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## Venture Outdoors

# Outdoor Educator Onboarding Manual

*Last updated: 1/25/2024 by LZ*

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## **Overview**

This manual is designed to give guidance and answers to the questions an Outdoor Educator (OE) may have. It includes expectations, guidelines, and how-to's to guide the Outdoor Educator to success in their role.

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## **Chapter 1: We Are Venture Outdoors**

### Who We Are

Venture Outdoors is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to making the outdoor recreation community a vibrant centerpiece of this region. Founded in June 2001, we believed that our region has not yet tapped its assets in outdoor recreation to contribute to a vibrant lifestyle and make this a region people want to call home.

The tremendous diversity and richness of our recreational opportunities are obvious to those who hike, bike, climb and paddle in this region. Unfortunately, this awareness does not extend to those without a personal network of contacts. Without an effective infrastructure to inform and engage novices and new residents, the prevailing lack of awareness will continue to hinder participation in outdoor activities, especially by young, active adults. In partnership with existing outdoor organizations, Venture Outdoors seeks to provide that infrastructure.

Western Pennsylvania and nearby sections of West Virginia and Ohio contain a wide variety of beautiful and accessible outdoor places. The opportunities to participate in many types of outdoor recreation activities are equal to those of any other region of the country. As this region works hard to maintain and/or grow its population base, create a place where people want to live and continue to stimulate economic development, our many nearby outdoor attractions could and should provide a focal point of activities and pride for residents and visitors alike.

Accordingly, Venture Outdoors will provide that focal point. We will increase awareness of, participation in and appreciation for our many regional outdoor amenities while creating a sense that ours is an active, vibrant and fun place to live, work and play. We strive to remove the barriers – such as financial limitations, transportation, fear, confidence, and gear – that prevent people from experiencing the health and wellness benefits of time spent in nature.

### IWINMEE

Venture Outdoors developed the IWINMEE acronym as a reminder to help Outdoor Educators convey essential information prior to starting trips. Each letter stands for a step in the process of communicating with participants prior to getting underway. Venture Outdoors encourages all Outdoor Educators to follow this model.

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**I—Introduce Yourself and Assistant(s):**

Once all participants have arrived and paperwork is complete ask everyone to assemble in a circle. Introduce yourself as an Outdoor Educator, stating briefly your prior leadership experience and qualifications. Next, allow each of your assistant leaders to do the same.

**W—We are Venture Outdoors:**

The next step is to communicate the organization's mission to trip participants. Below is a sample of some highlights you may want to include in your introduction.

**Key Points:**

- The mission of Venture Outdoors is to get people outside.
- By getting people outdoors, we create a healthier, more active lifestyle.
- We promote a better appreciation for our region as a great place to live, work and play.
- We foster respect for the environment.
- Venture Outdoors leads hundreds of outings each year.
- We are a membership driven organization.

**I—Introduce the Participants:**

Have everyone introduce themselves to the group. Individual introductions serve as icebreakers. Good icebreakers foster good group dynamics by allowing participants to begin to know one another. It usually works best to ask them to answer a specific question. This is a good opportunity to gauge participants' level of experience in the given activity.

*Examples:*

- Name
- Where You live
- Fun fact (e.g. favorite flower or favorite hiking trail) OR When was the last time you ? (e.g. kayaked five miles, biked 20 miles)

## N—News From The Trail:

This step allows outdoor educators to manage expectations by informing participants about the upcoming activity. This might include such things as time, distance, sights, hazards, and opportunities for water and bathroom breaks. You may also inform participants of possible alternatives or bailout plans. Finally, it's a good idea to let participants know what to expect at the end of the trip.

Visualizing a person from head to toe reminds you of topics to address.



### 1) Mouth

- State adequate food and water needs.

### 2) Abdomen

- State bathroom availability along the way.
- State what breaks will occur, how frequently, and approximately how long, including lunch and rest breaks.

### 3) Feet

- State how far, how fast, and how strenuous the activity is.
- State whether the group should stay together or spread out during the outing.
- Advise participants of which leaders are lead and sweep.
- State what to do at trail and road intersections.
- Tell the participants to keep the leaders informed of how they are doing.

## M—Medical Questions, First Aid:

- Ask participants to confidentially advise you or any leader of any relevant medical issues (e.g. asthma, allergies, heart trouble, etc.).



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- State your current level of first aid certification (Basic First Aid, Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness First Response) and who on the leadership team has current CPR training. Let the participants know who is carrying a first aid kit and where to find it.
  - Let the participants know they should stop and treat a minor problem before it becomes an issue (e.g. treat a hot spot before it becomes a blister).

### **E—Equipment/ Gear Check:**

- Check to make sure everyone has appropriate footwear, clothing, and rain gear.
- If this is an activity that requires specialized gear, do a quick check. For example, check that skis, snowshoes, backpacks, life jackets, helmets, and paddles fit well.
- Depending on the group's experience level, provide some instruction in the use of the equipment.
- Hand out anything you feel makes the trip more fun, interesting, and informative. For example, maps or information on plants, animals, or other natural features.

### **E—Etiquette:**

There is often an established etiquette for conducting outdoor activities. It is important that Venture Outdoors leaders educate and demonstrate those practices with their groups. Venture Outdoors groups should be seen as role models for environmental stewardship and courteous trail use.

#### **Key Points:**

- Advise participants of the etiquette, including park regulations, specific to your activity or the trails you plan to utilize (i.e. explain to snowshoers that they are to avoid the cross-country skiers).
- Explain how to communicate the advancement of other trail users (i.e. "Runner back!" should be shared if a runner is approaching a group from behind the group and looking to pass).
- Show how to signal changes in direction or speed (i.e. extending the right arm to the right to signal a right turn on a biking outing).
- State that we will be practicing [Leave No Trace](#) ethics on the outing.

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## Chapter 2: Outdoor Educator Expectations

### 10 Behavioral Standards

#### **Get Smart**

*Increasing Skills and Competence* — Venture Outdoors is committed to helping its employees and participants learn and grow. Participate on an outing, take part in socials, etc.

#### **Attitude Is Everything**

*Create a Lasting Impression* — We treat every participant as if they are the most important person in our organization. Behavior and attitude create a positive first impression that is everlasting. We strive to exceed expectations.

#### **Thank Somebody**

*Reward and Recognition* — We express gratitude and appreciation to one another. We celebrate our accomplishments and hard work to make Venture Outdoors the best place to work. We will have monthly nominations for the Educator of the Month.

#### **Make Words Work**

*Talk, Listen and Learn* — We communicate with courtesy, clarity and care in all verbal and nonverbal messages. We listen attentively to participants to understand their needs and to ensure they comprehend the information we provide to them.

#### **All for One, One for All**

*Teamwork* — Venture Outdoors team members share a common purpose: to increase environmental learning and participation in outdoor recreational activities while promoting safety. We build each other up; we share our successes, failures, information, and ideas.

#### **Make It Better**

*Service Recovery* — When the Venture Outdoors experience doesn't go right for a participant, we pledge to make things better. We listen and respond with empathy and apologize for not meeting expectations. We are proactive in making amends,

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even in difficult situations. This should be handled by the Outdoor Educator and Office Staff.

### **Think Safe, Be Safe**

*Safety at Work* — It is essential that we create a safety-minded environment at Venture Outdoors. We identify and report hazards immediately to the Office Staff.

### **Look Sharp, Be Sharp**

*Appearance Speaks* — When we dress, groom and maintain ourselves with care, we show respect to our participants and give them confidence in our ability to provide them with a quality and safe experience.

### **Keep in Touch**

*Manage Participant Expectation* - make sure participants understand exactly what they are in for. Keep communicating with participants to see how they are doing physically, and if they need anything (e.g. food, water, rest).

### **Prepare**

*Be the Expert* – Make time to gather materials and brush up on the topics you'll be sharing on your outing. Planning enough activities to fill the program time and being knowledgeable about the information you present is essential to trip success!

### Dress Code

You will be given two (2) Venture Outdoors staff shirts. If you need another shirt, please feel free to talk with your supervisor. Please wear a staff shirt for every outing you are on. Guidelines for appropriate clothing are:

- Weather & activity-appropriate shoes, pants or mid-length shorts should be worn with your shirts.
- Avoid any cotton shirts or pants.
- Wear closed-toed shoes or athletic sandals that strap around your ankles and will not come off. Clothing and hats should not have or display any profanity.

- It gets extremely hot during the summer, so bring an extra shirt or a towel to refresh yourself periodically if needed.

## Clearances and Certifications

Prior to your employment, you are expected to pay for and obtain the following ([view most up-to-date and complete directions here](#)):

- 1) FBI Fingerprinting – currently costs \$23.65. Review directions in the link above for necessary steps.
- 2) PA Child Abuse (PA ACT 151) Clearance - you'll need to register a new account and follow the steps [here](#). The current cost to receive this clearance for employment purposes is \$13.00.
- 3) PA Criminal Record (PA ACT 34) Clearance - you'll need to register [here](#). The current cost to receive this clearance for employment purposes is \$22.00. These clearances typically last 5 years.
- 4) Child Abuse Mandated Reporter Training - can be found [here](#). You'll need to go through these "modules", then print out the certificate at the end. The modules take three hours to complete. Provide your certificate to your supervisor. This reporter training is free.
- 5) CPR/First Aid Training - These certifications expire every 1-2 years depending on your provider. You can search for and register for a class anywhere in the city; Venture Outdoors also offers American Heart Association's Heartsaver First Aid and CPR Training on weeknights typically once a month in the summer; reach out to your supervisor for upcoming First Aid/CPR class dates. This course can cost anywhere from \$35 - \$85.

## Clearance Reimbursement

You are responsible for paying for the costs associated with obtaining these clearances. If you feel that you need assistance for covering the fees associated with these clearances or certifications, please speak to the employer. We do not want clearance fees to be a financial barrier to you in obtaining employment with our organization.

## Previous Record

A record with charges does not automatically disqualify you for employment purposes. The results will be used as a basis for a conversation between you and the hiring supervisor.

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## Chapter 3: Outdoor Educator Policies

### Mileage

Working at Venture Outdoors may include working away from the main office. As a result, the following policy will be used to determine when to reimburse staff for mileage when using his/her personal vehicle for travel related to Venture Outdoors work.

*Non-reimbursable Travel:* The “assigned place of work” for a staff member is the touchstone for determining when mileage is reimbursed to an employee for work-related travel. For Outdoor Educators, the assigned place of work is out in the field at the location for whatever program(s) that person is leading that day. Therefore, mileage is not reimbursable for standard OE work assignments or traveling between work assignments.

*Reimbursable Travel:* The OE will be reimbursed for travel that is required outside of Allegheny County. For instance, training weekend trips to YMCA Camp Soles in Rockwood or the Regatta at Moraine State Park would be considered unusual travel and mileage reimbursement is available. Contact your supervisor for the Mileage Reimbursement form, which will need to be submitted within 2 weeks after the trip takes place.

Other unusual circumstances involving unusual travel may be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you have any questions about what constitutes “unusual travel”, please consult your supervisor.

### Parking

Outdoor Educators are encouraged to carpool, take public transportation or bike to program locations whenever possible. Paid parking is not reimbursable; however, certain circumstances such as driving a company vehicle may be given special consideration. Please consult your supervisor with any questions.

