

Activity Safety Manual

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1. Risk Mitigation

We believe that taking appropriate risks is the only way for students to learn to deal with challenging and dangerous situations in life. This is similar to a child learning to cross the road by themselves safely. Road crossing is inherently risky but through practice and by taking appropriate precautions we can learn to cross roads with a minimum amount of danger. We take this approach to all potentially hazardous activities such as whittling, archery, or fire making. We encourage our staff to help students take risks when taken in adherence to Whole Earth Nature School policies and with all safety precautions in place.

This Safety Manual establishes guidelines for preventing injuries during Whole Earth Nature School programs. All staff are expected to adhere to these guidelines whenever possible. However, in extreme cases staff are expected to make the best decision to protect the safety of themselves and the students.

Staff are expected to follow this order of priority when dealing with dangerous situations:

- A. Protect yourself. It is essential that you not take undue risks. If you are injured then you may not be able to keep students safe.
- B. Protect the students. The safety of our participants is a top priority.
- C. Protect the natural environment. It is essential that we preserve natural areas for our future use and for the future use of others. It is important to set an example to our students of how to be a steward of our natural environment.

Instructors are responsible for ensuring that students adhere to all safety rules. If students violate any of these rules, instructors are responsible for documenting the violation, and notifying site leadership to implement a behavioral plan. Repeated violations may result in a student being dismissed or barred from the activity.

2. Activity Hazards

A. Knife Use and Other Sharp Tools

Carving activities serve as more than just skill-building exercises; they teach students to respect the power of tools, manage risks, and demonstrate care for themselves and others. Moreover, carving empowers students, enhances their self-confidence, and is a milestone for further ancestral skills.

Knife Safety Certification, Level 1: All campers intending to use knives must complete the knife safety certification process: [☰ Knife Safety Certification Slips](#)

Knife Certified

1. **Orientation and Homework:** An instructor will provide a knife safety orientation and assign a "homework" task to carve 10 points under guardian supervision at home.
2. **Guardian Consent:** Guardians will receive knife safety slips and loaner knives at sign-out, ensuring their awareness and approval of carving activities.
3. **Confirmation of Supervision:** An instructor will confirm guardian supervision of the child's carving on the following day's sign-in.
4. **Recitation of Safety Rules:** Before carving, each child must recite the 5 Knife Safety Rules.
5. **Supervised Carving:** Campers who did not carve at home must be supervised carving two points by an instructor before further carving activities.
6. **Certification Documentation:** Once completed, an instructor will award the student proof of certification and document the certification in internal tracking systems. For any programs using knives, Instructors must verify the students are knife certified prior to any knife use.

Age Guidelines:

- Under 8 Years Old: No knife use permitted.
- 8 years and older:
 - Personal knives allowed with the following specifications:
 - Fixed blade w/ sheath or folding blade w/ locking mechanism
 - Blade length 4" or shorter
 - Student must be knife-certified
 - Must be kept in backpack outside of carving time.

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- The student's parent/guardian must inform the instructor that their child has a knife in their backpack.
- Carving permitted only during designated time and only after earning Knife Safety Certification (Level 1)
- Direct supervision required

Carving Time Guidelines:

- Instructors must ensure student inclusion and offer carving skills after safety certification are complete, even if only half the group is interested.
- Carving group seated with blood bubbles.
- Distractions minimized. At least one instructor watching all students.
- "Knives Away" called for breaks, close encounters, loss of supervision, injury, or major distractions.
- Carving only during specified times or conditions.

Injuries Management:

- Instructors will address injuries with physical and emotional first aid.
- Instructors will provide opportunities for learning from mistakes
- Instructors must complete incident reports for ALL sharp-tool related injuries.

Common Avenues of Injury:

- Removing the knife from the sheath.
- Not focusing properly.
- "Testing" the blade.
- Carving into a portion of wood in the palm.
- Using a dull knife.
- Storing the knife sheath or knife on the belt.

5 Knife Safety Rules, Level 1:

Rule zero: Carving only permitted during designated times.

1. A sharp knife is a safe knife. A dull knife is a dangerous knife.
2. Stay seated while carving.
3. Create and maintain your blood bubble.
4. Carve away from all body parts and stop carving if you look away.

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5. Close and sheath all knives when not in use.

