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## Transporting Scouts Safely

Summer camp, museum trips, canoe trips, and other popular summertime program activities usually involve driving to get there. Motor vehicle accidents are among the most serious and costly accidents in the Boy Scouts of America. The vast majority of accidents are caused by poor decisions or indecisions. Today, many of the poor decisions that lead to accidents are caused by distracted driving or drowsy driving.

Distraction is defined as “an interruption; an obstacle to concentration.” Distractions come in many forms, such as fatigue, passenger horseplay, traffic, scenery, eating, programming navigation devices, using cell phones, texting, etc. There are three main types of distractions: Visual – taking your eyes off the road; Manual – taking your hands off the wheel; and Cognitive – taking your mind off what you are doing. Texting and smart phone use are especially hazardous because they involve all three forms of distraction. **SO DON'T DO IT - EVER!**

Drowsy is defined as “ready to fall asleep; inducing sleep.” Driving tired puts you in The Risk Zone—a state of mental and physical fatigue in which you are more likely to have an accident.

Below are key points to keep you and the youth you are responsible for out of The Risk Zone:

- Designate several leaders as drivers; all should get a restful sleep the night before driving.
- Know your vehicle. (Sport utility vehicles have experienced higher roll-

over rates than any other vehicle, underscoring a situation in which people not wearing a seatbelt may be ejected.) Gear should be secured and loaded so the vehicle is properly balanced.

- Ask a passenger to warn you if you begin to doze off or appear drowsy when driving.
- Schedule several rest breaks. Getting out of the vehicle and moving around helps you stay alert.
- Put sleeping into all your trip plans. Take 15-to-20-minute "power naps" to re-energize your body. (Naps longer

that 20 minutes tend to cause a person to be groggy.)

- Don't count on caffeine from soft drinks, energy drinks, or coffee to stay awake.

See these Web sites for more information on drowsy driving: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

([www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)); AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

([www.aaafoundation.org/home](http://www.aaafoundation.org/home)); National Sleep Foundation

([www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)); Resources for the Prevention of Drowsy Driving, a service of the National Sleep Foundation

([www.drowsydriving.org](http://www.drowsydriving.org)); National Safety Council ([www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)). BSA

([http://scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/632-006\\_wb.pdf](http://scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/632-006_wb.pdf) )



## Have a Great, Safe Summer!

## Help Scouts Keep Their Cool

Heat illness, ranging from mild dehydration to the life threatening condition of heat stroke, can happen to anyone during the hot summer months, but children are at an especially high risk, according to the Center for Disease Control. A primary contributor to heat illness is dehydration which occurs when a person gives off more water than he or she takes in. Water is essential for nearly every bodily function, including brain activity and temperature control. To prevent heat illness from striking your scouts, keep the following tips in mind:

- Make sure everyone in your group has at least one water bottle with them and drinks from it frequently; waiting to drink until you are thirsty means you are already becoming dehydrated.
- The adult human body can assimilate about 1 cup of water every 15-20 minutes. Take a break every 15-20 minutes and take several large gulps of water every break. Lead by example, and make sure everyone in your group does this.
- Be sure your group carries enough water for the duration of your activity, or that sources or means of producing safe drinking water (like water filters or purification tablets) are available where you are headed.
- Dress in loose, light-colored clothing and make sure they wear a hat.
- Plain water is best for staying hydrated, but sports drinks, like Gatorade, can help replace salts and electrolytes lost during sweating. However, many sources recommend that sports drinks should be diluted, with as much as 3 or 4 parts water, because the body needs extra water to metabolize the glucose in these drinks.

If any of your scouts are suffering from a heat illness it is critical to know the warning signs so treatment can be administered as quickly as possible.

- **Signs of Dehydration** may include: Thirst, dark and decreased urine output, weariness, headache and body aches, and confusion.
- **Signs of Heat Exhaustion** may include: Skin that is pale and clammy from heavy sweating, nausea and tiredness, dizziness and fainting, headache, muscle cramps, and weakness.

- **Signs of Heat Stroke** may include: hot red skin that can be either dry or sweaty, confusion, rapid pulse, loss of consciousness.