### Paid Sick Time

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As a part-time staff member, you will accrue 1 hour of paid sick time for every 35 hours you work. To check on the balance of your paid sick time, view your most recent pay stub in the ADP app. If you have to call out sick and would like to use paid sick time, follow these steps:

- 1) Notify your supervisor that you are sick
- 2) Your supervisor will advise you to drop the shift on When I Work and write in the message that you are sick
- 3) Check your pay stub and let your supervisor know how many hours of sick time you would like to use (your supervisor cannot see your sick time hours; only you can do that). Your supervisor will then add that to your timecard and code it as "SICK". You can ONLY use the number of hours you have a balance for.
- 4) Check your next pay stub to make sure that you were paid for the sick time. Contact your supervisor if you have any questions.

### Gap Time/Multiple Assignment Pay

For an Outdoor Educator, working at Venture Outdoors means that the "assigned place of work" each day may vary. The assigned place of work is out in the field at the location for whatever program that person is leading that day. In addition, an OE may have more than one program or work activity each day, and therefore more than one assigned place of work.

When an OE has more than one program or work activity on a particular day, the OE is paid for the time in between the programs, up to two hours. For instance, if an OE has a program at North Park in the morning from 9-Noon, and then a second program at Frick Park from 2-5, the two-hour gap between programs is paid at the employee's regular rate. In nearly all cases, this will allow for travel time and a meal break for the OE. This also includes any Kayak Pittsburgh shifts. For example, if an OE works a custom youth program in the morning and then has a Kayak Pittsburgh shift within the two-hour gap time period, then they stay clocked in for that period.

On a rare occasion, an OE may have more than two programs or work activities on a particular day. The same policy applies – if there is a gap of two hours or less

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between activities, the OE will be paid for the time in between the programs. Again, this will cover travel time and a meal break.

When an OE has a gap of time exceeding two hours between programs, the OE will not be paid for that time unless s/he performs work for Venture Outdoors during that time. The policy is based on the fact that more than two hours is enough time that the OE can choose to go home or do personal business between programs.

### Overtime Policy

Since the position of Outdoor Educator is part-time, your supervisor will do everything possible to ensure that an OE will not exceed a 40-hour work week. In the rare event that an OE is asked to work over 40 hours in a workweek (which is identified as a Saturday through Friday week), the OE will be paid one and a half times their current wage for each additional hour.

### Inactivity Policy

If an Outdoor Educator is inactive for more than 30 days in a row, they will automatically be removed from payroll and the When I Work scheduling system. "Inactivity" refers to any aspect of work, including: meetings, office work, prep time, leading/assisting on trips. It costs the company money to keep an employee in both the payroll and scheduling system. In order to be re-activated in the payroll and scheduling system, the Educator will need to contact their supervisor and complete a re-hire form and interview. If there are special circumstances that prevent an Educator from working for more than 30 days (sickness, death in the family, etc.), please contact your supervisor.

A note about the Winter Shutdown: the days during mandatory office winter shut down will not be included in the count of 30 days when determining an employee's inactivity status.

### Phone Policy

Outdoor Educators may keep their mobile devices on their person during a program in case of emergencies or for professional purposes. Use of mobile devices for personal reasons during programs is not permitted. If a phone or mobile device is being used to look up information to share with a group, the educator should inform students that it is being used for that specific reason to discourage student use of their own mobile devices during program time.

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## Communication Policies

### **Communication with Youth**

- *One-on-one:* Educators should never be in a closed room with a child alone. Always have at least one other adult or child with you in the room, and do your best to keep any doors open.
- *Personal Information:* Do not share any of your personal information (phone number, email address, social media, etc.) with any of our students, and do not collect any of their personal information. If you need to get in contact with a student, always go through a parent/guardian or the school/afterschool program.
- *Time Restrictions:* Follow site guidelines for communication with youth during particular hours. In general, unless there is an emergency, it is advisable to keep communication between 8am-5pm (this goes for coworkers as well).

### **Social Media**

- *Photo/Video Release:* Venture Outdoors waivers allow us to share photos and videos of youth on Venture Outdoors website and social media platforms. Educators may take photos/videos to share with Venture Outdoors, but may not post photos or videos of youth in our programs on their personal social media accounts. Exceptions may include instances where the youth is not identifiable in the photo/video (from the back, in a group). Check with your supervisor if you are unsure if you can post something.
- *Social Media Representation:* If you come across a mention of Venture Outdoors on social media and you feel a response is necessary, alert the main office so that we can formulate a response from an official spokesperson. Do not comment on social media on behalf of the organization.
- *Posting on Social Media:* As an employee of this organization, use professional judgement when posting about Venture Outdoors or outdoor recreation on your personal social media accounts. Examples of unprofessional posts include criticism of customers at our public kayaking concession, ridicule of coworkers, etc. If you identify that your work for Venture Outdoors, you are representing the organization! Bring any concerns to your supervisor or other office staff to be addressed.



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- *In Case of Emergency:* (I.e. incident, accident, loss of life, participant injuries) Do NOT post or share information on social media and do NOT talk to members of the media. The only people who are authorized from the organization to speak to the media is the President/CEO and the Director of Communications. Contact your supervisor immediately and file an incident report to wait for actions to be addressed through the organization.

### **Representing Venture Outdoors**

- *Public Conduct:* While wearing a Venture Outdoors t-shirt, remember that you are representing Venture Outdoors and you should abide by the same policies as if you were working. For example, don't wear your t-shirt to a bar unless it's a staff outing; don't accost someone in traffic, etc. Similarly, do not post photos of yourself in your Venture Outdoors t-shirt on social media doing anything you wouldn't do while you were working.

### Tardiness

Employees are expected to be present at their assigned work location and ready to begin work at the start of their scheduled work shift. If they are not, they are considered tardy. Instances of tardiness are addressed below, under "Disciplinary Action."

*Keep in mind that emergency situations may be considered on an individual basis.*

### Picking Up Kayak Pittsburgh Shifts

At some point, an Outdoor Educator may express interest in picking up available shifts at Kayak Pittsburgh. This is wonderful! Kayak Pittsburgh tends to have more work shifts available toward the end of the summer and programs also start to decrease, making it a great opportunity for OEs to maintain hours before the school year programming kicks back up.

Educators are **not to exceed 35 hours per week (Saturday-Friday) with combined Educator and Kayak Pittsburgh shifts**. While the When I Work scheduling app will notify you and your supervisor if your schedule exceeds 35 hours, it is also up to the employee to track their hours to make sure they will not exceed 35 hours if they decide they are going to pick up Kayak Pittsburgh shifts after their Educator schedule has been published 3 weeks out.

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The procedures for an OE picking up KP shifts:

1) The OE will contact Kayak Pittsburgh staff to inquire about picking up Kayak Pittsburgh shifts;

- The Kayak Pittsburgh staff will have the conversation with the OE about attendant pay, clock-in/out procedures, and other Kayak Pittsburgh processes.
- The Kayak Pittsburgh staff will add the OE to the When I Work schedule for Kayak Pittsburgh.

2) Once the three-week OE schedule is set on When I Work, the OE can look at open KP shifts on When I Work in that three-week timeframe and pick up shifts.

### Jury Duty Policy

Part-time employees summoned for jury duty are granted an unpaid leave in order to serve. Contact your supervisor upon receiving your summons to make arrangements to cover for shifts you are already scheduled for. We reserve the right to request proof of jury service issued by the Court upon return.

### Outdoor Educator Perk Policies

*Kayak Pittsburgh:* Outdoor Educators and one (1) guest per visit will be admitted free of charge to enjoy any offered paddle sport at any Kayak Pittsburgh location, during regular business hours. It is encouraged for staff to use this perk during the weekday when the concession is not as busy and to come prepared with a waiver already completed.

*Outing Discounts:* Codes are available to OEs so you may join Venture Outdoors outings at a free or discounted price, depending on the outing. These discounts are only applicable to the OE registering. For example, if a trip costs \$5 per person and an OE signs up themselves and a friend using their promo code, the only cost will be to register the guest, bringing the total cost to \$5. Please contact your supervisor to request a discount code.

### Disciplinary Action Policy

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[Pennsylvania is an "at-will" state](#), meaning that an employee can be let go at any time with or without cause, and similarly an employee may leave their position at any time with or without cause.

In some cases, Venture Outdoors will pursue the following disciplinary action procedure to promote employee improvement and avoid termination whenever possible:

(1) Oral warning - Initial disciplinary action should be in the form of an oral discussion and warning. This meeting should be held in private and should provide an opportunity for problem solving that results in clear problem identification, correction strategies, and employee commitment to improve. This meeting should be documented using a Disciplinary Action Form and will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

(2) Performance Improvement Plan – If the problem continues or occurs for a second time, an in-person meeting will be held between the supervisor and employee to establish a formal [performance improvement plan](#). As part of this plan, the employee and supervisor will work together to establish what the problem area(s) are, ways in which they can be alleviated, and set target deadlines for improvement.

(3) Follow up meetings as part of the Performance Improvement Plan – The employee will meet with their supervisor 1-3 times during the probationary period to check in on their progress regarding their Performance Improvement Plan. The employee will receive a copy of the warning and the original will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

(4) Discharge – An employee will be immediately discharged from his/ her position if he/ she continues to not respond to the above warnings. The employee must return all Venture Outdoors materials (First Aid Kits, gear, etc.) at that time.

*Examples of actions that may result in disciplinary action:*

- Failure to comply with the above policies
- Failure to work in a cooperative manner with coworkers and/or supervisors
- Disrespect of other staff and/or supervisors
- Tardiness or absence from an assigned work shift, including failure to find a replacement for a dropped shift

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- **NOTE:** Failure to find yourself a replacement for a dropped shift and not show up for that shift will result in an immediate Performance Improvement Plan, arranged with your supervisor.
  - Though paperwork is due 2 business days following a program, disciplinary action may result if it is not turned in by the end of the month in which the program is held.

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## Chapter 4: Schedules

### Scheduling

For part-time staff, we use an app called [When I Work](#) for all scheduling purposes. When you are first hired, your supervisor will enter you into the When I Work system: at this point, you should receive an “Invitation” email from When I Work, prompting you to create a username and password. Be sure to record what your login information is because your supervisor cannot view or edit it.

### Setting Availability on When I Work

Set your availability preferences to let your supervisor know when you prefer to work, when you prefer not to work, and when you are unavailable to work. By default, you’re set to be available all day. Availability must be set 3 weeks in advance to align with the 3-week scheduling cycles.

You can set your availability preferences from your desktop, iPhone or Android phone.

Your availability is a *preference* that your supervisor can consider when building the schedule. There is no guarantee you’ll always get shifts that align with your preferences. If you *cannot* work (versus prefer not to work), you must set that time frame as unavailable.

You can add, edit, or delete availability preferences that take place in the future but not preferences that take place in the past or on the current day.

### **Adding an availability preference**

1. In the top-right corner of the page, hover your pointer over your profile picture, then click My Availability.

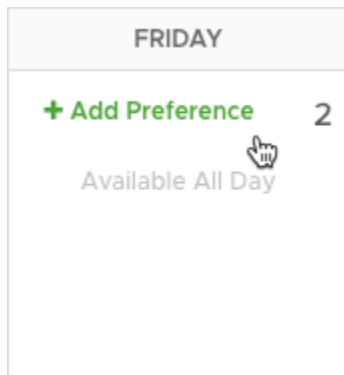
- Use the calendar to find the day when your preference will begin.

Availability For May 2018

VIEWING My Availability

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
30	1 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM	2	3 Unavailable All Day	4 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM	5 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	6
7	8 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM	9	10 Unavailable All Day	11 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM	12	13
14	15 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM	16	17 Unavailable All Day	18 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM	19 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	20
21	22 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM	23	24 Unavailable All Day	25 5:00 PM - 9:30 PM	26	27


- Hover your pointer over the date when the preference will begin, and click **Add Preference**.



