Non-serious injuries need not be reported. It is recommended that a report be prepared regarding each such incident and maintained for future reference.

## **Emergency Phone Number List**

1. Location of trip or expedition
2. Location of nearest town(s), city(ies), or phone(s)
3. Name and phone number of nearest doctor, hospital, or medical facility
4. Name and phone number of nearest county sheriff's department
5. Name and phone number of nearest state or federal park station
6. Phone number of highway patrol
7. Phone number of local Learning for Life executive

## **Property Smart**

Explorers and Learning for Life participants are often privileged to use the land and property of others for hiking, camping, and other activities. This privilege carries important responsibilities regarding care, courtesy, and cleanliness.

Carelessness is regrettable and must be avoided at all times. On the other hand, deliberate vandalism is a criminal act and is forbidden. Everyone has an obligation to do his or her best to care for and protect every property that he or she visits.

All youth and leaders should follow these guidelines:

1. Obtain permission early and confirm just prior to arrival.
2. Learn and obey all rules and policies.
3. Park in designated areas.
4. If trail markers are needed, use ones that can be removed when leaving.
5. When crossing personal property, seek permission.
6. Be careful not to harm livestock.
7. Use extreme care when using a fire in the outdoors. A backpacking stove is much more efficient for cooking on the trail.
8. Carry all trash out in plastic bags; don't leave any trace behind.
9. When departing, thank the owner. Send a letter of thanks later.
10. Participants are encouraged to do a service project in the area when possible.

## **Hantavirus**

Hantavirus is a deadly virus that was first recognized as a unique health hazard in 1993. Outbreaks have been principally limited to the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.

Hantavirus is spread through the urine and feces of infected rodents. It is an airborne virus. A person is infected by breathing in particles released into the air when infected rodents, their nests, or their droppings are disturbed. This can happen when a person is handling rodents, disturbing rodent nests or burrows, cleaning buildings where rodents have made a home, or working outdoors. The virus will die quickly when exposed to sunlight.

Symptoms of Hantavirus include fever, chills, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and a dry, nonproductive cough. If you suspect that someone has been infected, consult a physician immediately.

## Rabies Prevention

Although rabies in humans is rare in the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that more than 22,000 people in this country require vaccination each year after being exposed to rabid or potentially rabid animals. States with the highest number of reported cases include New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Mexico, Texas, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Maryland, and parts of northern California.

Leaders can help prevent exposure by reminding youth to steer clear of wild animals and domestic animals that they don't know. If someone is scratched or bitten by a potentially rabid animal, leaders should

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
- Call a doctor or a hospital emergency room.
- Get a description of the animal.
- Notify the local animal control office, police department, or board of health.

## Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use and Abuse

**Learning for Life prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances at any Learning for Life activity or at any activity involving participation of youth.**

Adult leaders should support the attitude that young adults are better off without tobacco and **may not allow the use of tobacco products at any Learning for Life activity involving youth participants.**

All Learning for Life functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants.

## First Aid

First aid is the first help or immediate care given someone who has suddenly sickened or been hurt in an accident. It is important that one person in each outing group be trained in the principles of first aid and knows how and when to put this knowledge to the best use.

It is strongly recommended that adult leaders in Learning for Life avail themselves of CPR and first-aid training by the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association, city and county health departments, hospitals, or fire departments to be aware of the latest techniques and procedures.

## First-Aid Kits

A first-aid kit well-stocked with the basic essentials is indispensable. Choose one that is sturdy and lightweight, yet large enough to hold the contents so that they are readily visible and so that any one item may be taken out without unpacking the whole kit. Keep a list of contents readily available for easy refilling. Keep the kit in a convenient location. Make one person responsible for keeping the kit filled and available when needed. Quantities of suggested items for your first-aid kit depend on the size of your group and local conditions. Latex gloves, eye protection, and mouth-barrier devices for CPR should be included.

## Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

This specialized skill to endeavor to revive victims of cardiac arrest (no breathing, no pulse) may be taught to Explorers by an instructor currently certified by the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, American Heart Association, city and county health departments, hospitals, or fire departments.

## Protection Considerations for Blood-borne Pathogens

Many people are concerned about the rapid spread of HIV (the AIDS virus) and try to avoid exposing themselves to this hazard. Health professionals and volunteers in Learning for Life may find they are faced with special concerns in this regard. Therefore, we must know how to act and how to instruct the youth we lead. Recognize that often the victims we treat with first aid are friends and family participants whose health we are familiar. Therefore, in such cases, except when we know they have infectious diseases, we should not hesitate to treat them.

Treat all blood as if it were contaminated with blood-borne viruses. Do not use bare hands to stop bleeding; always use a protective barrier. Always wash exposed skin areas with hot water and soap immediately after treating the victim. The following equipment is to be included in all first-aid kits and used when rendering first aid to those in need:

- Latex gloves, to be used when stopping bleeding or dressing wounds
- A mouth-barrier device for rendering rescue breathing or CPR
- Plastic goggles or other eye protection to prevent a victim's blood from getting into the rescuer's eyes in the event of serious arterial bleeding
- Antiseptic, for sterilizing or cleaning exposed skin area, particularly if there is no soap or water available

Individuals who might have been exposed to another's blood and body fluids should know the following:

1. Make knowledge of exposure known to youth and adult leaders.
2. As a precaution, adult volunteers or youth participants should consider vaccination against hepatitis B.
3. If a vaccination is recommended, any adult volunteers and youth participants who decline the shots should sign a refusal waiver that should be retained by the local Learning for Life executive for five years.

