




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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Planning for Success: Safety While Camping

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When I was growing up in Southern California, I couldn't wait to be thirteen years old! The church I attended then didn't have an Adventurers Club or Junior Missionary Volunteer Societies (now Adventist Junior Youth) for the kids. But every child in my church was always eager to be a Pathfinder.

The day I turned thirteen, I was so excited to go and buy my Pathfinder uniform and try it on. At that moment, I felt I had arrived. I was now part of the club. It was always a joy going on the camping trips, pitching tents, and being out in nature. We enjoyed the stars at night as we sat around the campfire singing songs and roasting marshmallows. These are some of my most cherished memories.

As I recall, our club directors always planned the trips well. We had our share of hiccups, but when I think back on those days, I only remember the good times because the director did such a great job. He genuinely seemed to understand the idea of pre-planning for a safe and successful Pathfinder camping trip.

The Plan

With the 2019 "Chosen" International Camporee fast approaching, Pathfinder Club directors and volunteers should begin preparations for this trip. The earlier you start your planning, the better. Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) has created the [Trip/Offsite Activity Planning Checklist](#) which is helpful as you outline your trip. Using this tool will help in preparing for the unknown and taking care of preliminary items including:

- Transportation
- Drivers
- Chaperones
- Qualified supervisors for each activity
- Permission slips and medical release forms
- An assumption of risk form

- Equipment
 - Safety equipment, tents, cooking utensils, wood, flashlights, batteries, wool or space blankets
- Communication tools (walkie-talkies, megaphones, etc.)

Use the ARM checklist to help you through the initial phase of your planning. Be sure you have all the information you need from <http://www.camporee.org/> as you proceed and include preparation for any emergencies that may arise.

Be Familiar with Your Surroundings

When you are familiar with your surroundings, you prepare appropriately for your trip. There are a few things you should do before departing for your trip. Research the weather trends for your destination. Make sure to pack the right equipment for the weather and share this information with leaders and campers so that they bring the appropriate clothing and tools for the trip. Plan for weather-related emergencies and communicate the plan with your leaders, campers, and parents.

For the camporee, on-site potable water will be available near the location of the showers. Remember to test your camp equipment beforehand to determine if you have all the necessary parts in working order to complete proper setup. Train staff in basic first aid and CPR to guarantee any injured person is taken care of and assessed until transported to a medical facility. Know the location of the closest [on-site medical](#) station or offsite center in case of injury.

Once you have arrived at your campsite, it's time to set up. [There are no open fires allowed on the camporee grounds, although cooking may be done with kerosene or white gas/propane equipment.](#) Have several fire extinguishers available along with updated first aid kits. Practice the emergency plan with campers to ensure the club is ready for any trauma event. Prepare your campers for thunderstorms, tornadoes, hail, high winds, and any other weather-related emergencies. Make sure to extinguish all campfires when finished with evening activities.

Night Time Exploration

After your club vespers and singing, it's time to get into sleeping bags and go to sleep. Campers should not be allowed to wander the campgrounds without supervision, especially during the night. Maneuvering around campsites at night can be tricky, and it's vital that you have a buddy system in place to keep campers safe. Set groups of two or three Pathfinders to watch out for each other. No one should go to the bathroom alone. Remind campers to carry flashlights at all times and stay with their buddy while out at night. Even with the buddy system in place, all campers must inform a chaperone where they are going and who their buddy is before leaving the campsite for the restroom.

Chaperones

Chaperones have an essential role on the trip. It's their responsibility to keep all the Pathfinders entrusted into their care safe during the trip and returned home safely. Each chaperone must be qualified to supervise any activity that they oversee or lead out. The number of chaperones and supervision is based on the event and varies according to the risk associated with it.

Supervisors must be aware of any inappropriate touching, both between campers and among campers and other chaperones. Chaperones should not be in any of the Pathfinder tents but should be situated close by to provide sufficient supervision. A chaperone should not put themselves in any situation where they could be accused of any sexual misconduct. More importantly, all chaperones should be trained and cleared through background screening before the trip.

Remember that at the end of the day, we plan and prepare so that both campers and staff can enjoy the trip and have fun. For more information on Pathfinder safety, visit [ARM's Pathfinder Safety page.](#)

References:

https://www.nps.gov/articles/camp-safety-before-the-trip.htm?utm_source=article&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=experience_more#Prepare

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