4. Click **I'm Unavailable to Work** or **I Prefer to Work**

### Add Preference

STARTING ON


May 26 2018 

I'M UNAVAILABLE TO WORK  I PREFER TO WORK

ALL DAY


TIME\* 9:00AM - 3:00PM

REPEATS

EVERY Week 

REPEATS ON  S  M  T  W  T  F  S

ENDS ON

Apr 27 2019 

NOTE

5. Set the hours of the preference
  - a. If you want the preference to apply to the entire day, enable the **All Day** toggle.
  - b. If you want the preference to apply to a specific time period, set the start and end **Time**.
6. Configure how the preference will repeat.
  - a. If you don't want the preference to automatically repeat, leave the **Repeats** toggle turned off.

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- b. If you want the preference to repeat, turn on the **Repeats** toggle.
    - i. Under **Every**, select repeat frequency (**Day**, **Week**, or **2 Weeks**).
    - ii. If you chose **Week** or **2 Weeks**, click the days of the week under **Repeats** On when the preference should apply.
    - iii. Under **Ends On**, set when the preference should stop repeating. Availability preferences can repeat for up to one year.
  7. (Optional) Add a **Note** that explains the reason for your preference. This note will be visible to you and your employer.
  8. Click **Save**.

### Requesting Time Off

Sometimes, you may need to request a block of time outside of your regular availability for reasons such as vacation, doctor's appointments, class meetings, or other. When you need to take time off from work, use When I Work to send the request to your supervisor for approval. Time off for an OE will only be submitted as unpaid.

You can request time off on the desktop version, or on your iPhone or Android.

Please complete a request for time off **at least 3 weeks in advance** (a month is preferred). Please note that submitting a request does NOT guarantee that you will have the day(s) off; it will be approved or denied by your supervisor and you will be notified through the app.

1. Hover over the Tray icon in the upper-right corner of the screen and click **Request Time Off**.



## 2. Set up your time off request.

### Request Time-Off ✕

---

ARE YOU TAKING OFF A PORTION OF THE DAY OR A WHOLE DAY(S)?

All Day  Partial Day

TIME-OFF TYPE

Unpaid ▾

---

START DATE 📅

END DATE 📅

MESSAGE

*//*

---

SEND REQUEST

## 3. Click **Send Request**. It is then submitted to your manager for approval.

### Calling Off

In the event that you need to call off for a shift that you are already scheduled to work, follow these steps:

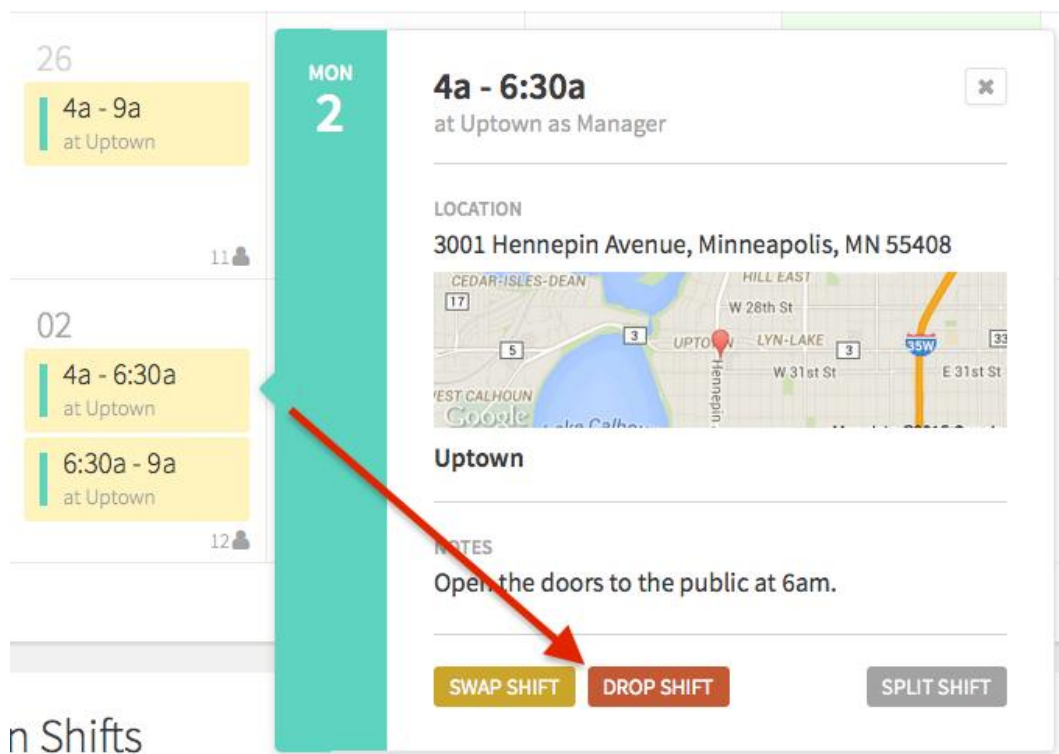
1. Drop the shift on When I Work (instructions below);
2. You must find your own replacement if the program is within three weeks of the call off date (Instructions below). If it is over 3 weeks away, your supervisor will work to find a replacement;
3. If you cannot find a replacement, contact the supervisor at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled shift you need covered.
4. Unless there are extenuating circumstances (i.e., sick, emergency), you will still be responsible for attending your shift if no replacement is found.
  - a. **NOTE: failure to find yourself a replacement for a shift you were assigned for and not showing up for that shift will result in an immediate Performance Improvement Plan.**

## Dropping Shifts on When I Work

If you're unable to work one of your shifts, you drop the shift to your coworkers. When you create a drop shift request, the shift is still your responsibility unless picked up by one of your coworkers. It is also your responsibility to reach out to other staff members to find your replacement.

**NOTE:** Failure to find yourself a replacement for a scheduled shift and not show up to complete that shift will result in a Performance Improvement Plan, arranged with your supervisor.

1. To drop a shift, go to **My Schedule** and select the shift you'd like to drop.
2. Click Drop Shift



3. Select the coworkers that you'd like to offer this shift to. The app shows your coworkers who are available to take your shift.
  - a. The request always works better if you have already contacted someone in person who is willing to take your shift.

**Shift Giveaway / Drop** ✕

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SELECT WHICH USERS YOU WOULD LIKE TO OFFER THE SHIFT:  
**Monday, February 2, 2015 at 4a - 6:30a at Uptown**

TO ONE OF THESE USERS ALL NONE LOAD MORE SHIFTS

Ella Bear <input type="checkbox"/>	Karen Trapp <input type="checkbox"/>	Randy Jackson <input type="checkbox"/>	Sam Adamson <input type="checkbox"/>
Kristi Longston <input type="checkbox"/>	Dan Nord <input type="checkbox"/>	Stacy Smith <input type="checkbox"/>	Garret V <input type="checkbox"/>

MESSAGE

INITIATE DROP

4. (Optional) Add a message to explain why you need to drop this shift.
5. Click **Initiate Drop**.

That's it! Your request has been sent to your supervisor for approval.

- The request status will be **Pending Approval** until your manager approves.
- Once your request is visible to your coworkers, the status changes to **Pending Acceptance** until someone accepts the request.
- If a coworker accepts your drop request, the status changes to **Accepted**, and the shift is no longer your responsibility.

### Finding Your Replacement

Once you have submitted a drop shift request, you have two options to get in touch with potential replacements:

1. Contact them via When I Work in the **Messaging** function.
2. Contact other OEs and interns personally via phone call, text or e-mail using the current list of [Team Contacts](#) (ask your supervisor for a copy of this list if this link is not working).

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3. Replacements can view **Requests** in their app and can pick it up by selecting **Take Shift**. It will then be added to their schedule and is no longer your responsibility.

### Notifications on When I Work

Changing your alert preferences:

1. Go to the My Profile page.
2. Set your alert preferences by checking the box next to Email or Mobile next to an alert category. Educators are required to turn on Schedule Updates and Shift Reminders as mobile alerts.

3. Recommended mobile alerts:

- Time off requests – sent when a manager makes a decision about your time off request

- Swap/Drop requests – sent when a coworker sends you a shift via a swap or drop request

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## Chapter 5: On An Outing

### Media/Public Relations Contact

- If contacted by an external source, no employee, other than the Executive Director or their designee, is or may be a spokesperson for Venture Outdoors;
- Refer all calls from the press to the Venture Outdoors Office;
- In the case of emergency, refer any press requests to the Venture Outdoors office.

### Denial of Participation

Deny a person to participate for the following reasons:

- Intoxication
- Age requirement not met – unaccompanied minor without parental consent.
- Not prepared (e.g. wrong type of shoes, no winter jacket, etc.)
- Behavior - During youth outings, you may have to deny a student participation. In this event, attempt to contact a nearby chaperone and have that adult stay with that student while you continue to lead the trip.

### **How to tell the participant:**

If you are considering a person for denial, take that person aside from their group and try to establish as much background information as possible. For example, if they seem intoxicated, ask them if they were drinking alcohol earlier in the day and if so how much.

- A gentle, rational, and kind approach is preferable to a more aggressive approach.
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes.
- Often times fairness and justice can go a long way.

*When the participant doesn't agree:*

If your decision is not accepted by this individual, try having another educator speak privately with the person.

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If the involved person still refuses to accept your decision, remember you cannot remove anyone from property open to the public.

**Notify Office Staff** - It is important that you advise the office staff of the situation as soon as possible. Your decision will be supported by the organization.

### Information Sharing

In order for participants to have any last minute questions answered (e.g. Is the outing cancelled?, How do I get to the meeting location?), we provide participants, partners, and chaperones with your cell phone number.

In addition, you may be CC'd on an e-mail communication with the client allowing your e-mail to be passed along to participants as well.

Monitor both your cell phone and email before an outing.

### Outing Cancellations (Weather Related)

We are an outdoor recreational organization, so there will be times when outings are either canceled or delayed due to weather-related issues. The most common weather-related cancellations are outlined below:

- 1) Water Flow levels: Kayaking outings should be cancelled when the river flow is **greater than 30,000 CFS (cubic feet per second)**. To check the water flow rates, visit the [National Weather Service data page for the Allegheny River at Sharpsburg Dam & Lock](#), and click on the graph to see the current and forecasted data. If you are a leader or an assistant on a kayaking outing, this should be closely monitored before your outing.
- 2) Combined air and water temperature: If the combined air and water temperature is **below 120 degrees**, boats should not go out. You can check [weather.com for air temperature data](#); you can view the USGS database for the [Allegheny River water temperature](#).
- 3) Thunder/lightening: Kayakers should not go out until after 30 minutes has passed from the last lightning bolt or last thunder clap. If you are already out on a trip and hear thunder in the distance, determine whether you can safely make it back to the starting point and do so if possible. If you are caught in a heavy storm, pull the group over and find shelter to wait it out.

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If you have weather related concerns, contact the office before making any decision alone unless it is clear that your participants do not WANT to participate. Ask them.

For public programs, it is generally the decision of the leadership team, with input from the on-call office staff.

For custom programs, have a discussion with the on-call office staff about whether or not to cancel an outing.

### Equipment Care

Treat Venture Outdoors-owned equipment as if it were your own. Return the equipment in the same if not better condition than you found it.

If you witness someone mistreating Venture Outdoors-owned equipment, prevent further mistreatment and take actions to prevent it from happening again.

If damage occurs, it is your responsibility to report damages on the [Broken Equipment Form](#) and/or let the Equipment and Facilities Manager know. Items should be marked with orange flagging tape with a description of what is broken and what date it occurred or was noticed. This orange flagging tape can be found in storage and at both Kayak Pittsburgh locations.