## Near-drowning

*Near-drowning* is a term used to describe a fatality that occurs several hours after resuscitation via CPR of a drowning victim. Lung damage and pneumonia are possible after revival, so all victims should be hospitalized for 24 hours after any incident.

## Air Guns and Firearms

The purpose of this policy is to restrict the use of firearms for hunting trips to Explorer posts where adequate safety procedures are followed. All participants are required to obtain necessary permits and licenses from state and federal agencies. High school Learning for Life participants may participate in a program using rifles/air rifles or shotguns as a part of a certified rifle range and supervised by a qualified range instructor.

Learning for Life recognizes the importance of teaching Law Enforcement Explorers and adult leaders the safe and responsible handling and use of air guns and firearms in a controlled environment under the supervision of a specially trained law enforcement officer designated by his or her agency as a firearms instructor, or by a NRA certified law enforcement instructor or range safety officer. Air guns are defined as simulated firearms that use compressed air to discharge metal or plastic projectiles. There are special provisions for Law Enforcement Explorers for use of Non-Lethal Training Firearms (NLTF) and firearms that may be found in the Law Enforcement Exploring Program Guidelines and related documents listed in the Appendix Section of the Guidelines. The Guidelines may be found in the Law Enforcement Exploring section of the Learning for Life website at <http://exploring.learningforlife.org/services/career-exploring/law-enforcement/>.

Middle School Explorer Club participants may not participate in activities involving pistol, semi-or automatic shooting, or non-lethal firearms.

**The possession of firearms is prohibited for individuals participating in Learning for Life/Exploring activities. There are two exceptions to this policy, the first of which is for law enforcement officers authorized to carry a firearm in the jurisdiction in which Learning for Life/Exploring activity is being conducted. The second exception is for Learning for Life/Law**

**Enforcement Exploring activities where the use of firearms is approved in a controlled environment under the supervision of a specially trained law enforcement officer designated by his or her agency as a firearms instructor, or by a NRA certified law enforcement instructor or range safety officer.**

**While hunter safety education may not be required to obtain a hunting license in some states, successful completion of the respective state program is required before participating in a hunting activity.**

## **Sports and Activities**

### **Unauthorized and Restricted Activities**

**The following activities have been declared unauthorized and restricted:**

- **Middle School Explorer Club participants may not participate in activities involving pistol, semi- or automatic shooting, or non-lethal firearms.**
- **In regards to aviation activities, Middle School Explorer Club participants can participate only in the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Young Eagles activity with a certified pilot.**
- **All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are banned from program use, UNLESS it is an approved Council program. ATVs are defined as motorized recreational cycles with three or four large, soft tires, designed for off-road use on a variety of terrains.**
- **Boxing, karate, and related martial arts—except judo, aikido, and tai chi—are not authorized activities.**
- **Chain saws and mechanical log splitters may be authorized for use only by trained individuals over the age of 18, using proper protective gear in accordance with local laws.**
- **Exploration of abandoned mines is an unauthorized activity.**
- **Varsity football teams and interscholastic or club football competition and activities are unauthorized activities.**
- **Fireworks secured, used, or displayed in conjunction with program and activities are unauthorized except where the fireworks display is conducted under the auspices of a certified or licensed fireworks control expert.**
- **The selling of fireworks as a fund-raising or money-earning activity by any group acting for or on behalf of participants, units, or districts may not be authorized by local offices.**
- **Flying in hang gliders, ultra-light airplanes, experimental-class aircraft, or hot-air balloons (whether or not they are tethered); parachuting; and flying in aircraft as part of a search-and-rescue mission are unauthorized activities.**
- **Motorized go-carts and motorbike activities are unauthorized. All motorized speed events, including motorcycles, boats, drag racing, demolition derbies, and related events, are not authorized activities for any program level.**
- **Participation in amateur or professional rodeo events is not authorized.**
- **Learning for Life prohibits the pointing of a real or non-lethal firearm at any individual during any type of activity. The only exception to this policy is for Law Enforcement Exploring activities where Non-Lethal Training Firearms (NLTF) may be used for training purposes. NLTF are described as replicas of firearms that are designed to look and feel authentic and may discharge a non-lethal laser beam or solid projectile (i.e., paintball or plastic pellet such as used in the popular Airsoft simulated firearms). NLTF that discharge metal projectiles are prohibited. The use of NLTF is authorized for Law Enforcement**

Exploring training only and may not, under any circumstances, be used for recreational activities where there is no clear learning objective(s), close supervision or justifiable training purpose. NLTF may only be used while under the supervision of specially trained law enforcement officers designated by his or her agency as a firearms instructor, or by a National Rifle Association (NRA) law enforcement and/or NLTF certified instructor or range safety officer. Lastly, NLTF may only be used in accordance with established safety standards and protocol as outlined in the NLTF policy for Law Enforcement Exploring.