If you notice that one of your scouts or scouters is exhibiting some of these symptoms, have him or her rest in a cool place and provide water (adding  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt per 1 liter of water can help) or a diluted sports drink to help him or her rehydrate. If the symptoms are severe or do not dissipate, place wet or iced towels on the scout's neck, wrist, armpits and have him or her lie down with legs elevated. Wetting the victim's clothing and fanning can help. If the scout's condition does not improve, or the above symptoms are present, he or she may have heat stroke. **Heat stroke is a condition where the core body temperature rises to a life threatening 105° F. The victim must be cooled immediately and emergency medical attention must be secured as soon as possible.**

Heat illnesses, especially dehydration, are some of the most common yet preventable problems in outdoor scouting activities. According to the Wilderness Medical Society, dehydration is a factor in 90% of all backcountry medical incidents, and dehydration is almost always a factor in other heat related illness. The cure for dehydration is Prevention and Rehydration, and above all else prevention is a matter of leadership. So educate yourself to prevent, recognize and treat heat related illnesses, and **DRINK EARLY, DRINK OFTEN, AND DRINK MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED.**

For more information on preventing and treating heat related illnesses see: The BSA *Fieldbook* (pages 82 and 83 in Fourth Ed.); *The Boy Scout Handbook* (Heat Emergencies beginning on page 319 in 11th Ed., 9th Printing); *NOLS Wilderness Medicine* by Tod Schimelpfenig; The National Safety Council [http://www.nsc.org/news\\_resources/Resources/Documents/Surviving\\_the\\_Hot\\_Weather.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/Resources/Documents/Surviving_the_Hot_Weather.pdf); WebMD <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/heat-exhaustion>.

Other sources: Wilderness Safety Council Wilderness First Aid course materials.

## Service Projects and Tool Safety

Cub Scouts promise “To help other people”, Boy Scouts take an oath “to help other people at all times”, Venture Scouts promise “to help others”, and Varsity Scouts pledge that they will “Live by the Boy Scout Oath, Law, motto and slogan.” Every level of Scouting encourages scouts to perform service to others and service projects are a significant part of the overall Scouting program. And just like other aspects of the Scouting program, service projects pose certain risks that, if ignored, can injure scouts or others. Some of those risks flow from the tools used in those projects, but those risks can be minimized by following the BSA’s age appropriate guidelines for tool use and other tool use guidelines. These guidelines indicate which tools are recommended for use by all scouts, what additional tools may be used when scouts reach age 14, more additional tools at age

16, and what tools may be used only by adults. Bryan Wendell, an Eagle Scout and senior editor of *Scouting* magazine, covers this subject in detail in an excellent blog at <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/05/01/check-the-bsas-tool-use-policy-before-your-next-service-project/>. Check it out.

See Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations at <http://scoutingmagazine.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/age-guidelines-2012.pdf> and Service Project Planning Guidelines at <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-027.pdf>.

## There’s a Reason for the Safety Instructions on Equipment

The National Interagency Fire Center has issued the following warning to its personnel and cooperating agencies regarding aluminum fuel bottles:

### *“Filling Aluminum Fuel Bottles*

*It is unsafe to overfill aluminum fuel bottles (commonly known as Sigg bottles). During testing, fuel bottles that were filled above the fill line and set in the sun reached pressures of about 550 psi before bursting. Under the same test conditions fuel bottles that were not filled past the fill line reached less than 1 psi. To make sure your fuel bottles are safe to carry do not fill them above the fill line.”*

For the full warning document see [http://gacc.nifc.gov/egbc/dispatch/ut-nuc/safety/docs/aluminum\\_fuel\\_bottle\\_warning.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/egbc/dispatch/ut-nuc/safety/docs/aluminum_fuel_bottle_warning.pdf).

So pay attention to safety instructions, don’t overfill your fuel bottles (bring a second bottle if more fuel is needed) and keep them out of the sun.



## Watercraft and Scouts

There have been several questions recently asking which levels of scouts, especially Cubs, can engage in watercraft activities and when certain rules apply. So here’s the deal straight from the Guide to Safe Scouting:

*“BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Adult leaders supervising activities afloat must have completed Safety Afloat training within the previous two years. Cub Scout activities afloat are limited to council or district events that do not include moving water or float trips (expeditions). Safety Afloat standards apply to the use of canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, floating tubes, sailboats, motorboats (including waterskiing), and other small craft, but do not*

*apply to transportation on large commercial vessels such as ferries and cruise ships. Parasailing (being towed airborne behind a boat using a parachute), kitesurfing (using a wakeboard towed by a kite), and recreational use of personal watercraft (small sit-on-top motorboats propelled by water jets) are not authorized BSA activities. Safety Afloat training may be obtained from the BSA Online Learning Center at <http://www.scouting.org>, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events.”*

See Guide to Safe Scouting page 12 for full details <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx>.