Violation Consequences: Instructors are responsible for administering violation consequences, and can request Site Leadership support if needed. Knife rule violations result in a temporary loss of knife privileges; repeated violations lead to confiscation. Knife privileges may be earned after a documented behavioral plan, knife use recertification, and/or conversation with the guardian and student.

This policy ensures that knife use at Whole Earth Nature School programs aligns with safety standards while providing valuable learning experiences for students.

Knife Safety Certification, Level 2: Students over the age of 12, and in programs led by Senior Lead Instructors with other students all over the age of 12, may be eligible to obtain Level 2 certification. Students must demonstrate maturity in general and carving skills specifically by carving a “tri-stick.” Once certified, carving is permitted within 25’ and in sight of an Instructor, as long as the student asks first. All other knife safety rules apply.

Knife Safety in FOREST Canopy: The Canopy program mentors older students (13-18) in risk assessment and decision making, and works with a select group of long-time students with proven maturity. Canopy students will be allowed the following exceptions to standard knife safety rules.

FOREST Canopy students may:

1. Carry their knives on their person
2. Perform their own risk assessment and decide whether it is a safe time to carve
3. Stand while carving (no walking)
4. Carve toward themselves if using correct technique and tools

Other Sharp Tools:

Saws with fine teeth such as the Japanese Pull Saw are very safe and may be used by any student with Level 1 Knife Safety Certification as long as an instructor is nearby. Saws with coarse teeth such as pruning saws and bow saws are very hazardous and may only be used by students 12 and older, under direct supervision.

Hatchets, axes and similar tools may only be used by students only under the following circumstances:

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- Activity must be led by Senior Lead Instructor or program leadership
- All students in the group must be over the age of 12
- Student must be under direct supervision
- Students must observe a Double Bubble, meaning twice the size of a standard Blood Bubble

B. Archery **Archery Set up, Tips, and Games**

Bows and arrows can be powerful weapons. We have two ways in which we practice archery at Whole Earth Nature School with different approaches to safety. Instructors must ensure that students understand the difference.

Instructors must review the following Archery Rules before facilitating the activity, and be prepared to go over these rules with students before every Archery lesson:

1. Rules for bows with nerf-type foam arrows:
 - a. These arrows are OK to be shot toward people only provided that the target agrees to be part of the activity.
 - b. Only use foam arrows that have been properly constructed with pennies on the tip of the shaft to prevent the shaft punching through the foam tip.
 - c. **Instructors must ensure that all participants wear eye protection when playing foam arrow games.**
 - d. Participants must aim below the chest and all head shots (accidental or not) result in a disabling of the shooter: they are out of the game for a round (at least).
2. Bows with target arrow: This equipment has an entirely different set of rules and protocols.
 - a. Target archery may only be practiced in established shooting ranges made for the purpose.
 - b. Shooting ranges should be clear of buildings and people or anything that may be damaged for 200 feet beyond the target.
 - c. When shooting, students should only use arrows that are in good repair. **Do not use broken arrows.** Instructors must inspect each arrow for safety prior to giving them to students.
 - d. During archery practice all students are required to stay behind the shooting line.

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- e. The only time students are allowed over the shooting line is when an instructor gives the command “Archers, retrieve your arrows.”
- f. When retrieving arrows all students must walk.
- g. Students should pick up all arrows, regardless of whether that student shot that arrow.
- h. When removing arrows from targets grasp the shaft right against the target and pull straight out. Watch behind you as you remove arrows in order not to poke another person.
- i. Never “dry-fire” the bows.
- j. When shooting, practice good “muzzle control” and keep your bow always pointed downrange.
- k. Stay focused while shooting and do not allow yourself to become distracted. Instructors will notice that participants tend to increase in accuracy during practice, followed by a drop in accuracy. When this drop occurs it is time to end the activity as students are beginning to lose focus and continued shooting is likely to result in injury.

C. Wading & Water Crossing Safety

Whole Earth does not permit swimming, we do allow supervised wading and water crossing when water levels are below or up to student’s knee level. Limited exceptions for students over age 12 are listed below.

Requirements:

1. Instructors must always conduct a thorough inspection of the wading and/or water crossing area for potential hazards such as drop-offs, sharp objects, or fast-moving water.
2. Students are only permitted to wade and/or water cross in shallow or slow-moving water and must avoid areas with fast-moving currents.
3. Instructors must carry a floating throw-rope to mark downstream boundaries or narrow shoreline boundaries.
4. Students must wear footwear with an ankle strap while wading and/or water-crossing.

