Creating Safe Environments and Managing Risks in ISU Extension & Outreach 4-H and Youth Programs

Information is given below that can assist your county in managing risks associated with youth programs. Keep in mind the ISU Office of Risk Management is conducting audits of Iowa State University youth programs. We encourage you to think through events and activities with managing risks in mind. A good tutorial for managing risks associated with volunteer development is located at http://nonprofitrisk.org/tutorials/ns_tutorial/intro/1.htm. “Every volunteer program from the smallest to the largest, can take steps to avoid surprises when it comes to providing meaningful experience for its volunteers.”


General
1. State 4-H volunteer leader procedures and policies followed.
   All volunteers at the county level must be approved by your county extension office. Leader application forms must be completed, signed, approved and on file in the Extension Office for all volunteers who have continuous long-term or on-going contact, and/or lead overnight activities with youth. Volunteers who are recruited by and volunteer for state organized programs are covered for liability through Iowa’s Tort Claims Act. Volunteers who volunteer through their county are covered through the county’s liability commercial policy. Volunteer Screening Forms are located at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/restrict/cpsp.htm

2. Volunteer Training and Management Systems in Place
   County offices have a volunteer system in place that includes the identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition and evaluation of volunteers (ISOTURE model). Volunteers who have continuous long-term or on-going contact with youth as club, project or Clover Kids volunteers must complete an initial county based orientation and training, Risk Management training, plus a multi-region New Volunteer Training within the first 12 months of being approved as a volunteer. Thereafter, volunteers in these roles must complete the annual campus generated training module on positive youth development and risks associated with working with youth audiences. Volunteers who serve as overnight chaperones must be fully screened. All volunteers need specific training as defined by their roles as well as understanding of the potential risks working with youth.
   New Safety Education in Shooting Sports (SESS) volunteers do not need to attend the New Volunteer Training because they receive the positive youth development training at their initial training.

3. Waiver of liability/Parent Permission Form
   Waivers and parental permission forms are incorporated into the Medical Information/Release Form parents/guardians are expected to fill out online for each 4-H club member on a yearly basis. Additional waiver and release forms may be required for higher risk activities and events. Contact Mitchell Hoyer if you have questions.
4. **Approval of Activities**
   All field trips and outings by clubs and staff must be approved by the Extension office prior to the event. This approval is for the protection of the volunteer and staff in order for liability protection. County designated staff must approve all activities. Clubs should include field trip information in their yearly club plan submitted to the county office, additions to the club plan may be added throughout the year as long as it is reviewed and approved by the designated county staff member. Activities should be reviewed to make sure adequate accident insurance is requested, whether a waiver may be warranted, or if the activity may conflict with 4-H policies.

5. **Use of Photos, Videos, or other Electronic Media**
   You must have a completed media release form for each participant (part of the *Medical Information/Release Form*). This form is included in the 4-H Online registration process. If you put photos of youth on web pages, do not identify the names or addresses of the children.

6. **Mailing Lists**
   To protect the privacy of 4-H’ers and volunteers, the name of 4-H leaders and members are not to be furnished to any individual or group entity outside of Iowa State University Extension unless authorized by the State 4-H Director. With permission, the name and contact information of adult volunteers may be shared with people who inquire about joining a 4-H club or becoming involved in a 4-H activity or event ([http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ofcguide/Section7c.htm#7c2](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ofcguide/Section7c.htm#7c2)).

**Emergency and Health**

1. **Medical Information/Release Form**
   Parents or guardians of youth who participate in 4-H Extension programs must fill out *Medical Information/Release Forms* for their child. The form includes health and emergency contact information, behavior statement, publicity permission statement, and a general waiver and if filled out through 4-H Online. Printed copies of this form must be in the hands of staff or volunteers who conduct programs with youth at each event – including club meetings. Best practice would be for a club leader or assistant leader to have a notebook with the printed form for each member. Information on the forms is confidential and should be treated as such. Examples of when the forms need to be at the event/activity: club meetings, club field trips and outings, camps, day camps, afterschool programs. Exceptions: school enrichment or programs conducted by another agency where 4-H is providing an educational session but is not the lead agency.