### First Aid Kits

You should have and carry a first aid kit with you on every outing. If you do not have your own First Aid Kit, we will be able to provide one to you to use for the duration of your employment with us (this kit is property of Venture Outdoors and will need to be returned to Venture Outdoors when your employment ends). Before the outing, double check your first aid kit for preparedness and ease of accessibility. If you are running low on a specific item, replace it or put in a [Storage Room Supplies Order Form](#) for more to become available.

*Note: you do not need to buy your own first aid kit. Kits are available to sign in/out storage. At the end of your time as an OE, you will need to return the First Aid Kit back to storage and sign it back in.*

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## Chapter 6: “How to...”

### Punch In and Out

1. Log into your ADP mobile app.
2. From the Clock view, tap “Clock in”.
3. When you are finished with your shift, you log back into the app and select “Clock out”.
4. To see examples and more information, [click here](#).

### **Key Notes:**

- DO stay clocked in if you have two hours or less between tasks/programs, as outlined in the [Gap Time policy](#) above;
- DO stay clocked in/clock in for the time it takes you to fill out the final trip report;
- DO clock in for the time it takes you to plan and prepare for outings, and to pick up or drop off materials from the office and/or storage;
- DO NOT include travel time to or from a location, with some exceptions. Only include travel time if:
  - It is within your two-hour gap time from one program/project to another.
  - You are coming to the office first to get materials and/or meet another staff member to carpool.
- DO NOT work more than 40 hours in a Saturday-Friday work week (unless approved by your supervisor to do so). You can view the current number of hours you have worked within the mobile app.

### Approving Your Timecards

Before we run payroll, you will need to first review and approve your timecard. Since our payroll runs on different days, there is no one consistent day of the week/month in which approval must happen – it can vary. Your supervisor will send an alert reminder via the When I Work chat feature and may also send an email and text to remind you to approve your timecard.

To approve your timecard, log into your ADP mobile app, select “My Timecard” and select “Approve Timesheet” after you have reviewed that your hours for the current pay period are accurate. To see examples, [click here](#).

### Report A Missed Punch



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There is no option in ADP to report a missed punch if you forget to clock in or out. Please email your supervisor ([lo@ventureoutdoors.org](mailto:lo@ventureoutdoors.org)) and let them know about the missed punch. Include the date, time of the missed punch was and what shift you were working.

### Complete a Final Trip Report

After the completion of your outing, it is part of your responsibility as the outing leader to complete a final trip report online within 2 business days of the trip. This online trip report is vital for office reporting of programs (paper copy also available in the OE cube if needed).

Use the following for your outings (when in doubt, follow the instructions and links provided at the bottom of your Trip Leader Update email):

[2021 Custom Program Report](#)

[2021 Community Program Final Trip Report](#)

[2020-2021 YORP/Leadership Final Trip Report](#)

### Complete an Incident Report

An incident during a Venture Outdoors outing can be defined as an event or occurrence which had the potential to cause harm or did cause harm to someone (e.g. a participant was bitten by a dog while on a hike, a participant ran into a pedestrian while biking, etc.).

**Please note:** Incident reports can be completed for “near miss” situations, in which no one was hurt, but the situation put someone at risk of getting hurt (e.g. a participant unzipped their life jacket while kayaking, a participant tripped and fell but did not get hurt, etc.).

[Incident Reports](#) should be submitted online. You can carry blank copies of incident reports with you so you can write an incident down while it is fresh in your mind, but the final version should be submitted online. This must be completed **within 24 hours** to ensure necessary staff follow up.

## Complete a Roster (Youth Programs)

When you are leading a YORP or other grant-funded program, you will need to keep attendance in order to fill out a roster in a timely manner. Along with your online report, you are required to complete the roster within 2 business days of the trip. This is especially important for grant-funded programs so that we can submit attendance to funders and receive the funding needed to continue these programs.

All rosters live in Sharepoint, and a link to the corresponding folder will be sent to you in your Trip Leader Update email prior to your trip. Create a column in the excel sheet with your name and date you led the trip, and place an X in the row of the students who were present that day. If you have any questions about keeping attendance, ask your supervisor.

Excel Online | Venture Outdoors Team Site > Rosters Roster - Allegheny Traditional Academy Leadership Course - Saved

File Home Insert Data Review View Tell me what you want to do Open in Excel

Undo Paste Copy Format Painter Font Alignment Number Tables Cells AutoSum

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	<b>Allegheny Traditional Academy</b>			Claire	Claire	Claire	Joanna	Beth	Joanna	Joanna	Joanna	Joanna
2		<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	11/13/2018	11/20/2018	11/27/2018	12/4/2018	12/11/2018	12/18/2018	1/8/2019	1/15/2019	1/22/2019
3	1	Burgess	Antuon	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	2	Floyd	Aliyah	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	3	Harvey	Lundyn	x		x		x	x	x	x	x
6	5	Marshall	Markell	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	6	Perez	Asiya	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
8	7	Rivera	Norma	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
9	8	Starkey	Brianna	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10	9	Thompson	Ayrionna	x								
11	10	Tippett	Julian	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
12	11	Turner	Chersh	x								
13	12	White	D'Asia	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
14	13	Woods	Shereese	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
15	14		Gary		x	x	x					
16	15	Starkey	Deon		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

1st 9 Weeks 2nd 9 Weeks 3rd 9 Weeks 4th 9 Weeks

## Upload/Download GPS Data

### **GARMIN GPS - Uploading Waypoints from Basecamp**

- 1) Turn on your GARMIN GPS of choice.

- 2) You may need to confirm that you would like to continue without Satellite Connection.
- 3) Go to Menu → Waypoint Manager
- 4) Press Menu button once.
- 5) Toggle to "Delete All" and confirm.
- 6) Open Basecamp on the OE laptop. DO NOT ALLOW UPDATES. Some of our GPSs won't work with the updated system.
- 7) Plug the GPS into the mini USB attached to the OE laptop and wait until it loads data 100%. It will then show up under My Device.
- 8) You may see your desired waypoint file in the My Collection list. If so, click and drag into "My Device" and continue with Step 14. If you do not see your desired waypoint list, continue with Step 9.
- 9) Open SharePoint.
- 10) Go to Custom Programs -> Activities -> Geocaching -> Courses
- 11) Select what course you are interested in and download the .gpx file
- 12) Once downloaded, go to Basecamp, under "File" Select "Import Into". The File box will open, and click on the .gpx file you downloaded. It will now appear in the "My Collection" in the sidebar.
- 13) From "My Collection" in the sidebar, click and drag the waypoint file onto your device (i.e. eTrex 10).
- 14) A loading bar and a green checkmark will confirm your upload is complete. Sometimes it is very quick, other times it is very slow.
- 15) Some devices you can right click to eject first, others you can just unplug if ejecting isn't an option.
- 16) Double check that the waypoints are correctly uploaded by going through the "Menu" and "Where To" screens on your GPS.

### Upload Photos onto Flickr

You may take photos while leading/assisting on trips. **You can only take photos of participants that you have a completed waiver for.** To access the Venture Outdoors Flickr site to upload your trip photos, visit <https://www.flickr.com/> and use:

Username: [marketing@ventureoutdoors.org](mailto:marketing@ventureoutdoors.org)

Password: G3t0outdoors33! (contact supervisor if password is incorrect)

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Please edit the photos you take and select 5-15 of the best photos per trip. You should organize your uploads into an "album" and name the album the same as your trip. Preview [Venture Outdoors Albums](#) to see how it's done.

- 1) Once you've selected the photos to upload ("before clicking the final upload button"), be sure to change the Owner Settings from "Only Visible to You (Private)" to "Visible to Everyone (Public)".
- 2) Then, select an ALBUM for the photos.
- 3) On the left side of the page, select "Add to albums".
- 4) Click "Create a new album" if you are the first person to add photos from an outing or select an existing album to add photos to. Please include "Taken by \_(your name)\_" underneath the Album title for photo credit. Finally, click "Upload photos" in the upper right-hand corner.

We may highlight your photos on our web site, blog, Facebook and Twitter pages and in the Trailhead newsletter. The photos you upload should represent the BEST of the BEST aspects of your trip and depict happy, engaged participants! Please be respectful of anyone who might not want to have their photos posted online.

Trip photos are always available for public viewing on the [Venture Outdoors Flickr site](#).

### Use the SharePoint Site

On the SharePoint Site, you will find access to several resources and historical data, such as past trip reports and routes, on this site. Many of the links that we share with you will take you directly to our SharePoint site. If you have any questions or suggestions along the way, please contact your supervisor.

### **Signing In**

1. Visit <https://ventureoutdoors.sharepoint.com> (bookmark this page for future access!)
2. Use your assigned Username and Password to log in.
3. Enter your cell phone number and a back-up email address for authentication codes.
4. You are in!

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## Chapter 7: Programs Overview

### Community Programs

Our community programs are those published in the Trailhead newsletter and posted to the [Activities Calendar](#) on the Venture Outdoors website (e.g. Urban Fitness Hikes, Wine Tasting Hikes, etc.). Anyone can sign up for these outings online or by calling the Venture Outdoors Office.

### Custom Programs

Our custom programs consist of a variety of outdoor recreation activities designed for group experiences. Activities include: kayaking, hiking, biking, geocaching, fishing, environmental education, and more. Groups include: summer camps, Mom's groups, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and schools. College outings are partially grant funded but included under the Custom umbrella. Generally, these outings are conducted in the same manner as public programs with the exception of special requests.

### Grant Funded Programs

Our grant funded programs aim to serve populations that may not have the means to participate in the outdoor recreational activities that we offer to the general public. These programs are still considered "custom", since we have customized the experience for the particular group. Grant funded programs generally involve survey and attendance tracking, which will then be used in reporting to the foundation/entity that graciously offered to fund the program.

Examples of some of our current grant funded programs are:

- Youth Outdoor Recreation Program (YORP): This program targets low-income and minority youth living in the city of Pittsburgh. Outdoor Educators meet with students twice a month throughout the school year (September - June) to offer outdoor recreational activities in their own neighborhood. The partners are already established after-school providers or schools; the age ranges from K-6th grade. YORP outings are typically 1.5-2 hours long, with group sizes of up to 30 youth.
- Junior Jo (Jr. Jo): This program is a continuation of the school-year YORP program (above). Outdoor Educators meet weekly during the summertime with inner-city youth who are already attending community summer camps

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or schools. Jr. Jo outings are typically longer than YORP outings, lasting 2-3 hours, with groups sizes of up to 30 youth in grades K-8. In special cases, students are transported (either by the partner or by Venture Outdoors) to various locations throughout the city, to expose them to new neighborhoods and provide them with an opportunity to kayak, bike, hike, and explore elsewhere.

- College and Young Adult (ages 18-24) Outings: This program aims to provide free outings to college students at a reduced cost to their universities. The goal of creating opportunities for college students to access outdoor recreation is to encourage them to explore the outdoor amenities that Pittsburgh has to offer, in hopes of them deciding to continue living here long after they graduate and enhancing their education of conservation stewardship. Examples of outings in this program include downhill skiing, caving, whitewater rafting, hiking, flatwater kayaking, and more.

### Standard Programs

Venture Outdoors offers a variety of programs for participants to engage in. Below are the descriptions of our general offerings provided to prospective participants:

**Kayaking:** With a double-bladed paddle, participants can glide across the water with us in one of our yellow kayaks! This water sport offers exercise and relaxation.

**Biking:** We provide participants bicycles for this awesome form of recreation! We give a great tour of the city and its riverfronts or explore a near-by trail or park.