Preparation and Instruction:

1. Instructors must inform students that wading and/or water crossing is dependent on safety conditions and may not always be possible.

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2. Instructors must explain all safety rules and boundaries to students before approaching the water.
3. Instructors must emphasize the importance of listening to instructors and following all instructions, and describe consequences if rules are not followed.
4. Students must be free from distractions and must verbally agree to abide by the rules.

Establishing Boundaries:

1. Instructors must define designated wading and/or water crossing areas and potential rock-throwing zones.
2. Instructors must ensure students understand the boundaries and landmarks that define the wading and/or water crossing area.

Entering the Water:

1. Students may only enter the water when instructed by an adult and after boundaries have been established.
2. Instructors must remind students to enter the water cautiously and avoid sudden movements.

Supervision and Enforcement:

1. Instructors must monitor students closely for compliance with safety rules.
2. Instructors must address any unsafe behavior immediately, giving warnings and providing guidance as needed.
3. If a student violates safety rules, they must sit out for one minute as a safety reminder. A second offense results in exclusion from further wading and/or water crossing activities for the day.

Emergency Preparedness:

1. Instructors must position themselves strategically to ensure downstream safety boundaries are maintained.
2. In the event of unsafe behavior or difficulty in maintaining control, instructors must call all students out of the water for a safety reminder. Instructors must review safety rules before allowing students back into the water.

Exiting the Water:

1. Instructors must provide timed warnings to signal the end of the wading and/or water crossing activity.

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2. Instructors must ensure students exit the water safely and allow time for drying off and transitioning to the next activity.

Ocean Safety: When near the ocean, instructors must inform students of the following additional safety precautions:

1. Track tide charts and inform students of tide safety.
2. Never turn your back on the surf.
3. Setting clear range boundaries on the beach.
4. Do not play or climb on driftwood near the water.
5. Keep ocean water at or below ankles.
6. All above water safety precautions must also be followed.

Age Restrictions:

- Groups which include students under the age of 12 may only wade in slow moving water up to their knees
 - Instructors must have eyes on all students at all times
- Groups with students all 12 and older may wade in slow moving water up to their waist or moderately moving water up to their knees; fast moving water must be less than 1 foot deep
 - An Instructor must have eyes on students at all times, with the exception of creek-walks
 - When doing creek-walks in brushy areas with poor visibility, students will always travel with a buddy, and Instructors will space themselves close enough to students to aid a student in case of injury.

D. Fire Safety

Fires may be built only in established fire pits or portable fire rings with site leadership's permission. Water and tools (shovel or hoe) must be available nearby anytime you are working with fire. These rules apply to any fire making activities, including: campfires, lighters, matches, candles, torches, coals and oil lantern, etc.

Fire Safety Rules: Instructors must educate all participants on the following rules prior to fire starting activities:

1. Adult supervision is required at all times when working with fire or fire starting equipment.
2. Fire starting equipment, like bowdrills and stoves, should only be used if a fire is allowed to be started in an area.

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3. A water source and a shovel/stirring tool must be ready before starting any fire.
 - a. Depending on the circumstances, it may also be necessary to have a fire extinguisher on hand.
4. The fire triangle (Oxygen, heat, fuel) concept and how to extinguish a fire.
5. Students must *walk* when near fire pits.
6. Never step over a fire.
7. Students may not add objects to a fire without instructor permission.
8. Never leave a fire unsupervised and extinguish fires completely when leaving an area. A fire is completely extinguished when there are no coals or smoke present.

Extinguishing Fires: Whenever a group is finished with a fire, the Lead Instructor must ensure that the fire is extinguished completely as follows, before leaving the immediate area:

1. Never leave a fire unattended, even if “only a few coals.”
2. Try to burn up as much of the fuel on a fire as possible before extinguishing it, and that means planning ahead and not allowing fuel to be added to a fire when there would not be time for it to be consumed.
3. Rather than simply extinguishing a fire, instructors are encouraged to gather the students and use it as an opportunity to teach them how to properly put out a fire. Allow enough time to show them and teach them what you are doing.
4. When you are finished with a fire, use a shovel or other tool to spread out any remaining fuel. Generously sprinkle water all over the fire area and then stir it well with a shovel to mix wet dirt with the fire. Add more water and continue stirring until the area is cool.
5. Do not allow students to pour water directly on a hot fire due to the risk of steam burns.
6. You should be able to place your hand on the ground where the fire was and not feel any warmth.
7. Always clean up the area and focus on leaving it better than you found it.