- Motorized personal watercraft, such as jet skis, are not authorized for use in aquatic activities, and their use should not be permitted in or near Learning for Life program areas.
- Hunting is not an authorized Learning for Life curriculum-based program activity, although hunting safety is part of the program curriculum.

(The purpose of this policy is to restrict curriculum-based programs from conducting hunting trips. However, this policy does not restrict Explorer posts from conducting hunting trips or special adult hunting expeditions provided that adequate safety procedures are followed and that all participants have obtained necessary permits and/or licenses from either state or federal agencies. While hunter safety education might not be required prior to obtaining a hunting license, successful completion of the respective state voluntary program is required before participating in the activity.)

- The possession of firearms is prohibited for individuals participating in Learning for Life/Exploring activities. There are two exceptions to this policy, the first of which is for law enforcement officers authorized to carry a firearm in the jurisdiction in which Learning for Life/Exploring activity is being conducted. The second exception is for Learning for Life/Law Page 2 of 3 Enforcement Exploring activities where the use of firearms is approved in a controlled environment under the supervision of a specially trained law enforcement officer designated by his or her agency as a firearms instructor, or by a NRA certified law enforcement instructor or range safety officer.
- Parasailing, or any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, or other device towed by a motorboat or by any other means, is unauthorized.
- All activities related to bungee cord jumping (sometimes called shock-cord jumping) are unauthorized.
- Technical tree-climbing with ropes and harnesses is unauthorized Learning for Life activity. There are no uniform standards. There is no available method to measure the weight bearing capacity of the tree limb and no backup procedure if the limb breaks
- The use of electronic self-defense devices (i.e., Taser, Stun Guns, etc.) by participants in Learning for Life activities is prohibited.
- The use of chemical repellents (pepper spray, tear gas, etc.) by participants in Learning for Life activities is prohibited. The only exception to the policy, as set forth in Section 2.12 of the Law Enforcement Exploring Program Guidelines, is for Law Enforcement Explorers who are permitted to volunteer, with certain restrictions, to be exposed to Oleoresin Capsicum (pepper spray) for familiarization purposes in a controlled training exercise.

## **Parade Floats and Hayrides**

Learning for Life prohibits the transportation of passengers in the backs of trucks or on trailers. This rule may be tempered for parade floats or hayrides, however, provided that the following guidelines are strictly followed to prevent injuries:

1. Transportation on the truck or trailer to and from the parade or hayride site is not allowed.
2. Those people riding, whether seated or standing, must be able to hold on to something stationary.
3. Legs should not hang over the side.
4. Flashing lights must illuminate a vehicle used for a hayride after dark, or the vehicle must be followed by a vehicle with flashing lights.

## Post/Club Fund-raisers

Include these safety considerations when planning a post/club fund-

- raiser:
1. Money-earning projects should be suited to the ages and abilities of youth participants.
  2. Proper adult supervision should be provided.
  3. Youth should engage in money-earning projects only in neighborhoods that are safe and familiar and should use the buddy system.
  4. Leaders must train youth participants never to enter the home of a stranger and to know whom to contact in case of an emergency.
  5. Youth participants should be familiar with safe pedestrian practices and participate during daylight hours only.
  6. Adhere to all compliance requirements:
    - a. Check local statutes regarding solicitation rules and permits.
    - b. A fund-raising permit must be obtained from the local Learning for Life executive.

## Climbing and Rappelling

### 1. Qualified Supervision

All climbing and rappelling must be supervised by a mature, conscientious adult who is at least 21 years of age and understands the risks inherent to these activities. This person knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in his or her care. This adult supervisor is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of the Climb On Safely procedure. One additional adult who is at least 18 years of age must also accompany the post/club. Units with more than 10 youth in the same climbing/rappelling session must have an additional adult leader at least 18 years of age for each 10 additional youth participants. In other words, a group of 11 to 20 youths requires at least three adult leaders; a group of 21 to 30 youths would require four adult leaders, and so on.

The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently certified in American Red Cross Standard First Aid and CPR (a 6.5-hour course). In addition, the two-hour module "First Aid—When Help Is Delayed" is required. A course of equivalent length and content from another nationally recognized organization can be substituted. A higher level of certification such as emergency medical technician (EMT), licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), and licensed health-care practitioner is also acceptable. American Red Cross Emergency Response, a 43.5-hour course that includes CPR, is highly recommended.

### 2. Qualified Instructors

A qualified rock climbing/rappelling instructor who is at least 21 years of age must supervise all climbing/rappelling activities. The climbing/rappelling instructor has successfully completed a minimum of 10 hours of climbing/rappelling instructor training from a nationally or regionally recognized organization, climbing school, college-level climbing/rappelling course, or is a qualified climbing/rappelling instructor. Local Youth Protection training is required for all instructors. A Project COPE director or instructor fulfills this requirement.