**Hiking:** Participants will walk for a short or long distance, in the woods or through a neighborhood! This allows participants to rediscover the green areas of Pittsburgh or explore a part of town they've never been to before!

**Geocaching:** Participants will use our pre-programmed GPS to find hidden prizes and facts/clues. A very awesome way to get outside!

**Fishing:** Participants will attempt to catch some big (and small) fish. We use worms or minnows as bait and participants are invited to bring lures along as well!

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## Chapter 8: Working with Youth

### Social Contract

Start off any program (beginning of the summer, beginning of the school year) by creating a social contract with your students. Ask the following questions:

- How do you want to be treated by me, the teacher?
- How do you want to be treated by other students?
- How do you think I, the teacher, would like to be treated by you?
- When there is a problem, how should we handle it?

Ask each student to add their signature to the paper on which the contract is written and bring it with you to each program session to remind students. Staying consistent will help establish you as the authority in the classroom, but one who equally considers how students want to be treated and how they are treating you.

### Positive Narration

Positive narration is a common classroom tool used by teachers, which can be helpful when you are explaining directions or observing the students' behavior. The idea behind positive narration is that the leader is able to reinforce their directions in a constructive way, drawing attention to the desired behavior, as opposed to misbehavior. When using positive narration, you want to name the specific behavior you want to see, with as much detail as possible. You want to call out desired behavior in *at least three students* before correcting one student's' misbehavior. For example:

- "I see Amiyah has her helmet strapped on tightly; I also see Amir has his helmet strapped on tightly; and I see Poppy has her helmet strapped on tightly. Chase, please buckle your helmet to strap it on tightly now." Note that *three desired behaviors were called out* before one misbehavior was called out.

### Modeling

Although it is important for students to learn new things all on their own, modeling is so important for helping youth understand what you want them to do. Whether you are leading students on a kayak paddle, craft lesson, or environmental project, you should model for the students how you want them to act. Examples of modeling for youth on our outings include:

- Information from [paddle](#) and [bike talks](#); actively SHOWING the students how they should paddle, how to brake, etc.;
- How to complete a journal entry: “thinking aloud” as you are “writing” your journal entry, by showing them an example of how to write their entry.

## Student Recognition

If there is an opportunity to recognize and praise the students for good behavior, please take it! This does not mean you have to give the students stickers or prizes; below are a few ways you can acknowledge good work to help encourage positive behavior:

- Three clap on three: Tell students someone has earned a “three clap on three” recognition. Have all the students “warm up” their hands by rubbing them together; on the count of three, the entire group will clap three times. You can make this even more special by showing them the *soul clap* (on the count of three, the entire group will clap nine times).

## Call and Response

When working with youth, having fun “call and response” tools can be helpful in getting their attention. Examples of “[call and response](#)” attention getters include:

- Clap or snap in patterns and have the youth repeat it back (using familiar songs or beats is best; for example “We will, we will... Rock You!”)
- “If you can hear the sound of my voice, clap once... If you can hear the sound of my voice, put your hands on your head...”
- Reinforce character education: have students finish a motto or quote, such as “Work Hard...Be Nice!” (or you can make it fun, such as “Holy Moly...Guacamole!”)
- Reinforce Leave No Trace: have youth finish pieces of the LNT principles, such as “Know Before... You Go!”

## Turn and Talk

Kids love to talk, and the more you can engage them in the activity by having them talk about it, the more meaningful the experience will be. As an OE, you will be talking quite a bit about the directions and expectations for the outing. While giving directions, however, you can encourage the students to “turn and talk” to each other about the directions, rules, what they’re hopeful for, and so on. It is important to *be very clear* when telling youth to “turn and talk”: Explain you will



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give them 30 seconds to “turn to a partner and tell them one thing you are excited to do on today’s activity.”

### Restorative Practices

In 2018, Pittsburgh Public Schools began training its teachers on Restorative Practices, which encourages using daily "circles" to check in with students using questions to learn more about them and gauge their feelings about the day's activities. This also proactively builds trust and helps to sets expectations of respect and healthy sharing of emotions.

Restorative practices (circles and/or restorative questions) should take priority in classroom management before implementing teacher-mandated punishments. In restorative practices, you help students decide how to make things right when responding to bad behavior. Of course, if they cannot or will not participate constructively, established punishment is appropriate. The most important thing is creating a consequence process that is the same for all offenses so students know what to expect, and separating the bad behavior from the person so that she is not a class outcast.

A great use of basic Restorative Practices is doing an icebreaker-question circle at the start of every program. When there is conflict, do not blame or ask “why” a student did a certain behavior. Instead, ask “what happened?” and let both the offender and offended have a turn to talk.

“Restorative question” cards can be found in the OE cube. 2-day-long trainings on Restorative Practices are offered by PPS many times throughout the year. Talk to your supervisor if you’re interested in registering.

### Trauma-Informed Care

*What is trauma-informed care?* Trauma-informed care is a framework or approach for interacting with others to respond to undiagnosed and overlooked trauma in our world.

### **SIX QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN A CHILD IS HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME**

When a child is not listening, exhibiting aggressive behaviors, etc., there are six questions to ask based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and potential follow-ups. The questions are designed to be asked in order to get a sense of what needs are

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not being met in that moment and help them fulfill the need. They are not to be asked in a crisis.

### **1. When did you last eat?**

**Suggestion:** Provide a snack

### **2. How much sleep did you have last night?**

**Suggestion:** Allow for a brief nap or rest

### **3. Do you feel safe right now – physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially?**

**Suggestion:** If the response is “no,” ask, “what is making you feel unsafe?” and address what is in your control as the program staff. If it is something outside your program making them feel unsafe, ensure them they are safe with you (only communicate this if you can absolutely guarantee they are safe on every level in your space right now).

### **4. Who are your friends here or who do you play/hang out with?**

**Suggestion:** If they have friends in the space, ask, “what do you do with your friends?” If they do not have friends in your space, ask, “who are your friends outside of here and what do you do with them?” Introduce them to someone in your space they may share an interest with.

### **5. What is the last thing you did that you are proud of?**

**Suggestion:** Use this information especially as a reminder when they are frustrated with themselves. Give encouragement and promote self-esteem. If they are not able to think of anything, share your observations.

### **6. What do you love about yourself?**

**Suggestion:** Use this information to learn more about and make a connection with the child. If they are not able to think of anything, share your observations.

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Remember, behaviors are guided by the brain and are usually symptoms. When possible, address the underlying cause first (or at least acknowledge there is one) before administering consequences for the behavior.

Source: [ELIE Circle, LLC](#) (Debralyn Woodberry-Shaw, MSW, LSW)

### Youth Mental Health First Aid

*All outdoor educators are encouraged to receive Youth Mental Health First Aid Training. Venture Outdoors offers these training sessions for educators about once a year. Visit [mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://mentalhealthfirstaid.org) for more information.*

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

### Inappropriate Displays of Affection

We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, empowering and promotes growth and success. We expect all staff working with youth to act in a professional and caring manner towards all youth. Youth staff will adhere to the standards as outlined below.

Inappropriate and unacceptable physical interactions include:

- Full frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling

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- Piggyback rides
  - Tickling
  - Allowing a youth to cling to an employee or volunteer's leg
  - Any type of massage given by or to a youth
  - Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff/volunteer
  - Compliments relating to physique or body development
  - Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

Staff will...

- Not stare at or comment on youths' bodies
- Not date or become romantically involved with youth
- Not use or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal, or mind-altering drugs in the presence of youth or while working
- Not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organizations' property or any partners' property
- Not have secrets with youth and will only give gifts with prior permission
- Not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth (see section on "Social Media" for more details)
- Be prohibited from working one-on-one with youth in a private setting. Staff should use common areas when working with individual youth.

Staff will not abuse youth in any way including, but not limited to:

- Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
- Verbal abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing
- Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
- Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
- Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter

Staff will complete Mandated Reporter Training prior to employment, so they are aware that if they suspect or witness any form of abuse, they are mandated to report it to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.

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## Chapter 9: Safety Guidelines and Policies

### Hot Weather Guidelines from PPS Schools

**Purpose:** The Pittsburgh Public School District supports the health of students by encouraging safe and responsible physical activity. The weather can impact a student's health during outdoor activities. These guidelines are to ensure protection of every child's health and wellness by using responsible decision making during all hot weather school sessions.

**Heat Stroke/Illness:** Heat illness may occur when the body's core temperature rises to dangerous levels because the body is unable to appropriately cool itself down. If the elevated body temperature is allowed to persist or worsen, thermal injury may occur resulting in heat stroke and possible death.

**Risk Factors:** Please make note of the following important factors regarding a child's ability to tolerate heat and physical activity:

- Children do not adapt to extremes of temperature during exercise as effectively as adults because of increased transfer of heat from the environment, increased production of metabolic heat per mass, and decreased sweating capacity compared with adults. (Pediatrics 2000)
- Dehydration can occur more easily in children due to their inability to realize that they need to drink more, and enough, to replenish fluid loss during physical activity. A child's core body temperature escalates more quickly in response to heat stress.
- Humidity impacts the body's ability to dissipate heat and is a major component of heat stress. Humidity is often more important than the air temperature.
- The 'heat index' is the combination of heat and humidity. It is the "feels like" temperature. The heat index is very important when assessing the risk of heat illness based on relative humidity and temperature. It should be noted that the following heat index chart does not measure radiant energy from the sun so on sunny days, the heat index may be even higher than is indicated on the chart. (Pediatrics in Review 2007)

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## **Strategies for preventing Heat Illness:**

**Hydration:** Drinking plenty of fluids is very important during any physical activity, but especially so during warm weather. Supervisory staff need to be sure that students drink plenty of fluids before starting any exercise and continue to drink during exercise.

- Children should drink before going outside, and should have 'water breaks' approximately every 20 minutes while exercising even if they don't feel thirsty. Slow down and make time for this!
- A 90 lb. child should drink 4-6 ounces every 15-20 minutes.
- Adolescents that are exercising should drink approximately 8-10 ounces every 20 minutes to replace sweat.
- Younger children may drink more if offered flavored beverages.

## **Heat dissipation:**

- Encourage youth to wear light colored loose clothing to reduce radiant heat absorption and increase sweat evaporation.
- Waterproof garments should not be worn during physical activity.
- Students who are overweight are less able to dissipate excess body heat and are at increased risk for heat related injury. Special care should be taken to ensure they are well hydrated and not forced to perform strenuous exercise in the heat. Monitor this closely!
- Students with medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, cystic fibrosis, and kidney disease should also be watched to ensure adequate hydration and rest.
- Larger athletes (such as football players) are at special risk. These athletes should slowly work up to full practices in the heat and have enforced hydration breaks. (HealthyChildren.org)

**Careful Monitoring:** Supervisory staff must monitor students carefully for evidence of heat-related illness. The presence of excessive fatigue, difficulty breathing, confusion and/or muscle cramps may indicate the onset of heat illness.

- Heat cramps are painful contractions of the muscles (usually leg muscles). Treatment is to stop exercise, drink water, and massage the muscles.

- Heat exhaustion may include symptoms such as high temperature (up to 104°F), sweating, weakness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and headache. Treatment is cooling with removal from the sun, use of ice bags, fans, air-conditioning and giving fluids. If the student's symptoms don't resolve quickly, 911 should be called and the student transported to the closest Emergency Room. Immediately contact parent/guardian.

- Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency! A person's skin may appear reddish, very hot and often dry, no sweating, temperature >104°, dizziness, severe headache, confusion, seizures or coma. Paramedics should be called for immediate transport to the closest Emergency Department. The student should be removed from the hot environment and cooling begun with iced or cold water applied to the skin, use of a fan or air conditioner, and protection if seizures should occur. Never give anything to drink because of the risk for aspiration. (HealthyChildren.org)

**Heat Index:** This is the "feels like" temperature. A listing by zip code can be found at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com). This can be checked prior to outside activities.