Permitted Fire Location Details

- **Hendricks Park:** Wilkins Shelter at Hendricks Park is the second of two locations where fires may be allowed in Eugene City Parks. Use of the fireplace at Wilkins Shelter requires the specific rental of the Wilkins Shelter site which can be done through the City of Eugene Parks & Open Space. The rental contact

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person is Amy Meeker. You must pick up the key to the fireplace on the preceding business day before you will be using it. During fire season, be sure to check burning restrictions before building fires.

- **Outdoor School Sites:** Fires may be built at Outdoor School sites as per site regulations and only in established fire pits. During fire season, be sure to check burning restrictions before building fires. Follow guidelines for preparation, engaging with students, and extinguishing fires below.
- **Other established fire pits:** When operating programs at sites with established fire pits such as campgrounds, National Forest recreation sites, etc, always familiarize yourself with all relevant rules and regulations before lighting any fires. During fire season, be sure to check burning restrictions before building fires.

Backcountry or dispersed fire use:

- When operating in “primitive” or backcountry environments preference should be given to using already established fire pits in order to mitigate impacts to the land and improve safety.
- If operating in an area where established fire pits are not available then extra care must be taken to ensure you are not creating excessive impacts on the land or encouraging future users to behave irresponsibly.
- Locate fire pits away from natural water sources and ensure that there are no low-hanging branches overhead.
- Before lighting fires, dig down to bare mineral soil and clear away all flammable debris in an area with a radius of three feet in all directions from the edge of the fire pit.
- When finished with any fire pit that you have created, follow all procedures below to ensure that your fire is completely out. Once the fire area is cool to the touch, camouflage it by sprinkling the debris you previously removed over the site to disguise the fact a fire was there. This will discourage future users from establishing a fire at the same location.

Seasons/restrictions: In western Oregon, there may be an elevated risk of wildfire any time between June and October. It is common for restrictions to be in place on where and whether fires are allowed throughout the summer. It is the responsibility of Program Leaders to stay informed of all relevant fire restrictions before allowing fires. See links to local fire authorities:

- [Lane Fire Authority](#)
- [Oregon Department of Forestry: Public Fire Restrictions Map](#)

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→ [Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority: Outdoor Burning Advisory](#)

Bowdrills and any fires that are not “built”

Fire starting equipment, like bowdrills and stoves, should only be used if a fire is allowed to be started in an area. Ensure that activities are happening in a location where the ground is not flammable. For instance, do bowdrill activities in a large asphalt area or on a large, green, lawn.

Stoves

If using stoves at programs, instructors must always ensure that they understand how to use the stove first, then adhere to the following:

1. Check that fuel lines are securely attached and not loose or damaged.
2. Make sure that stoves are placed on stable, level surfaces and do not slide around easily.
3. Talk to students beforehand about safety around the stove and have a plan for managing student movement if you are going to have students interacting with the stove at all (e.g. while making candles).
4. Ensure that stoves are turned off, cleaned, and put away properly after use.

E. Running Games

In order to ensure a safe experience, we take the following precautions:

Pre-Game Inspection: Before initiating any running games, instructors must conduct a thorough inspection of the playing area to identify potential hazards such as potholes, slippery/uneven ground, and other land hazards. Any risks that could lead to injuries must be promptly addressed or the game relocated to a safer area.

Active Supervision: During running games, instructors must actively engage in the game while simultaneously observing participants for risky behaviors. Prompt intervention is necessary to prevent accidents or injuries.

Risk Management: Participants who demonstrate excessive risk-taking behaviors during running games must be temporarily removed from the game to ensure their safety and the safety of others. Excessive risk-taking includes, anger directed at self or others, excessive contact or force to others, tripping, violating game rules, or volatile conflict. These individuals may be provided with alternative activities or closely supervised until they can rejoin the game safely.

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Timing Considerations: Running games should be scheduled earlier in the day whenever possible to mitigate the increased risk of injuries associated with tiredness and crankiness at the end of the day. In instances where running games are scheduled later, instructors should focus on calm or relaxing activities to minimize the potential for accidents.