### 3. Physical Fitness

Any climbing/rappelling activity requires evidence of fitness—at least a current Personal Health and Medical Record, Class 1, or a complete health history from a parent or legal guardian. The adult supervisor should adapt all supervision, discipline, and precautions to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions.

If a significant health condition is present, an examination by a licensed health-care practitioner should be required by the adult supervisor before permitting participation in climbing/rappelling. The adult supervisor should inform the climbing/rappelling instructor about each participant's medical conditions.

### 4. Safe Area

All climbing/rappelling activities must be conducted using an established or developed climbing/rappelling site or facility. A qualified climbing/rappelling instructor should survey the site in

advance of the activity to identify and evaluate possible hazards and to determine whether the site is suitable for the age, maturity, and skill level of the participants. The instructor should also verify that the site is sufficient to safely and comfortably accommodate the number of participants in the activity within the available time. An emergency evacuation route must be identified in advance.

#### 5. Equipment

The climbing/rappelling instructor should verify that proper equipment is available for the size and ability level of participants. Helmets, rope, and climbing hardware must be approved by the UIAA (Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme) and/or ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials). All equipment must be acquired new or furnished by the instructor.

Records must be kept on the use and stresses (the number of hard falls) on each item of equipment, which must be specifically designed for climbing/rappelling. Outside providers should be asked if they are aware of any stresses that have been put on their equipment. Any rope or webbing that has been subjected to more than three hard falls or that is four years old (whatever its use) must not be used. Refer to the Climb on Safely and Project COPE manuals concerning records that must be kept and made available even by outside providers.

#### 6. Planning

When planning, remember the following:

- Obtain written parental consent to participate in climbing/rappelling activities for each participant.
- In the event of severe weather or other problems, share the climbing/rappelling plan and an alternate with parents and the committee.
- Secure the necessary permits or written permission for using private or public lands.
- Enlist the help of a qualified climbing/rappelling instructor.
- Be sure the instructor has a topographic map for the area being used and obtains a current weather report for the area before the group's departure.
- It is suggested that at least one of the adult leaders has an electronic means of communication in case of an emergency.

#### 7. Environmental Conditions

The instructor assumes responsibility for monitoring potentially dangerous environmental conditions that may include loose, crumbly rock; poisonous plants; wildlife; and inclement weather. Use the buddy system to monitor concerns such as dehydration, hypothermia, and an unusually high degree of fear or apprehension. The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the group leaves no trace of its presence at the site.

#### 8. Discipline

Each participant knows, understands, and respects the rules and procedures for safely climbing and rappelling and has been oriented in Climb On Safely. All participants should respect and follow all instructions and rules of the climbing instructor. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed for all participants before climbing or rappelling begins. When participants know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. The climbing instructor must be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

Learning for Life limits climbing to top roping. A separate relay safety rope with a separate anchor system is used for all rappelling activities. A UIAA- and/or ASTM-approved climbing helmet must be worn during all climbing/rappelling activities.



## Medical Information

It is recommended that all participants have periodic medical evaluations by a licensed health-care practitioner.\* In an effort to provide better care to those who may become ill or injured and to provide youth participants and adult leaders a better understanding of their physical capabilities, **Learning for Life has established minimum standards for providing medical information prior to participating in various activities. They are categorized as follows:**

**An LFL Medical form (item no. 680-024) should be completed for any outing or event, such as field days, day hikes, conferences, and academies, including overnight events where medical stand is readily available. The medical information required is a current health history signed by parents or guardians but need not be signed by a physician. Learning for Life adults should review these forms and become knowledgeable about the medical needs of youth participants. Forms must be updated annually. They are filled out by participants and kept on file for easy reference.**

**The medical form evaluation must be signed by a physician and completed for any outings or events such as resident camping and extended outings and trips such as hiking and boating in remote areas where medical staff is not available. Medical data required includes an annual health history signed by parents or guardians, supported by a medical evaluation completed within the past 12 months and signed by a physician. A place for the physician to sign is on the back of the medical form and is required for this type of activity. Youth and adult participants use this form, found in the appendix.**

It is recommended that adult leaders have the proper complete medical form and permission slip for every participant attending each outing. The medical form and permission slip, in most cases, will allow emergency medical treatment to a youth participant in case of injury or illness when a parent or guardian cannot be contacted.

## Immunizations

Verification of the following forms of protection is strongly recommended before participation in activities:

1. Tetanus and diphtheria toxoid within the past 10 years
2. Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine since first birthday
3. Four doses of trivalent oral polio vaccine (TOPV) since birth

## Life-Threatening Communicable Diseases

Learning for Life groups/posts and their participating organizations traditionally determine their own membership, absent any legal constraints. Accordingly, groups/posts and participating organizations should determine the feasibility or desirability of allowing youth or adult participants who have or are suspected of having a life-threatening communicable disease to participate in Learning for Life activities.