Limit activities according to the table below.

Heat Index "feels like" temperature	Example of temp & humidity	Category	Activity Limitations
<80°F	<80°F and any humidity		No limitations; monitor all youth during physical activity and take "rest breaks."
80-89°F	84°F 65% humidity	Caution	75% vigorous activity/25% light activity or rest. Encourage hydration, monitor all youth closely and take "rest breaks." Move activities indoors with escalating humidity.





100	109	114	118	124	129	136							
98	105	109	113	117	123	128	134						
96	101	104	108	112	116	121	126	132					
94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
92	94	96	99	101	105	108	112	116	121	126	131		
90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	132
88	88	89	91	93	95	98	100	103	106	110	113	117	121
86	85	87	88	89	91	93	95	97	100	102	105	108	112
84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
82	81	82	83	84	84	85	86	88	89	90	91	93	95
80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87

*Revised 7/2010*

*References:*

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness (2000) Climatic Heat Stress and the Exercising Child and Adolescent. Pediatrics, 106, 158-160.
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Heat Illness and Heat Stroke, Pediatrics in Review Vol.28 No.7 July 2007
- Coris EE, Ramirez AM, VanDurme DJ. Heat illness in athletes: the dangerous combination of heat, humidity and exercise. Sports Med. 2004;34:9-16
- American Academy of Pediatrics, HealthyChildren.org-Exertional Heat-Related Illness, [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org), updated 6/9/2010
- Kyrene School District, Heat Index Guidelines and Procedures, 2005

### Cold Weather Guidelines

Here at Venture Outdoors, we love getting kids outside – all year round. Below is background information and guidelines on taking kids outdoors in the cold. Note that these guidelines are flexible, changing and may vary across sites, groups and

situations. If you have any questions after reviewing this information, please consult your supervisor.

According to the Department of Education, there isn't a national standard for keeping kids indoors for school recess or play time. Consequently, site principals and site directors often make this decision based on local situations.

In PA, the PA Position Statements "expect outdoor play to occur during colder weather when the temperature/wind chill is above 25 degrees and there is no current air quality alert. Although this guidance is a good baseline when considering outdoor play, it can sometimes be appropriate and beneficial to take children outdoors when temperatures fall below 25 degrees and/or even when there is snow falling!"

### **Why do we still go outside in the cold?**

1. Kids have a chance to see the outdoors in a new lens
2. Increase in exercise and using different muscles
3. Vitamin D exposure
4. Breathing fresh air and avoiding germs that linger inside
5. Presents opportunities for new challenges and problem solving

### **Trip Leader to-dos for cold weather:**

#### *Before the trip*

1. If you have parent contact information for this group, reach out to them ahead of time to let them know you plan on taking the kids outside and to help them dress appropriately.
2. Using a weather app, check the temperature, weather, wind chill, and "feels like" temperature for the time of the trip
3. Grab extra cold weather gear from storage, including hats, gloves, scarves, jackets, sweatshirts, ponchos, and rain jackets
4. Prepare a back-up indoor lesson if needed (i.e., if wind chill factor is below 25 degrees)
5. Consult your supervisor if you have any questions or concerns

#### *During the trip*

6. Check in with the site principal or director upon arrival to ask if they have a policy regarding cold weather
7. Have kids warm up with jumping jacks, star jumps, etc. inside before heading outside
8. Decrease the length of time the group spends outside (i.e., 20-30 minutes instead of the full hour)
9. Continuously monitor the kids and check in with each one to ensure they are not exhibiting any cold-related symptoms (see below for more details)

#### *After the trip*

10. Check in with each kid when you bring them back inside to make sure they are not exhibiting any cold-related symptoms

### Protect again cold weather

Below is an overview of how to dress properly to protect yourself and the kids against the cold. Venture Outdoors has gloves, scarves, hats, sweatshirts, jackets, and boots in storage. Please come prepared to youth trips with extra gear in case you need to provide additional layers to the kids you work with. Return the gear back to storage for the next leader to use.

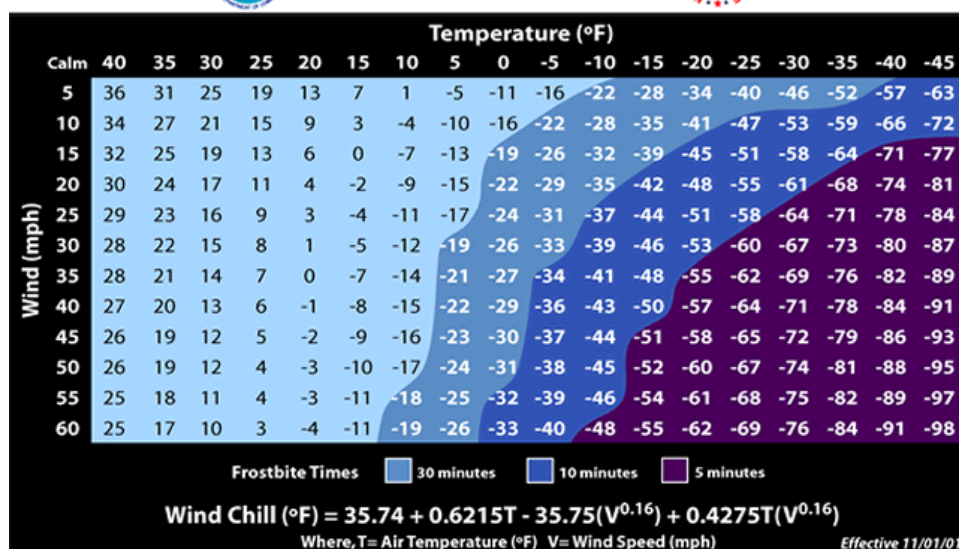


### National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart

This chart identifies the risks of winter winds and freezing temperatures. It is a reminder to always check the "Wind Speed" and the "Feels Like" measures on your weather app before heading outside with your group of children.



## Wind Chill Chart

### How to tell when a child is too cold and at risk for hypothermia

- Shivering
- Unusually clumsy play
- Stiff and jerky limb movements
- Bluish cold extremities
- Drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Confusion
- Skin color looks white or gray
- Burning sensation in fingers and toes
- Frostbite

### What to do if you suspect frostbite

- If you expect frostbite:
  - Call 911 immediately
  - Wrap the child in a warm blanket
  - Give the child something warm to drink

### Resources and Further Research

1. <https://peacefulplaygrounds.com/school-recess-when-is-it-too-cold-to-go-out-to-recess/>
2. [https://www.fix.com/blog/keep-kids-playing-outdoors-in-winter/?utm\\_source=newsletter1&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=drip\\_b&utm\\_content=email24](https://www.fix.com/blog/keep-kids-playing-outdoors-in-winter/?utm_source=newsletter1&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=drip_b&utm_content=email24)
3. <https://www.weather.gov/safety/cold-wind-chill-chart>
4. <http://programqualityassessmentinpa.com/providing-outdoor-play-experiences-during-winter-weather/>

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5. Page 10: [http://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ECERS-R\\_PA\\_Position\\_Statements\\_2016-17.pdf](http://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ECERS-R_PA_Position_Statements_2016-17.pdf)

## Head Injury/Concussion

### **What is a concussion?**

Other terms for a concussion include “head injury” and “mild traumatic brain injury.” A concussion usually is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. In most cases, children hit their heads without getting a concussion. That is because the brain is protected by the skull which is a very hard covering made of bone that works like a helmet. But if the head is hit hard enough, the brain can be shaken around inside the skull causing a concussion. Common causes of a concussion are car or ATV crashes, falls from bikes and skateboards, and sports-related accidents – a lot of which are possible on Venture Outdoors trips!

### **What happens after a concussion?**

After a concussion, less than 10 percent of children lose consciousness or are “knocked out” for a short time. A child can have a concussion without losing consciousness. Most children don’t feel well for a while after a concussion but recover quickly. However, every child is different, and some take longer to get better than others. Common problems (symptoms) you may notice in your child after a concussion are listed below. It is important to remember that the symptoms are a normal part of recovery and usually go away on their own. If you notice any of these symptoms, you should advise parents to talk with their child’s doctor to find out whether any treatment is necessary. If any potential head injury occurs during a Venture Outdoors program, call home immediately to alert parents and ask for updates if there is a change in their child’s condition.

Symptoms to look out for:

### **Physical**

- One pupil being larger than the other
- Blood or fluid leaking from ears or nose
- Headaches
- Fatigue, seeming tired, trouble staying awake
- Trouble sleeping

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- Lack of energy, slow-moving
  - Blurry or double vision
  - Sensitivity to noise or light
  - Dizziness, feeling lightheaded
  - Nausea

### **Thinking (Cognitive)**

- Not remembering how the concussion happened
- Becoming easily confused
- Slowness in thinking, seeming “foggy” or “zoned out”
- Difficulty paying attention
- Forgetfulness, memory problems
- More difficulty at school than normal

### **Emotional and Behavioral**

- Becoming easily annoyed or angry, seeming cranky and irritable
- Feeling worried or nervous
- Seeming emotional, crying more easily than normal
- Not seeming like himself/herself, personality changes

Call for help right away if you notice the student:

- Loses consciousness
- Is extremely sleepy or drowsy and can't be awakened
- Vomits repeatedly
- Gets a headache that worsens, lasts for a long time, or is severe
- Has weakness, numbness, trouble walking, or decreased coordination
- Has difficulty remembering familiar people
- Is very confused
- Has trouble talking or slurred speech
- Has a seizure
- Cries nonstop and cannot be comforted
- Has any other sudden or unusual change in thinking or behavior

### **Fire Plan**

When a fire emergency begins:

1. **Ensure safety of all staff and all youth.**

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- All staff and youth will be instructed to meet at the designated meeting location.
  - Once at the meeting location, staff will take attendance to ensure everyone, staff and youth, is accounted for.
- 2. React to the fire.**
- If it is small enough, use the fire extinguisher.
  - Pull fire alarm. In most cases, the fire alarm automatically triggers the local fire department to arrive.
  - If needed, dial 911. Be ready to report the following.
    - Location of fire
    - Size of fire
    - Cause of fire
    - Growth of fire
    - Location of other humans
    - Any medical emergencies
    - Call back phone number
  - Maintain safety of children.
- 3. Inform all parties.**
- Contact your supervisor.
  - Contact the site/location staff to let them know.

## Weather Emergency Plan

When a weather emergency arises:

1. **Staff will gather and count participants and relocate to a safe space,** dependent on the weather emergency.
  - a. Maintain constant communication with your supervisor.
2. Create a plan of action if necessary.

Examples of Weather Emergencies:

1. Thunder or lightning storms:
  - Seek shelter immediately. If on the water, get off water immediately.
  - Stay away from windows, water sources, and avoid touching large metal objects.
2. Flash floods:
  - Make your way to Shelter immediately.

## Intruder Plan

An intruder is someone who disrupts the program and puts the wellbeing of staff and/or participants at risk. Intruders can range from individuals who have become

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lost and ended up in the programming area to individuals with malicious intentions. When an intruder is disrupting programming:

1. Account for all participants and staff.
2. Move to a safe location away from the intruder.
3. React to the intruder.
  - a. Approach the individual, only if you feel comfortable, asking why they are in the area.
  - b. If the intruder is aggressive or argumentative, contact local authorities. If the situation allows, maintain safe distance from the intruder and keep them in eyesight.
  - c. If the intruder has an intent to harm, call/text 911 immediately. React to the best of your ability.
4. Contact your supervisor to inform them of the situation.