2. **Accident Insurance**
   It is required that all volunteers and youth be covered by supplemental accident insurance such as American Income Life [http://www.americanincomelife.com/who-we-serve/4-h-insurance](http://www.americanincomelife.com/who-we-serve/4-h-insurance) for all 4-H activities. Know that some activities are not covered or require a higher premium. Know that American Income Life does not cover: illness, eyeglass replacement, suicide, aviation accidents, hernia in any form, staff employees covered under Worker's Compensation, loss covered under Medicare, injuries sustained while downhill skiing, tobogganing, bobsledding, or snow tubing. All programs must fit within state program guidelines and policies.

3. **Incident Report**
   Volunteers and Staff need to record all incidents (medical, property damage, altercations, etc) for the county office. Records of the incidents should be filed with the county office.
The county office should fill out an incident report form for those incidents that could lead to a liability or accident claim against the University and send copies of the form on to the State 4-H office. Be sure to keep the Regional Director and Youth Program Specialist informed.

4. **Emergency Plan**
   An emergency plan of action should be written and followed for each activity. This plan should consider:
   - Potential risks analyzed and procedures planned
   - Minor incidents/first aid – who treats or determines procedure (first aid kit)
   - Access to emergency medical treatment (telephone on site, phone numbers to call, transportation, etc.)
   - Two-deep leadership (at least two adults on hand) both know the plan and procedures
   - Natural catastrophe procedure (fire, tornado, lightning, etc.)

5. **Medications**
   Staff and volunteers may be asked to handle medications for youth under 18 years of age. This requirement usually comes into play for overnight activities where parents cannot dispense the medications. Parents or guardians need to fill out a Request for Giving Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication at 4-H Event Form (4H-3039C). A common practice would be to designate a volunteer or staff member who has a medical background or first aid certification to accept medications. If this is not possible, a responsible staff member or volunteer can serve this function. This person would accept medications only in their original containers and with the required signed form from a parent or guardian.

**Transportation**

1. **General**
   Personal transportation to and from 4-H program activities is the responsibility of the 4-H member, parent, volunteer or other driver. If volunteers use a personal vehicle for an authorized 4-H activity, the vehicle must be insured in accordance with Iowa State Motor Vehicle Law. No liability, collision, comprehensive or no-fault insurance coverage is provided by Iowa State University, ISU Extension & Outreach, or the State of Iowa. There is a secondary insurance policy that covers authorized 4-H Club or county Extension volunteers when driving personal vehicles for approved 4-H Club or County Extension activities. Check the County Insurance Fact Sheet for additional information.

2. **Parental Permission**
   Volunteers and staff need to obtain permission from the parent/guardian before transporting a 4-H member to any activity or event including club field trips and activities. This permission request is included in the Medical Information/Release Form. Please review the form and comply with parents’ desires on who can transport their children. Written parental permission is not required for routine car-pooling of minors to and from regular club or group meetings. All drivers should be screened against the National Sex Offender Registry.

**Emergency Procedures**

**Care for the Injured Person**
   Call for emergency professional help, if needed. Contact parents/guardians and the county’s ISU Extension & Outreach designated staff member by the fastest means possible. The county designated staff person is responsible for initiating completion of the incident report and notification as indicated on the incident report.
Finances
4-H clubs and most Affiliated 4-H organizations are considered a program of Iowa State University for income tax exemption purposes.

All 4-H clubs must have their own IRS nine-digit Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Taxpayer ID number, if they plan to open a club bank account. Clubs should not use an individual’s personal social security number or state tax ID number.

Supervision Ratios
1. Recommended Ratios
   - Youth 6-8 years of age: one adult to 6 youth
   - Youth 9-14 years of age: one adult to 8 youth
   - Youth 15-18 years of age: One adult to 10 youth

While these numbers can be used as a guide for program planning, the inherent risk of the activity and the maturity and/or skill level of the participant should also be considered when determining needed supervision.

Forms
1. Child Protection and Safety Policy Forms
   https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/restrict/cpsp.htm
2. 4-H Volunteer Risk Management Checklist (4H-3039A)
3. Iowa 4-H Medical Information/Release Form (Word, 4H-3039B)
4. Request for Giving Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication at 4-H Event Form (Word, 4H-3039C)
5. Iowa 4-H Program Incident/Injury Form (PDF, 4H-3039D)