F. Moving in Natural Environments

When moving in the woods with students, instructors must:

1. Examine the route for hazards both above and on ground (poison oak, hanging branches, standing dead trees, sharp sticks, rocks, wildlife, water, etc.) Help students to be aware of hazards that may exist.
2. Encourage students to move in an alert and deliberate way through the forest. Playing interactive games while moving through wooded areas can keep children engaged and help them learn along the way.
3. When dealing with steep or uneven terrain, assist kids who need help. Do not push students beyond their abilities.

G. Bare Feet

All students must wear shoes or sandals with a backstrap while at Whole Earth programs, except during specific times:

- Instructors may allow students to be barefoot when running activities that require or benefit from participants being barefoot (e.g. blindfolded activities or stalking games).
- In all cases where students will be barefoot, instructors must first scout the area ahead of time for any hazards such as broken glass or anything that could cause a foot injury.
- If such hazards are present they should be removed or another area chosen for that activity.

H. Plant Harvest & Use

While teaching the use of wild, medicinal, and edible plants, all Whole Earth staff and students must adhere to the following requirements:

- Respect park/site special use permits harvesting rules and be mindful of ecological impact.
- Coyote Outdoor School does not harvest plants for edible use.

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- Day Camps may only harvest plants from approved list in Activity Handbook
- We ask students to not teach their peers about edible plants outside of Whole Earth programs.
- For edible plants, instructors must ask students if they have eaten it before and encourage moderation in consuming any edible plants.
- Do not harvest or consume any plant in the parsley family. Instructors must inform students that this family contains many toxic plants and can be easy to misidentify.
- Before harvesting or using any plant material, students must always follow the “ask twice” rule:
 1. **Ask the plant.** Asking the plant includes considering the health of the plants and the potential impact on the environment of harvesting there. Is this plant growing in contact with poisonous species? Has it been exposed to road run-off or pesticides? If you harvest this plant will there be enough left for the species to continue to thrive in the area? Is there anything additional you can do to help this environment thrive? Instructors will guide students through the process of determining these answers.
 2. **Ask an instructor for positive identification of the plant.** If an instructor is unfamiliar with the plant, student must not consume it. .

I. Tree Climbing

These guidelines are specifically for unharnessed free-climbing of designated trees. In cases of harnessed climbing using ropes we defer to the safety policies and procedures of the contractor providing the service. This policy applies to all programs besides Coyote Outdoor School, which does not permit tree climbing.

Prior to tree climbing, Instructors are required to:

1. Inspect the tree before and during climbing to ensure that the limbs being climbed on are stable.
2. Restrict the number of students in a tree to no more than 5 at a time, with one instructor supervising at all times.
3. Review the following tree rules and boundaries with students before students touch the tree.
4. If students are not following any of the tree climbing rules at any time, the instructor must discontinue the activity.

Tree Climbing Rules:

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1. Students may not have their feet higher in the tree than the level at which they can reach when their feet are on the ground OR supervising instructor shoulder height (whichever is lower).
2. Instructors may not assist students in getting into trees. They must climb up on their own, but instructors may assist students out of trees when necessary.
3. No rough housing, pushing or horseplay. Be mindful of your body & communicate if you are moving around some else.
4. Don't walk below a tree or branch people are climbing on.
5. Be respectful to the tree and to each other.

Designated Climbing Trees

- The "Climbing Tree" or Spot K on the WENS Mount Pisgah Map.
- No other trees should be used for tree climbing. including any trees at Hendricks.

J. Day Hiking

Preparation: Instructors leading day hikes must be well-prepared with emergency gear, including extra supplies for unprepared students. This includes extra water and snacks, sun protection, first aid supplies, emergency fire starters, rain gear, flashlight, and a map or thorough knowledge of the area.

Map Study and Evacuation Routes: Before embarking on a day hike, instructors must thoroughly study a map of the hike or scout the area in advance. Evacuation routes should be planned ahead of time to ensure quick access to help in case of emergencies.

Monitoring: Instructors are responsible for monitoring student water intake carefully during the hike to prevent dehydration. Frequent rest breaks should be taken to allow hikers at the back of the group to catch up and rest. Instructors should teach students about developing "hot spots" or early warning signs of blisters. Students should be actively encouraged and rewarded, to promote early and active intervention. Instructors must treat blisters or hot spots as soon as possible using moleskin, tape, or other first aid supplies.

Instructor Supervision: An instructor must always remain at the rear of the hiking group to ensure that no participant is left behind. Students should not be allowed to

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proceed ahead out of sight of the lead instructor to prevent them from taking wrong turns or getting lost.