### Active Shooter Plan

To be prepared for an active shooter, it is important that you take note of the following every day you arrive at a site or location:

1. Locate all the possible exits, including exits on different floors that may require use of stairwells
2. Identify locations that can be useful for hiding, such as classrooms with deadbolt locks, closets, etc.
3. Consider the type of building material that is used: a bullet can easily go through drywall, but not brick. If hiding, it's important to stay low to the ground for this reason.

When an active shooter becomes present:

1. **React to the shooter.** You have three options: Run, Hide, or Fight. Every situation is unique; depending on the situation, one option may be better than the other. Quickly evaluate
  - a. Campers and staff will run into the woods and spread out. If you have to stop running, find a hiding place.
  - b. Hide in the building, blocking all entrances. When hiding, lock the door or use objects to block the door. Silence your cell phone. Turn off the lights. Cover the windows or close the blinds. Stay low to the ground.
  - c. If no other options are available, you may choose to fight as a last resort.
2. **Call or text 911.** To the best of your ability, provide the following information:



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- a. Where the shooter was last seen, where they came from, and where they were heading.
  - b. What they were wearing
  - c. Any other behaviors, such as yelling, gestures, etc.
  - d. Where you are and where your campers are.
  - e. A note about texting 911: 911 can only respond via text if you reply back to them.

**3. If appropriate, call your supervisor.**

References:

- [ACA Camps Reference - Active Shooter](#)
- [Dept of Homeland Security - Active Shooter](#)

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## Chapter 10: Youth Overnight Camping Trip Policies

### Sleeping Arrangements

- Campers will stay in accommodations with other campers of the same gender and similar age band (i.e., ages 9-11 and 12-14).
- It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the same area as campers. Adults should be close enough to supervise if necessary.
- If an adult does sleep in the same sleeping area as campers, this adult will be of the same gender. There should be at least two adults, one of which is unrelated to any campers.
- If in a large room, adults should sleep away from campers.

### Adult Supervision

- Both Venture Outdoors staffs and chaperones are expected to maintain ratios for adequate child supervision.
- At least 1 staff and 1 chaperone should be present with the group of children at all times. Ratio expectations are outlined below.

### Camper Expectations

- Campers and a guardian will sign the contract prior to the overnight trip. This contract should be provided in a packet to parents including other important documents such as the Assumption of Risk form, Medical History form, and packing list.
  - See [camper contract](#) for more details
- **Consequences:** the consequences may be slightly adjusted based on partner/chaperone input and the system of consequences that the partner site follows, but a general outline is listed: below. If a camper has difficulty following the behavior expectations, Venture Outdoors staffs will:
  - 1) Remind the camper of the expected behavior
  - 2) Review the Camper Contract above
  - 3) Discuss ways staff and chaperones can support the camper in making the necessary improvements.

- If a pattern of inappropriate behavior continues, the Venture Outdoors staffs will work with the camper to set specific, appropriate behavior goals and outline consequences for continued inappropriate behavior. Wildwood staff may contact parents/guardians for suggestions to help improve behavior.
- Continued inappropriate behavior or severely inappropriate behavior (such as physical or emotional violence, bullying, or possession of prohibited items) will result in immediate dismissal from the overnight. The parent/guardian is responsible for picking up a dismissed camper immediately.
- We ask both the camper and the parent/guardian to sign the Behavior Agreement section in the camp forms to confirm that you have read this document together and acknowledge and accept the responsibility to meet these behavior expectations.

### **Camper Orientation**

- Campers will be informed of the **Buddy System**.
  - While group bathroom and drink breaks should be strategically planned out, there may be instances in which a camper needs to leave the group (ie, go to the bathroom, they forgot something, etc.). Campers will be instructed to always ask staff when needing to leave the group. Campers will be instructed to go directly to their destination and immediately return. Upon return, campers will be instructed to inform staff.
  - Campers will always practice the buddy system to ensure that if an emergency were to happen while two campers were away, one can inform the staff.
- Campers will be informed of a designated meeting location at the site in the case of an emergency. This meeting location should be reviewed every morning and afternoon with the campers.
- Campers will be informed of the code word, "Gingko".
- Outdoor Educators will help campers arrive at this location safely.
- Campers will be informed of all exits of a building.
- Campers will be given an overview of all safety procedures.
- Campers will receive activity-specific safety talks before participation.
- Campers will sign a contract that states that they agree to follow these rules. The contract was signed at the time of paperwork completion.

### Chaperone Expectations

- Chaperone ratio for trip:

Age Group	# Youth	# Chaperones
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Ages 7-12	1 - 10	2
	11 - 17	3
Ages 13-17	1 - 10	2
	11 - 20	3
<i>*If the group has mixed ages, follow the ratio for the youngest age group</i>		

- Chaperones will be expected to stay awake until no noise is heard from youth for at least 15-30 minutes.
- Chaperone will help enforce camper contracts.
- Chaperone will help with behavioral challenges.
- Chaperone will help supervise campers and assist in activities.
- Chaperones should take two 30-minute breaks, working with the Venture Outdoors staff to adhere to ratios outlined above.
- Chaperones must have all campers' medical forms and assumption of risk forms completed prior to the start of the trip; give these materials to Venture Outdoors staff the morning of the trip. Alert Venture Outdoors staff of any medical issues or concerns.
- Chaperones take over full responsibility of the campers starting at 9pm until the morning routine begins (typically 8am). Venture Outdoors staffs will still be available to assist in the case of an emergency.

## Venture Outdoors Staff Expectations

### **Ratios**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b># Youth</b>	<b># Venture Outdoors Staff</b>
Ages 7-12	1 - 10	2
	11 - 16	3
Ages 13-17	1 - 10	2
	11 - 20	3

*\*If the group has mixed ages, follow the ratio for the youngest age group*

## Trip Preparation

- **Scouting:** At least one of the Venture Outdoors staffs will need to scout the area at least 1-2 weeks in advance of the overnight trip. If needed, the trip plan and emergency action plan for the site will need to be revised or edited.
- **Materials review:** All staff are expected to thoroughly review the trip plan, emergency action plan, and any corresponding documents for the trip at least 3-5 days prior, leaving time to ask questions to their supervisor.
- **Packing list:** If needed, a Venture Outdoors staff will develop a packing list for their group.
- **Meet with youth prior to the trip:** At least one Venture Outdoors staff should be meeting with the group of participants a few days prior to the start of the trip. They can hand out the medical information forms, packing lists, and answer any questions the kids might have.

## Work Time

- Prior to the trip, your supervisor will outline for you the hours in which you should be clocking in/out for work time for this overnight trip.
  - An example of work time might include:
    - Punch in at 9am on the first morning
    - Punch out at 9pm when it is considered "lights out"
    - Punch back in again in the morning (approx. 8am) when you start to get things ready for the kids/lessons to begin
- If you need to get up in the middle of the night due to an emergency, do not worry about punching in/out. Reach out to your supervisor after the trip, discuss the circumstances, and they can manually update your timecard to reflect hours worked.

## Breaks

- Staff should take two 30-minute breaks throughout the trip if it is a one-night trip.
  - For example, if the trip starts at 9AM on Monday, a staff member can take a break from 1:00pm – 1:30pm and again from 6:00pm – 6:30pm.

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- These breaks will be paid time.
  - Staff will need to coordinate with fellow staff members and chaperones on the trip to ensure the minimum adult ratio is being maintained.

### **Emergencies**

- Staff are expected to review the Trip Plan and Emergency Action Plan for the location.
- In the case of an emergency, it is the staff's responsibility to react to a situation to the level of your training (i.e., minimum First Aid/CPR certified) even during "lights out" hours when the children are under the supervision of the chaperone(s).

### **Vehicles**

- At least one vehicle (preferably a company vehicle) will need to remain on-site on at all times in the event of an emergency.
- The staff member that is responsible for driving the company vehicle should review the [Vehicle Safety Manual](#) prior to the trip date.

### **Communication with Staff and Chaperones**

- It is critical that Venture Outdoors staff remain in constant communication between each other and with the other adults on the trip.
- Check in regularly with chaperones to see if they need anything, have questions, or if you have roles or tasks that you'd like them to help out with.

### **Communication with Youth**

- *One-on-one:* Venture Outdoors staff should never be alone with a child. Always have at least one other adult or child with you. When in a room with a child, maintain this minimum ratio and keep any doors open.
- See more communication practices with youth in the [Venture Outdoors staff Onboarding Manual](#).

### **Medical Releases**

- Venture Outdoors staff should collect and review the medical history forms that will be completed by parents prior to the trip. Discuss with a chaperone, parent, staff or supervisor for any questions or concerns.

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## Clean Up

- After the group leaves in the morning, staff should search the area for any leftover items, clean up the camp site, and follow necessary check out procedures

## Emergency Preparation

### Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

- An EAP will need to be completed for each overnight site and reviewed by staff prior to the overnight trip.

### Cell Phone

- There should be at least one cell phone charged at all times in case of emergencies. During scouting, staff should monitor cell service to determine if there are any dead zones and take that into consideration while creating the EAP.

### Missing Camper

- Missing Camper procedures should be included in the EAP.
- When a camper is not accounted for:
  1. **ALL staff will recount campers and other staff** and move to a location that campers can easily be seen and heard, such as a large room or outside.
    - Ensure safety of campers present with adequate child supervision.
  2. **Check common areas:** the site lead ensure that all areas were thoroughly check by staff, making record of each area checked. Inform your supervisor with the status of the situation.
  3. **Contact local authorities.** Have the following information ready:
    - When and where were they last seen?
    - What were they doing?
    - What were they wearing?
    - How were they feeling?
    - Did they say anything about going anywhere?

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- Think if anything major is going on in the camper's life. They may play a role and is good information for authorities to know. You may need to look at the camper's medical history.
  - 4. **Contact guardians of missing camper:** provide updates and action items.
  - If a boater is not accounted for:
    1. **All boaters must exit the water** and proceed to a safe location away from the water. One staff member will stay at the water.
    2. **Contact local authorities** immediately, providing the information in #3 above. The Outdoor Educator at the water will direct local authorities upon their arrival.



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## Chapter 11: Driving Youth in Company Vehicles

### Before the Trip

- A trip plan will be distributed to all adults, including Venture Outdoors staff and chaperones. This includes itinerary, directions to the site, nearest hospitals, any important medical information, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
- The Venture Outdoors staff member who is driving will need to take attendance of the youth and adults joining in the vehicle prior to departure.
- Youth will receive a brief orientation about traveling in a vehicle with rules and will review the Conduct Contract (below) before departure.

### Ratios

- A minimum of two adults, one Venture Outdoors staff and either one Venture Outdoors staff or chaperone, in each vehicle. Only driver-trained Venture Outdoors staff members are permitted to drive youth, while the other adult will help to manage behavior.
- As a reminder, a Venture Outdoors staff should never be alone with a child; there should always be at least one other adult or child present.
- Each adult must have a list of youth, including medical information and emergency contact information.
- The camper to adult ratio on trips that require youth to be transported via company vehicles is at least 1 adult to 6 youth. At least one Venture Outdoors staff must also be present.

### Traveling in the Vehicle

- All passengers must be belted in their seats with all belongings secured so that they will not be free to fly around if the vehicle stops suddenly.
- Vehicle carrying capacity will not exceed the number of available seat belts
- Each vehicle must have a cell phone with enough battery to make the trip in case of an emergency.
- If a passenger exhibits poor behavior you should stop the vehicle once you are in a safe position to do so and consult your supervisor if needed. Together, you can make a plan for that individual.