## Medical Care

The following is the policy regarding medical requirements:

- **Medical examinations for the appropriate Learning for Life activity are required of all participants for the protection of the entire group. The immunization requirement is waived for people with religious beliefs against immunization.**
- **All participants and adult leaders should learn first aid, not for their own use, but for service to others who may require it. A participant or leader may ask to be excused from first-aid instruction, but no advancement requirement will be waived except as indicated.**

## Prescriptions

The taking of prescription medication is the responsibility of the individual taking the medication and/or that individual's parent or guardian. An adult leader, after obtaining all the necessary information, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a youth takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but Learning for Life policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the leader to do so. Also, if your state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.

\*Examinations conducted by licensed health-care practitioners, other than physicians, will be recognized in those states where such practitioners may perform physical examinations within their legally prescribed scope of practice.

## Transportation

Established public carriers—trains, buses, and commercial airlines—are the safest and most comfortable way for groups to travel. Chartered buses usually are the most economical transportation for groups of 20 or more. It may be necessary for small groups to travel in private vehicles; however, the use of chartered equipment from established rail, bus, and airline companies is strongly recommended.

## Vehicles

General guidelines for vehicle travel are as follows:

1. **Seat belts are required for all occupants.**
2. **All drivers must have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason.** If the vehicle to be used is designed to carry more than 15 people, including the driver (more than 10 people, including the driver, in California), the driver must have a commercial driver's license.
3. **An adult leader (at least 21 years of age) must be in charge and accompany the group.**
4. **The driver must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age. However, there is a youth participant exception:** When traveling to an area, regional, or national activity or any Explorer event under the leadership of an adult (at least 21 years of age) outing leader, a youth participant at least 16 years of age may be a driver, subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Six months' driving experience as a licensed driver (time on a learner's permit or equivalent is not to be counted)
  - b. **No record of accidents or moving violations**
  - c. **Parental permission granted to the leader, driver, and riders**
5. **Passenger cars or station wagons may be used for transporting passengers, but passengers should not ride on the rear deck of station wagons.**
6. **Trucks may not be used for transporting passengers except in the cab.**
7. **All driving, except on short trips, should be done in daylight.**
8. **All vehicles must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed requirements of the state in which the vehicle is licensed.** It is recommended that coverage limits are at least \$100,000 combined single limit. Any vehicle designed to carry 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of \$100,000/\$500,000/\$100,000 or a \$500,000 combined single limit.
9. **Do not exceed the speed limit.**
10. **If more than one vehicle is used to transport our group, we will establish rendezvous points at the start of each day and not attempt to have drivers closely follow the group vehicle in front of them..**
11. **Driving time is limited to a maximum of 10 hours and must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and recreation stops.** If there is only one driver, the driving time should be reduced, and stops should be made more frequently.

## Campers, Trailers, and Trucks

**The beds of trucks or trailers must never be used for carrying passengers.** Outing permits will not be issued for any trip that involves carrying passengers in a truck except in the cab. **(One exception is if the truck is a part of a float in a parade; there the youth may ride on back but only while in the parade, not to and from the site)**

## Buses

A driver of a bus or any vehicle designed to carry more than 15 people (including the driver) is required to have a commercial driver's license.

The safety rules for automobiles apply to bus travel, with the exception of seat belts. In special cases, chartered buses may travel more than nine hours a day. On certain occasions, night travel by public carrier bus is appropriate. It should be considered permissible when conditions are such that rest and sleep for passengers are possible with a reasonable degree of comfort. However, night travel on buses should not be planned for two successive nights.

All buses must be covered by liability insurance with limits equal to or greater than \$500,000.

## Trains

Observe these safety guidelines for train travel:

1. Don't lean out of windows or doors.
2. When changing trains, don't cross railroad tracks without permission.
3. Stay out of vestibules. Keep the railroad car door closed.
4. In case of illness or accident, see a train official who can arrange for medical help.
5. On overnight trips, one leader should be on watch duty at all times.

## Boats

In national parks and some other areas of the country, special boat and canoe regulations are in force, and special boat permits are required for cruising or recreation. Follow these safety precautions:

1. **All outing leaders must have current training in Safety Afloat.**
2. **U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) recommends and Learning for Life regulations require that an approved USCG personal flotation device (PFD) be worn by each participant using watercraft in an aquatics activity. Types II and III PFDs are recommended for activity afloat.**
3. **Rowboats or canoes carrying passengers should not be towed behind motorboats or sailboats.**
4. **Use of canoes should be restricted to swimmers who have satisfactorily demonstrated their ability in launching, landing, and paddling a canoe and in handling a swamped canoe.** Canoeists should be taught the proper procedure for staying afloat if the canoe capsizes or is swamped.
5. **Small boats, whether under sail or power, used for pleasure or ferry purposes, must have a minimum capacity of 10 cubic feet per person. Boats propelled by hand power—such as rowboats—and used for pleasure purposes only must provide a minimum of 7 cubic feet per person. (Lifeboats on passenger-carrying vessels propelled by power must comply with the 10-cubic-foot law.)**
6. **Provisions also should be made on all boats under sail or power for a sufficient quantity or supply of oars and rowlocks or paddles to be used in case of emergency. Fire-fighting equipment and lights also must be carried aboard.**
7. **Bilges of gasoline-powered boats should be kept free from gasoline and oil at all times. Thorough ventilation, either natural or by blower, is necessary to dispel gasoline vapor.**
8. **Motorized personal watercraft, such as jet skis, are not authorized for use.**

9. **To prevent ignition by static electricity during refueling, establish complete metallic contact between the nozzle of the filling hose and the tank opening or filling pipe, and maintain contact until gasoline has ceased to flow. If a funnel is used, establish contact with the funnel and the opening in the tank. All passengers should be ashore during refueling.**

For regulations that govern cruises by private powerboat or sailboat, refer to *Motorboat Regulations*, published by the U.S. Coast Guard.