Communication: Before departing on a day hike, the lead instructor must leave a detailed plan of the intended hiking route with the Site Director or other site leadership. This ensures that someone is aware of the group's whereabouts in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

K. Shelter Building

Inspection: When building shelters with students, instructors must first check areas ahead of time for environmental hazards. If students are going to be sleeping in shelters, instructors must also approve the structural integrity of the shelters prior to sleeping.

Construction Safety: While building shelters the most common hazard is moving around large sticks. Instructors are required to inform students of the following safety requirements:

- If a stick is less than the height of a student then the student may carry it on her own. When carrying sticks alone students should also be very careful of portions sticking out behind them.
- If a stick is taller than the student then they must get approval from the instructor to carry it alone or must ask for assistance in carrying the stick from another student or instructor. When team-carrying sticks there should be one person on each end of the stick to prevent swinging the ends around and hitting another student.
- When breaking large sticks the only safe method is the fulcrum method (the "Kentucky break"). The stick is placed in the crotch of a large tree and pulled back until breaking. Always ensure that nobody is in front of a stick being broken this way.

Leave no Trace: When leaving an area, Instructors must require their students to take down shelters that have been constructed or ensure that they are safe. Scout pits or other below-ground shelters should be filled in or covered completely with sturdy wood.

L. Meals and Snacks

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- Whole Earth Nature School is a peanut-free organization, this applies to all WENS staff and participants. If an instructor finds that a student has peanuts in their lunch/snacks, they must require the student not to eat the peanut-containing food and notify the guardian of this requirement. If the student does not have enough food while omitting the peanut food, the instructor must ask site leadership to notify the guardian that additional food drop off is required.
- There may be additional food restrictions based on the allergy restrictions of the group or program. Program directors will communicate any additional restrictions in advance.
- Instructors must ensure that all students are sitting or standing still while eating.
- All food must be kept tidy and put away when not actively consuming.

M. Stick Use

Sticks are permitted for their specified purpose, such as walking support, shelter building or specific games.

Setting Expectations: Instructors should set clear expectations for students, especially regarding walking sticks, which students may be territorial or attached to a stick. Instructors must create group agreements about safe stick use and ensure students are familiar with the following stick use guidelines.

Contact with the Ground: When using a stick, one end must always maintain contact with the ground. This helps to ensure stability and prevents potential accidents or injuries.

Indoor and Offsite Restrictions: Sticks are strictly prohibited from being brought indoors or taken offsite. They are to remain within the designated outdoor areas at all times.

No Raising Above Head: Sticks should never be raised above the head. This rule is in place to prevent accidental injuries to oneself or others.

Use of Harm: Sticks are never to be used as a weapon, attempting to strike or harm others, whether this is intentional or not. Slow motion play sword fighting may be permitted while supervised by an instructor.

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Loss of Stick Privileges: Students who have more than two violations of stick rules will lose privileges for the rest of the day. Students who use the stick as a weapon or swing the stick above their head, will lose stick privileges for the rest of the program. Instructors should notify other staff members working with the student.

N. Water Vessels (On-Water Activities)

This policy outlines guidelines and best practices to ensure the safety of all participants and instructors during canoe, boat, kayak, and rafting activities. Instructors must review the following guidelines with students prior to entering the water vessel.

Participants:

- Participants should not be tied, strapped, or otherwise secured to the vessel at any time during on-water activities.
- On-water activities should not commence before sunrise or continue after sunset.

Buddy System:

- Groups must utilize the "buddy system" to ensure that each participant has a designated buddy who is responsible for checking on them and providing assistance if necessary.

Emergency Procedures:

- Instructors must train students in emergency response procedures before the water activity.
- In the event of an overturned vessel, the supervising instructor must verify that all paddlers have their heads above water and are not experiencing difficulty.
- All equipment on the watercraft must be securely and properly fastened to prevent loss or injury.

Safety Equipment:

- Life-jackets must be worn at all times during on-water activities, regardless of swimming ability.
- Participants should wear appropriate footwear that provides traction and protection against sharp objects in the water.
- Attire should be suitable for the weather conditions and provide sun protection.

Supervision:

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- Participants under the age of 18 must be visually supervised by a trained instructor at all times during on-water activities.
- Group sizes should be kept manageable to ensure adequate supervision and safety.

Weather Conditions:

- Water activities should be conducted in accordance with weather conditions and forecasts.
- Site leadership will ensure that water activities will be suspended or canceled in the event of severe weather conditions or other safety concerns.

