

Activity Planning and Risk Assessment

Policy Regarding Prohibited and Unauthorized Activities

The Boy Scouts of America's Charter and Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, policies, and program guidelines help provide a safe and consistent program. Council and unit charters as well as individual registration are conditioned upon adherence to those requirements.

Adult volunteer leaders and units that allow youth or units to engage in prohibited or unauthorized activities in contravention of program requirements, and leaders who fail to take steps to stop any such activities, put Scouts and the organization at risk.

Only leaders possessing the educational, emotional, and moral qualities necessary for leadership are permitted to register and serve as Scouters. Actions which put youth or the organization at risk call into question the suitability of a Scouter for leadership.

If it is determined that Scouts were allowed to participate or engage in unauthorized or prohibited activities, a leader's registration and/or the unit's charter may be subject to adverse action, including revocation.

Approved by the National Executive Committee, February 13, 2018

Prohibited Activities

The Scouting program incorporates common activities such as swimming, climbing, cycling, archery, and snowboarding that, depending on the details, may include both real and perceived risks to participants. Those risks are managed by BSA policies, procedures, and guidelines that set limits and incorporate specific features such as safety equipment or qualified supervision. Guidance is provided by, but not limited to, the [Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities](#), [Safe Swim Defense](#), [Safety Afloat](#), [Climb on Safely](#), [Belay On](#), and the [BSA shooting sports](#) program. Activity components outside of BSA program guidelines are prohibited as follows:

1. Nonadherence to the [Scouter Code of Conduct](#)
2. Any activity that is not aligned with the current *Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities* (<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf>)
3. Aquatic activities that fail to comply with [Safe Swim Defense](#) and/or [Safety Afloat](#)
4. Activities related to COPE or climbing that fail to comply with [Climb on Safely](#) and/or [Belay On](#). This includes activities on courses that are not constructed to comply with standards set by the [Association for Challenge Course Technology \(ACCT\)](#) and/or are not inspected annually for integrity.
5. Flying—use of hang gliders, ultralights, experimental aircraft, or nontethered hot-air balloons, or flying in an aircraft as part of a search-and-rescue mission (*exceptions: transportation to Scouting events by commercial airlines; flying or [tethered hot-air balloon flights](#) following completion of the [Flying Plan Checklist](#)*)
6. Motorized vehicles used as program or activities—including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-road vehicles, motorized personal watercraft (PWC), and motorized speed events (*exceptions: council-approved ATV and PWC programs that comply with [National Camp Accreditation Program \[NCAP\] standards](#); go-karting conducted at a commercial facility that provides equipment and supervision of cart operation; youth completing the Motorboating merit badge*)
7. Shooting or throwing sports outside of BSA program literature and guidance. Examples of prohibited activities (with exceptions in italics) include:
 - Anvil shooting, flintlocks, exploding targets, and devices regulated by the National Firearms Act
 - Blow guns, boomerangs, and ballistae
 - Homemade firearms and air cannons, potato cannons, and tennis ball cannons
 - Throwing of shovels, torpedoes, spikes, or stars
 - Inappropriate ammunition such as pumpkins, hard slingshot ammo, and tracers
 - Cannons (*exception: council camp ceremonies, which must follow the [BSA's guidelines for cannon use](#)*)
 - Crossbows (*except at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve*)
 - Reloading ammunition, and using reloaded ammunition (*except at Philmont Scout Ranch*)
 - Spears, including atlatls, pole spears, and spear guns (*except at Philmont Scout Ranch*)
8. Open or concealed carry or use of firearms at any Scouting activity, *with the following exceptions:*
 - Law enforcement officers who are required to carry firearms within their jurisdiction
 - Use as part of an official [BSA shooting sports](#) program
 - Appropriate hunting in Venturing

Some activities considered by youth and leaders are not compatible with the Scouting program. Some have unacceptable risks that have been confirmed by serious or even fatal consequences. Others are not compatible with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The activities listed below are strictly prohibited as part of any Scouting program.

The list is not comprehensive, but it serves as a definitive list of prohibited activities and it offers a broad sense of what is **not allowed** as a Scouting activity. Scouting leaders should refer to this list when deciding on activities, and they should reflect vigorously on how any activity outside our published program would resonate with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the following activities (with exceptions in italics):

9. Extreme or action sports and associated activities that involve an unusually high degree of risk and often involve speed, height, a high level of exertion, and specialized gear or equipment. These activities include but are not limited to
 - Parkour
 - Cliff diving or jumping
 - Whitewater paddling on rapids rated Class V or above
 - Tree climbing
 - Free or solo climbing
 - Aerobatics while snowboarding, skiing, wakeboarding, or mountain biking
 - Parachuting, BASE jumping, or wingsuiting
 - Parasailing or any activity in which a person is carried aloft by a parachute, parasail, kite, flying tube, or other device
 - Participation in amateur or professional rodeo events, council or district sponsorship of rodeos, and use of mechanized bulls or similar devices (*This restriction does not apply to bicycle safety rodeos.*)
 - Jumping with bungee-cord devices (sometimes called shock-cord jumping)
 - Bubbleball, Knockerball®, zorbing, Battle Balls™, bubble soccer, bubble football, and similar orb activities where participants collide or roll around on land or water
 - Flyboarding/jet-boarding
 - Highlining
 - XPOGO
 - Trampolines and trampoline parks (*exception: commercial facilities that meet or exceed current ASTM Standard F2970-15*)
10. Use of accelerants, chemicals, or pyrotechnics to start fires or in ceremonies (*exception: solid fire starters designed and manufactured for this purpose*)
11. Using homemade or modified equipment that fails to comply with the BSA [Chemical Fuels and Equipment policy](#)
12. Burning any solid, liquid, gel, or gas fuel in a tent—including tents or teepees that feature or support stoves or fires
13. Activities where participants strike at each other, including martial arts, boxing, combat games, gladiator games, and reenactment activities such as live action role-playing games (LARP) and Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) activities (*exception: tai chi*)
14. Activities where participants shoot or throw objects at each other, such as rock-throwing, paintball, laser or archery tag, sock fights, or dodgeball
15. Service projects that fail to comply with federal, state, or local laws regarding the safety of youth (For more information, visit www.youthrules.gov and www.dol.gov/general/topic/youthlabor/hazardousjobs/.)
16. Use of power tools by youth, including chainsaws, log splitters, wood chippers, and power saws or mills (*Youth may use age-appropriate tools following tool manufacturers' guidelines.*)
17. Exploration of abandoned mines
18. Fireworks, including selling of fireworks (*exception: fireworks displays by a certified or licensed fireworks control expert*)
19. Water chugging, and eating or drinking competitions such as “chubby bunny” or hot dog eating contests
20. Hunting (*Venturing crews may conduct hunting trips, and councils may host special adult hunting expeditions provided that all participants have obtained necessary permits and/or licenses from state or federal agencies and have completed a hunter safety education course.*)
21. Intramural, interscholastic, or club sport competitions or activities

You can use this Safety Moment on unauthorized and restricted activities to help explain the policies at your meetings: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/unauthorized-restricted-activities/.

Approved by the National Leadership Council May 30, 2019