## Aircraft

Air travel is permitted as follows:

1. **Learning for Life and Exploring participants may travel on any flight scheduled by a commercial airline.**
2. **The Learning for Life Flying Permit Application (see sample in the appendix) is required for all Learning for Life flying activities except for commercial flights. The local Learning for Life office reviews and approves the flying permit just as it would an outing permit. The Parent/Guardian Consent Form (see sample in the appendix) is also required.**  
Groups/posts should attach the signed consent form to the Learning for Life Flying Permit Application and keep a copy of the signed consent forms in their files.
3. **Flying in hang gliders, ultra-light airplanes, experimental-class aircraft, and hot-air balloons (whether or not they are tethered); parachuting, and flying in aircraft as part of a search-and-rescue mission are unauthorized activities.**
4. **Airplane travelers are cautioned about what they pack in their luggage. In flight, variations in temperature and air pressure can cause some hazardous materials to leak or ignite. Included in the category of hazardous materials that should not be packed in luggage are matches or lighters; flammable liquids and gases; signal flares and other explosives; and bleaches, aerosols, mercury, and solvents containing dangerous chemicals that can cause toxic fumes and corrosion.**
5. **Middle School Explorer Club participants can participate only in the Experimental Aircraft association's (EAA) Young Eagles activity with a certified pilot as an aviation activity.**

## Tour and Activity Plans

**A national Learning for Life and Exploring tour and activity plan (item no. 800-736) is required for all posts/clubs/groups traveling to areas 500 miles or more one way from home area or crossing national boundaries into the territory of other nations. This application should be submitted, typed or printed, to the local Learning for Life office for approval at least one month before your outing.**

Tour and activity plans have become recognized by national parks, military institutions, and other organizations as proof that an activity has been well-planned and organized and is under capable and qualified leadership. These organizations may require the tour and activity plan for entry.

**Most short, in-town trips of a few hours do not require a tour and activity plan; however, it is recommended that groups/posts/clubs obtain permission slips from parents and follow all requirements as found in the tour and activity Plan.**

## Commercial Driver's License Compliance

The following questions and answers may help you understand how drivers fall into a category of private motor carriers that are subject to the commercial driver's license (CDL) rules:

1. *What is a "private motor carrier of passengers?"*  
**A private motor carrier of passengers does not offer transportation services for hire but (a) transports passengers in interstate (some state regulations apply to intrastate) commerce, and (b) uses a vehicle designed to carry more than 15 passengers, which**

**includes the driver, or a vehicle that has a gross vehicular weight greater than 10,000 pounds.**

2. *What are some examples of usage of a private motor carrier of passengers?*  
Learning for Life groups/posts that use vehicles designed to carry more than 15 passengers, such as buses, is one example. The driver in this case is often a volunteer driver of a bus that is owned or leased. This category is referred to as nonbusiness private motor carrier of passengers and is probably the most frequent usage subject to the rule.
3. *What about the use of school buses?*  
In most states, Learning for Life groups that contract with schools to use buses fall into the for-hire category, and the school is subject to the federal safety regulations. Since public school transportation vehicles are not subject to CDL rules when transporting students, the school may not realize that the for-hire regulations apply. The consequence could have a ruinous effect on a planned Learning for Life activity.
4. *How will the rule be enforced?*  
The primary enforcement activity of both categories, business and nonbusiness, is the driver/vehicle inspection. Inspections can be performed anywhere on the road or at destination points such as parks, sporting complexes, etc. Only the business category is subject to compliance reviews and record keeping, but if serious safety problems are identified in either category of vehicle usage, the operation of the vehicle is subject to being discontinued.
5. *Are Learning for Life operations subject to the drug and alcohol testing portion of the rule?*  
As of January 1, 1996, all operators of vehicles who are required to have a commercial driver's license are subject to drug and alcohol testing. There are no exemptions for the nonbusiness private motor carrier of passenger category, which includes Learning for Life volunteer drivers. Local Learning for Life executives should establish guidelines for volunteer drivers based on the requirements of the state where located.

*How do Learning for Life officials obtain the Department of Transportation (DOT) identification number required for all vehicles that are subject to the CDL rule?*

Form MCS-150 should be requested from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Office of Motor Carriers, in the Learning for Life official's state. The completed form should then be sent to the FHWA's office in Washington, D.C., where a DOT number will be assigned. This number, as well as the name, city, and state, should be displayed on the side of the vehicle. An education and technical assistance package can be obtained from the local FHWA office.