Equipment Maintenance:

- All watercraft and equipment must be maintained in good working condition and inspected regularly for safety.
- Any damaged or faulty equipment must be repaired or replaced before use.

O. Ropes Elements

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone, the following guidelines must be adhered to when using high ropes elements, zip line, low ropes, and the climbing wall:

Certified Equipment: All ropes elements and climbing walls must be regularly inspected for any signs of wear or damage. Any issues must be reported to staff immediately for maintenance or repair. All ropes elements require an up-to-date certification of inspection by an official. This certification should be obtained from the site, and kept on-file at all times

Supervised by Trained Staff: All activities must be supervised by qualified staff who have a current certification of training in proper safety protocols and rescue procedures.

Safety Equipment: Participants must wear a properly fitted harness, helmet and closed-toe shoes at all times when engaging in activities on high ropes elements, climbing walls, zip lines and some low ropes elements. This safety equipment must be inspected by qualified staff before each use.

Safety Briefing: Before using high ropes elements, climbing walls and zip lines, participants must receive a thorough safety briefing from trained staff. This briefing will

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cover proper usage of equipment, safety procedures, and emergency protocols. All participants are required to follow the guidelines outlined in the safety briefing.

Spotter Requirement: A designated spotter must be present to assist climbers on the climbing wall and all ropes courses, providing guidance and support as needed.

3. Environmental Hazards

- A. **Poison-oak:** Instructors must educate all students the first time you encounter poison-oak on how to identify the plant in that season, how to minimize exposure and how to deal with exposure.
- a. To minimize exposure students should wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Before using an area for an activity such as shelter-building or hiding games, instructors must scout around for dense areas of poison-oak and avoid those areas. Instructors must review rosters to understand if any students have a strong sensitivity to poison-oak.
 - b. If students are exposed to poison-oak, instructors must take them to a faucet to wash with soap and cool water. If an instructor is unable to do this, they must radio for support from site leadership. Do not use warm water to wash away poison-oak.
 - c. Instructors must inform guardians if a student has been exposed to poison oak and educate them to use cool, running water and plenty of soap to wash skin, and to wash clothing separately to prevent cross-contamination.
- B. **Sunburn:** To prevent sunburn, instructors must:
- a. Encourage students to wear sun hats when they have them.
 - b. Try to utilize shady areas during the sunniest parts of the day.
 - c. Sunscreen use: If students bring their own sunscreen then an instructor can help them to apply it to any areas not covered by clothing. If students do not have their own sunscreen, sunscreen is available in the camp first aid kit and can be used on students only with the previous approval of their guardian. Instructors may need to request that site leadership call a guardian for approval as often there are no notes in their medical forms regarding applying sunscreen.
- C. **Heat injury:** To prevent heat injury, instructors must focus on the following measures on hot days:
- a. Play frequent “drinking games” to keep kids hydrated.
 - b. Ensure at the beginning of the day that all students are carrying refillable water containers and that they are full.
 - c. Try to do more high-energy activities in the cooler morning hours and do more resting and spending time in the shade during the afternoon heat.

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- d. When water is abundant you can use water play as a way to cool off.
 - e. Be aware of signs of heat injury in students and if you notice symptoms then take steps to cool them immediately. Common symptoms of heat injury include:
 - i. Disorientation, headaches, lethargy, combativeness, nausea, Vomiting, cramps, dizziness, and heavy sweating or lack of sweat.
- D. **Cold injury:** To prevent cold injury, instructors must take the following measures:
- a. Before heading outdoors make sure that students are properly prepared with waterproof and insulating clothing and warm boots. Gloves are also recommended. Put extra effort into helping kids stay hydrated.
 - b. Monitor kids' comfort level and have a plan to get them out of the weather if necessary.
 - c. Hand warmers can be helpful with temporarily warming kids. When possible, making fires or tea is a great way to help kids warm up.
 - d. In our climate frostbite is rarely a concern but hypothermia is a likelihood. Watch for signs and symptoms of hypothermia which include:
 - i. shivering (or cessation of shivering), clumsiness, slurred speech, confusion or trying to remove warm clothes despite the cold weather, drowsiness or lethargy.
- E. **Lightning:** Lightning is a rare but serious environmental hazard in our area. If there is lightning in the area when outdoors with students, instructors must take the following measures:
- a. The first choice is always to evacuate students indoors when possible, contact site leadership via radio to determine if this is a possibility.
 - b. If not possible to evacuate indoors or if it is unsafe to do so then find an area that is among tall objects such as trees. Instruct students to spread out and avoid being right next to any one tree.
 - c. Instruct students to get low to the ground and cover your ears and keep your mouth shut.
 - d. If anyone is injured by lightning, call 911 immediately and administer first aid.

