

Recreational Safety Tips for Counselors

As we enter into the warmer months and prepare for summer recreational activities, safety and health awareness will be important to help maintain a safe working environment.

This document provides basic awareness information on potential hazards and controls to help prevent incidents and illnesses related to outdoor activities. This document is not all inclusive and should be used in conjunction with the organization's safety procedures and policies.

General Safety

- Report all incidents and injuries to your supervisor immediately.
- First aid kits are available. Your supervisor should be able to assist you with locating these kits.
- Report unsafe conditions or behaviors to your supervisor immediately.
- Report any suspicious activities to your supervisor immediately.
- No horseplay. This may escalate to other unwanted behaviors and injuries.
- Personal hygiene is important. Wash hands before eating. Avoid touching mucous membranes (i.e. mouth, eyes, etc.) with unclean hands.

Know Your Physical Abilities

- Everybody has different physical capabilities. Certain activities may be physically demanding. Please know your limits. Abrupt movements could result in an injury.
- Productive interaction with the children is encouraged; however, do not engage in any activity that may exceed your physical capabilities.

Poisonous Plants (Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac)

- Familiarize yourself with the appearance of poisonous plants. Be aware of symptoms of exposure.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when necessary.

- Use barrier creams. Follow directions for application.
- Do not burn poisonous plants. Respiratory problems may occur if inhaled.



Poison Ivy: Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Wildlife / Insects

- The area may support natural inhabitants or species. The animals may become aggressive at any time with no warnings. The animal's action (e.g. bite or scratch) could result in a serious injury and illness. In addition, wild animals may carry infectious diseases (e.g. rabies). Please do not try to feed or touch the animals.
- Use effective insect repellent.
- If an allergic reaction occurs from a bite or sting, inform your supervisor. More importantly, seek medical attention immediately.

Slips Trips and Falls

Slips

- Slip hazards may include beverage spills, weather conditions (e.g. rain or ice), unsecured floor mats, trash, and food.
- Wear proper footwear (e.g. tennis shoes, hiking shoes, boots, etc.).
- Clean spills or wet surfaces immediately.

- Hold on to handrails when ascending or descending stairways.

Trips

- Trip hazards may include curbs, uneven pavement or terrain, tree roots, and recreational equipment.
- Stay on designated walking paths.
- Keep walking paths clear.
- Hold on to handrails when ascending or descending stairways.
- Children's movements are unpredictable. In addition, their immediate whereabouts changes frequently. As a result, a child may pose a trip hazard. To help prevent tripping and falling over a child:
 - Always assume children are in the proximity.
 - Always look before walking. Pivot your feet towards the direction before moving in that direction.

Falls

- Fall hazards may include missteps, holes, fall from elevations, and loss of balance.
- Use caution when traveling from different elevations.
- Do not use chairs, furniture, or other unsuitable objects for climbing. Use a step ladder or stool.
- Use the "three-point contact" rule when changing levels of elevation. This may include entering or exiting a vehicle or using a ladder.
- Use caution when running. Unless required by the recreational activities, you should avoid running- especially indoors.

Distractive Walking

Distractive walking may be defined as engaging in an activity or task which may decrease an individual's ability to observe the surrounding environment while walking. Activities and tasks that may cause distractions include:

- Talking/texting on a cell phone.
- Talking with another person.
- Carrying an item that blocks your view.
- Reading a document, newspaper, etc.

As mentioned above, the children's movements are unpredictable. Please minimize distractive walking activities while at work.

Heat Stress

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water. Avoid caffeinated beverages (e.g. energy drinks)
- Use effective sun screen.
- Get a good nights rest.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Wear proper clothing (e.g. light-colored, loose-fitting, and breathable). Wear hats (if appropriate).
- Become familiar with the symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Be attentive to other coworkers. If they appear to be experiencing symptoms of heat-related illness (e.g., dizziness, heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea, fainting), alert your supervisor immediately.
- Certain prescription and over-the-counter medication may make an individual more susceptible to heat-related illness. Become familiar with adverse health effects associated with medication before intake.

Additional Resources

- Zenith Insurance Company (www.thezenith.com)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (www.osha.gov)

For further information and assistance, contact your Zenith Safety & Health consultant.