## **Learning for Life Youth Protection Guidelines**

As an adult leader, or a volunteer, you need to have a basic knowledge about abuse of adolescents and the youth protection policies of Learning for Life. Due to the coeducational makeup of the youth being served in Learning for Life, youth protection takes on an added dimension.

It is important to realize that, although child abuse is preconceived as a problem related more to younger children, it is not unusual for adolescents to be victims of abuse also. The most common forms of abuse are neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse all prevalent in today's society. Therefore, all adult leaders are obligated to be familiar with the Youth Protection guidelines of Learning for Life.

Learning for Life's Commitment to Youth Protection:

1. Educate Scouting professionals, volunteers, parents, and youth members to aid in the prevention and detection of all forms of child abuse.
2. Strengthen chartered organizations' leader selection procedures to help defend against suspected or alleged abusers entering the BSA leadership ranks.
3. Strengthen and enforce policies that create barriers to child abuse within the Scouting program.
4. Encourage the immediate reporting of improper behavior or violations of BSA policy.
5. Identify and swiftly remove suspected or alleged offenders.
6. Provide support and resources to Explorers, families, posts, clubs and local offices as needed.

*Learning for Life Youth Protection Training. This training is required for all overnight Learning for Life activities.* An online module for **Youth Protection Training** is available on the Learning for Life website located at [myparticipation.org](http://myparticipation.org). Contact your local council office for details or log onto the Web site for individual instruction.

## Background Information

The idea of what is child abuse has expanded a lot in the last 25 years. At first we thought of child abuse as parents who battered a child so bad that it caused injury. But now we think of it in a much broader way as treatment of a child or parenting practices that cause harm to the child and violate social norms or conventional practices, not the way that children should be treated. By definition child abuse is harm to a person under the age of 18 that occurs immediately or through the accumulated effects over a period of time.

Child abuse is often described in four categories, although these can overlap in a single child. These categories are

1. Physical abuse. Non-accidental bodily injury of the youth by the parent or another adult. Indicators of physical abuse include unexplained, unusual, or repeated injuries.
2. Neglect. Caused by withholding from a child life's necessities, which are vital to his or her safety, health and general well-being. Basic food, clothing, and shelter and proper medical care are forms of neglect a child may experience.
3. Sexual abuse. Any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between children where there is an unusual distribution of power, such as when one is significantly older or larger. It involves the misuse of trust and power.
4. Emotional abuse. Occurs for example, when a youth is consistently told that he or she is not good and never will be. Denigrating name-calling is a form of emotional abuse. Because the physical signs of this form of abuse are subtle, it is difficult to substantiate but significantly harms the child's emotional status and self-image.

Child abuse is also a cause of stress, as are any number of other events in life such as a family disruption, divorce, or loss of a loved one or pet, or problems in school. This stress may cause reactions such as crying for no reason, immature behavior, clinging or aggressive behavior, withdrawal symptoms, depression, and others. If any of these symptoms take place over a period of time, there is a reason to be concerned and the behavior needs to be studied.

## Characteristics of a Child Molester

There are a lot of misleading ideas about who child molesters are. It used to be thought that they were easily spotted, as dirty old men, deviants, or guys in raincoats. We know that is not true. Very ordinary, upstanding, and well-respected individuals in positions of authority have been found to be child molesters. Relatives or people very well-known to the children are just as likely to be abusers. Examples include males and females, public officials, clergy, school teachers, doctors, and other professionals. It is often difficult to accept that such a prominent individual was found to be a child molester. A child is more likely to be abused by somebody he or she knows or someone in the family than by a stranger.

Child abusers tend to be individuals with low self-esteem. Their own needs are so overwhelming that they are poorly equipped to meet the needs of their children. Often children who are neglected have parents who abuse alcohol or drugs. An emotional abuser might have unreal expectations of the child and maligns them when he or she fails to meet their expectations.

## Date Rape

A form of sexual abuse of particular concern for high school- and Explorer-age youth is "date rape" or "acquaintance rape." More than half of the rape victims reporting to police are adolescent females, and their greatest risk for sexual assault appears to be through a social relationship with a boyfriend or date. As in any form of forced sexual contact, date rape is a crime and the victim deserves emotional support and assistance. Such help is available through agencies such as rape crisis centers and other service agencies. Your Learning for Life executive can guide you through the proper procedure.

## Youth Protection Guidelines

An important component of Learning for Life's Youth Protection guidelines is adherence to the policies, which will ensure that young people participating in any phase of the Learning for Life program are safe from abuse.