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F. **Wildlife:** Wildlife can be unpredictable and, while they typically avoid humans, dangerous interactions are possible. If encountering mammals or birds in the wild, instructors must instruct their students in the following measures:

- a. Do not attempt to approach them. Avoid getting between guardian animals and their young.
- b. When traveling in the woods, stay as a group.
- c. If a person is injured by wildlife then wait until the danger has passed before administering first aid.
- d. Call for help immediately. If it is safe to do so after an attack then leave the area as soon as possible.

G. **Dehydration:** This is one of the most common camp injuries and symptoms are often delayed until after camp. Instructors must prevent dehydration by:

- a. Ensuring that all students always carry water with them.
- b. Encourage students to drink water frequently throughout the day. Frequent sips are more effective than infrequent large intakes of water. Playing drinking games is another good way to encourage hydration.
- c. When appropriate, teach kids to monitor the color and volume of their urine to track their own hydration.

H. **Bugs Injuries**

- a. **Bees/wasps:** Mostly we encounter honeybees and various types of wasps. The primary concern is ground dwelling wasps or “yellow jackets.” Instructor must always know your group and if there are any known insect allergies.
 - To prevent issues with stinging wasps we place traps in areas where we anticipate student activity.
 - During the summer when moving around, especially in unfamiliar areas, an Instructor must walk in front and look for wasps (unless the instructor has a severe allergy).
 - In case of wasp attack:
 - *calmly* remove the students from the area as quickly as possible.
 - Once the students have been removed from the hazard try to assess who, if anyone, has been stung.

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- Have an assistant instructor take the not-stung kids a small distance away to do a small activity while you assist the stung kids.
 - Watch all kids who have been stung carefully for signs of severe allergic reaction and be ready with treatment.
 - See the allergy section of Administering First Aid Policy for treatment of severe allergic reactions.
- b. **Ticks:** Instructors must:
 - i. Help students identify ticks and tick habitat.
 - ii. Encourage students to check themselves twice a day during springtime. Typically students are encouraged to check themselves while alone in the bathroom as ticks prefer warm, moist areas of the body, under clothing.
 - iii. If a tick does bite, the instructor must inform site leadership. Site leadership will either attempt to remove the tick or contact the guardian for student pickup. If site leadership is attempting to remove the tick, they will:
 - 1. Remove it by pinching it gently at the head with a pair of tweezers and pulling straight out.
 - 2. Try to keep the tick and send it with a guardian for disease testing.
 - 3. If the tick removal requires removal of clothing, a second adult must be present.
 - iv. Any tick bites or removal must be followed up with an incident report.
- c. **Spiders:** The only potentially harmful spider species common in Oregon are the Black Widow and Hobo spider.
 - i. In the event that a student is bit by a spider, the instructor must:
 - 1. Attempt to catch the spider and give to guardian or emergency services for identification
 - 2. Draw a sharpie circle around the spider bite
 - 3. Monitor for serious symptoms or infection
- I. **Water-Borne Illness:** Water-borne parasites are impossible to detect and can cause serious illness in the backcountry. Instructors must always assume all water sources are contaminated and treat them for parasites before using.

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Water Treatment:

- a. Even when treating your water, always look for the purest possible water source to treat.
- b. Instructors must ensure that all water used for drinking, washing dishes, and cooking must be treated. Always follow all product directions when treating water.
- c. Acceptable methods of water treatment are (in order of priority):
 - i. Microfilter
 - ii. chlorine dioxide
 - iii. Iodine
 - iv. UV light
 - v. Boiling: ensure that water reaches a rolling boil for 1 minute

J. Food-Borne Illness: Instructors must ensure:

- i. All meat is well cooked.
- ii. Any perishables will be kept cold until cooking, we won't store any leftovers.
- iii. Wash cutting surfaces or non disposable dishes with use a four tub washing method (pre-wash, wash, rinse, sanitize).
- iv. Keep vegetarian pans away from meat pans, etc.
- v. Handwashing is conducted prior to cooking and prior to eating.