### Fraternization

**Because the high school Learning for Life and Exploring programs are designed for young adults, there are often little differences in ages of the adult leaders and the participants. It has been found that maintaining a close social relationship, such as dating, between adult leaders and participants is disruptive to the program, and therefore is not permitted by Learning for Life.**

### Creating Barriers

After selecting the best possible leaders, further protection for children is structured into the program through policies that guard against abuse and provide security for its youth participants. **The following policies have been adopted to provide security for youth; in addition they serve to protect adult leaders from situations in which they are vulnerable to allegations of abuse.**

- **Two-deep leadership.** Two Learning for Life adult leaders or one Learning for Life leader and a parent—both of whom are 21 years of age or older—are required on all trips and outings. If the activity is coeducational, leaders of both sexes must be present. The participating organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
- **No one-on-one contact.** One-on-one contact between adults and participants is not permitted, except for authorized ride-along programs in Exploring. Personal conferences must be conducted in plain view of others.
- **Respect of privacy.** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of participants in situations such as changing into swimsuits or taking showers at activities and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. They must also protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- **Separate accommodations.** When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the same tent or room with an adult other than their parents or guardians. We strongly encourage separate shower and toilet facilities for males and females, and when separate facilities are not available, posted shower schedules for males and females.
- **Proper preparation for high-adventure activities.** Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, supervision, and safety measures.
- **No secret organizations.** There are no secret organizations recognized in Learning for Life. All aspects of Learning for Life programs are open to observation by parents and leaders.
- **Appropriate attire.** Proper clothing for activities is required. Skinny-dipping is not appropriate as part of a Learning for Life program.
- **Constructive discipline.** Discipline in Learning for Life should be constructive and reflect the program's underlying values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- **Hazing prohibited.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Learning for Life activity.
- **Youth leader training and supervision.** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders.

Adherence to these policies not only enhances the protection of participants but also ensures the values of Learning for Life are preserved. It helps to protect volunteer adult leaders from situations that are deemed at risk by creating barriers to abuse.

### Disclosure

Considering the prevalence of abuse and the educational programs that increase adolescents' awareness of sexual molestation, you might someday have a participant tell you that someone has molested him or her. If this happens, you must be prepared to help. Follow the guidelines below:

- Do not panic or overreact to the information disclosed to you by the youth.
- Do not criticize the youth.
- Do respect the youth's privacy. Take him or her to a private place in sight of others and reassure them that you are concerned about what happened and that you would like to help. You might want to ask if they have talked to their parents about this—if parents are not the alleged abuser.
- Do not promise to keep the victimization secret, as it will be necessary to make a report to the Learning for Life office. Learning for Life will advise you of your responsibility to report to child protective services or to a law enforcement agency.
- Do encourage the participant to tell the appropriate authorities. You may do this by making sure the youth feels that he or she is not to blame for what happened. Tell the youth that no one should ask him or her to keep a secret and that it is OK to talk about what happened with the appropriate adults.
- Do keep it strictly confidential. Take your guidance from Learning for Life or the child protection agency; discussing allegations of abuse with others is not helpful to the child.

## Reporting Requirements

### Learning for Life's Required Steps for Reporting Child Abuse

**1. Ensure the child/Explorer is in a safe environment.**

**2. In cases of child abuse or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. In addition, if the suspected abuse is in the Explorer's home or family, you are required to contact the local child protective services office.**

**3. Notify the local office Scout executive, or the executive's designee during his or her absence. (Contact names and telephone numbers can be found using the BSA local council locator at [www.scouting.org/LocalCouncilLocator.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/LocalCouncilLocator.aspx).)**

**\*State laws may vary**

Each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories has different reporting requirements. Many of these require child-care professionals to report suspected child abuse, and some states require reporting by adults in volunteer child-care positions. You should be aware of your reporting responsibilities in the state or community where you live. **No state requires the person making the report to have proof that abuse has occurred only that it is suspected.** The intent of the law is clear—they expect suspected child abuse should be reported as soon as it is suspected. Failure to do so can result in civil or criminal penalties.

Concern is often expressed over the potential of criminal or civil liability if a report of abuse is made and subsequently is found to be unsubstantiated. All states provide immunity from liability to those who report suspected child abuse. The only requirement is that the report is made in good faith. Some states make the presumption that a reporter is making the report in good faith.

**Learning for Life will not tolerate any form of child abuse in its program and will take all necessary steps to remove any offenders from participation in Learning for Life.**

## Learning for Life Youth Protection Training

An online training module is available on [myparticipation.org](http://myparticipation.org). **Youth Protection training is required for one adult leader on all overnight Learning for Life activities.** This training may be presented by the Learning for Life local office or may be taken individually via the Web site. A certificate is available in the appendix. **A copy of this certificate will be required with all outing permits if it is an overnight experience.**



Adult leaders can learn more from the following materials:

- *Super Safe* CD-ROM. Learning for Life's interactive game on CD-ROM is designed for students in the third through sixth grades. The game teaches students how to deal with Internet safety, bullies and protection against sexual abuse. Found in all new elementary teacher guidebooks.
- *It Happened to Me*. This training program has been developed for the 6- to 9-year-old male audience. It is designed to educate them, through five scenarios, about sexual abuse and the trickery involved in luring young victims. Available through your local Learning for Life office.
- *A Time to Tell*. This award-winning youth protection program dramatizes three abuse situations and what to do about them. It was designed to be viewed by 11- to 14-year-old boys and can be used by community groups and organizations. Available through your local Learning for Life office.