### At the Destination

- A designated meeting place will be established as soon as the group arrives at the location, in case someone becomes separated.
- The buddy system will be strictly enforced for everyone, the entire time.
- Respond to any emergencies according to the Summer Camp Emergency Plan

- For additional safety and procedural instructions related to driving, all drivers must review the Driving Training documents. These documents will be provided during driver training.

## Youth Conduct Contract

### **Behavior Guidelines**

- I will treat myself, others, and equipment with respect.
- I will speak highly of my fellow campers and staff.
- I will set a positive example for others because I am a role model.
- I will always remain with my group and my counselors.
- I will ask for adult permission to use the restroom, get a drink of water, or go elsewhere.
- I agree to accept the instructions that are given to me by adults and follow them the first time.
- In the car, I will remain in my designated seat with my seatbelt buckled properly and secure my belongings

### **Conduct Violation**

- If I act in such a way that does not follow the behavior guidelines, I understand that there may be consequences for my actions, including verbal warnings, parental contact, or dismissal from the program.
- If I am to be dismissed from the program, my parent/guardian is responsible for picking me up immediately.
- I will seek to understand why I acted the way I did and work with my counselors to make better behavior choices.

I understand that this document is for my own safety and well-being. I understand that in order to have the best time at camp, I will agree to the above Camper Conduct Contract.

Camper Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As a parent, I have read and understand this conduct contract. I have discussed these expectations with my camper, who has agreed to follow them while on this trip. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to pick up the camper if poor behavior choices are made.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Staff Statement of Understanding

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this Driving Policy in full. I understand what is expected of me when driving or participating on a Venture Outdoors trip in a company vehicle, regardless of whether I am the driver.

If I have any questions about what I have read, I will direct them to my supervisor as soon as possible.

Staff Member Signature & Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 12: Virtual Learning with Youth

Adapted from the [Squash & Education Alliance's Online Learning Safety Guidelines](#)

### Overview

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, components of Venture Outdoors' youth programs have transitioned to virtual programming. This document offers guidance about how to safely connect with students online during this time. This information is changing rapidly, and updates will be shared as we learn more.

### Potential Risk

As programs engage in online programming and conversations with students, we need to be aware of the risks involved with online interactions.

*Potential risks include:*

- **Uninvited participants:** Some online communication tools can be infiltrated by uninvited participants, who may use inappropriate language or share inappropriate content.
- **Inappropriate student behavior:** Just like students may behave inappropriately at times during in-person programming, there may be inappropriate behavior during online interactions. In the online sphere, it may be more difficult to monitor all student behavior, as some platforms include options for private chatting and/or file sharing.
- **Student privacy:** We have a responsibility to protect the privacy of our students, which includes handling any images, recordings, and online data of students carefully.
- **Safeguarding students:** Online interactions are, by nature, less "public" than in-person programming. Creating safeguards that prevent staff, volunteers, or other adults from engaging in, or creating the perception that they are engaging in, inappropriate conduct with participants is more complicated in the online sphere.

With these risks in mind, Venture Outdoors has laid out the following guidelines for staff and volunteers to consider.

### Recommendations

#### **Establish/review appropriate boundaries**

Online boundaries should be in line with appropriate boundaries during regular programming. Review the [Online Learning Code of Conduct for Youth](#), which should have been reviewed and already signed by the student and parent prior to joining any live online learning session.

Review these expectations at the beginning of every online learning session.

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Expectations for staff, students, and volunteers should include:

- Appropriate clothing;
- Appropriate language;
- Appropriate visible background;
- Appropriate hours for program communications (for example, between 8:00am and 8:00pm), which should be respected except in emergencies;
- Program accounts/emails should be used instead of personal accounts/emails.

Please see Venture Outdoors' [Outdoor Educator Manual](#) (section on Communication) for more information, including guidance on one-on-one interactions for staff and students.

There should always be at least two adults in the online learning session (i.e., two Venture Outdoors staff or one Venture Outdoors staff and one volunteer).

### **Protect student privacy**

- Get parental consent for students to participate in your online programming. When parental consent is being given online, programs should also speak with parents to verbally confirm that they grant permission. See the [online learning parent consent form](#).
- Keep in mind that students under the age of 13 will need a parent's permission to create any online account, and some social media platforms prohibit anyone under the age of 13 from joining.
- Remind students and staff that a general best practice is to cover webcams when not in use.
- Guidelines for posting student images and videos online have not changed; they include:
  - Staff should never post student images or videos on their personal social media
  - Programs should ensure students have signed photo/video releases before posting on programs' social media
  - Never post student images/videos with accompanying personal identifying information, including full name (first name only is fine, or first name and last initial), school, and location (geotagging). Never "tag" a student such that a photo/video links to their personal social media page.

### **Create transparency in interactions**

- Ensure supervisor is aware of which platform(s) staff are using with students
- Whenever possible, ensure supervisor knows about one-on-one interactions ahead of time
- Communicate regularly with supervisor to share updates and concerns
- When planning outreach to individual students, carefully consider which staff member is the best fit to contact a given student
- Write summaries of interactions/check-ins in a log that is shared with your supervisor

- Do not use communication tools that purposely do not maintain a record of communication when engaging with participants (such as Snapchat)
- Consider whether to record online programming and/or check-ins. (There is conflicting guidance on the question of whether to record).
  - If you choose to record students, be sure to get parental/guardian permission AND disclose to both parents and students that they are being recorded

### **Review expectations for sharing concerns**

- As is the case during in-person programming, when a student shares potentially concerning personal information with a staff member or volunteer online, the staff member or volunteer must share that information with their supervisor. When unsure whether something must be shared, err on the side of sharing with a supervisor.
- Information that must be shared with a supervisor **immediately** includes:
  - Disclosures and/or concerns related to abuse and neglect
  - Suicidal thoughts
  - Self-harm thoughts or actions
- Examples of other information that should be shared with a supervisor:
  - Family death/loss/upheaval
  - Health conditions/injuries
  - Housing/family changes
  - Drug/alcohol use
- Remember that staff and volunteer responsibilities as mandated reporters have not changed. See [information about what it means to be a mandated reporter in PA](#).

### **Use online platforms' privacy options**

Most platforms offer ways to make meetings more secure. Research the options available on your program's platform(s) and ensure all staff are aware of which privacy options to use.

- If your program uses Zoom, lower the risk of "Zoombombing" occurring (where an uninvited participant infiltrates the Zoom session with inappropriate content) by\*:
  - Using a unique meeting ID each time
  - If you have a paid Zoom account, creating an invite-only meeting
  - Requiring a meeting password
  - Creating a waiting room
  - Setting up attendees to be muted on arrival
  - Only allowing the host(s) to share their screen(s)
  - Locking the meeting once it starts
  - Disabling file transfer
  - Disabling private chat
  - If issues arise:
    - Disabling participants' cameras
    - Removing a participant

- 
- Note that [Zoom recently changed its policies](#) and has made some of these privacy options the default settings

## Additional Reading

### **General online learning**

- [Connect Safely](#) has a list of questions to help assess whether an online tool properly protects students' privacy and data
- [Darkness To Light](#) has a guide for safeguarding students in the online learning environment

### **Using Zoom**

- [PC Mag](#) shares tips to prevent zoom-bombing

### **Privacy and Safety**

- [COPPA Regulation](#)
- [FAQ for COPPA](#)
- [Six-step plan for verifying you're in compliance](#)
- [Guide to livestreaming](#)

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## Chapter 13: COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines

For the most up-to-date requirements regarding activities and COVID-19, please visit our website at <https://www.ventureoutdoors.org/community-programs-covid-19-policies/>

### Participant Requirements

- All participants will be required to bring and wear their own mask.
- Any participant coughing, sneezing, displaying illness or otherwise will be asked to leave immediately.
- Any participant who is sick or has had a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or over in the previous 24 hours cannot attend any programs. Participants must be fever free without medication for 72 hours before returning to programs.

### Outdoor Educator Requirements

- Venture Outdoors staff will need to review and sign the Employee COVID 19 Policies and Procedures document prior to in-person shifts. This will stay on file for the duration of your employment.
- Before each in-person shift, Outdoor Educators will also take a personal screening survey similar to what is found in this survey here. Your co-leader will take your temperature before beginning your shift.
- Any Outdoor Educator who is sick or has had a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or over in the previous 24 hours cannot run programs. Outdoor Educators must be fever free without medication for 72 hours before returning to programs.
- All Outdoor Educators will be required to bring and wear their own mask.
- Any Outdoor Educator coughing, sneezing, displaying illness, or otherwise will be asked to leave immediately.
- Outdoor Educators will be responsible for making sure the group adheres to socially distanced guidelines as best as possible.

### Other Requirements

- All programs are currently capped at around 20 participants total (this is subject to change, according to guidelines, activity, and vaccination totals), including youth and chaperones.
- Any Outdoor Educator or participant traveling out of state/country will be asked to quarantine for no less than 14 days prior to returning to a public program.



- Any Outdoor Educator or participant who has had direct contact with a person known to be diagnosed with COVID-19 will be asked to quarantine for no less than 14 days prior to returning to a public program.
- If an Outdoor Educator is diagnosed with COVID-19, they must notify the Youth Programs Manager as soon as possible. They will work to ensure the confidentiality of all Outdoor Educators.
- Management will inform any and all participants who may have come in contact with said Outdoor Educator.
- If a known participant is diagnosed with COVID-19, any and all Outdoor Educators and other participants will be notified.

### Activity Specific Guidelines During COVID-19

*In addition to the above guidelines for everyone involved, the main categories of Venture Outdoors activities are all to have special cleaning/sanitizing and social distancing guidelines. If you are planning an activity that does not fall into these categories, please contact your supervisor.*

#### **Hiking Activities**

##### *Cleaning Procedures*

- No Venture Outdoors materials should be used during hiking programs.

##### *Social Distancing*

- Prior to the program start, Xs should be created around the meeting location for participants to stand on. This setup will be used during instructional and safety talks.
- When participants group up, masks should be worn properly.

#### **Biking Activities**

##### *Cleaning Procedures*

- Use gloves and practice social distancing when handing out materials.
- Wipe bikes down and spray helmets before and after the program.
- Only use helmets from bins that have not been used within the past three days. When finished, use a piece of tape to label the bins that you used.
- Wipe down all equipment prior to use and after each person uses it.
- Wipe off handles, locks, and any other high-touch areas of the trailer before and after use.

- Participants are not allowed to get more than one bike; they must take a bike, and that is the only one they can use for the duration of the program that day. The same applies for helmets.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in the bike trailer for leaders and participants.

### *Social Distancing*

- Prior to the program start, Xs should be created around the trailer for participants to stand on. This setup will be used during instructional and safety talks, and while distributing helmets, bikes, and other equipment.
- During the program, youth will maintain 6 feet of distance between one another while on bikes.
- If an Outdoor Educator needs to adjust a helmet or a bike seat, they must wear a mask, face shield, and gloves.
- When Finished with the program, the bike trailer should look like this:



## **Geocaching Activities**

### *Cleaning Procedures*

- Wipe GPSs before and after the program with Lysol wipes.
- Place pencils in a box after use. Label the box with "Last Used [date of program]".
- Participants are not allowed to get more than one GPS. They must take on GPS and that is the only one they can use for the duration of the program that day.

### *Social Distancing*

- Prior to the program start, Xs should be created around the meeting location for participants to stand on. This setup will be used during instructional and safety talks and distributing GPSs.
- Use gloves to hand out materials and practice social distancing.
- Prior to the start of the program, caches will be completely covered by one color
  - Youth will find the points and record what color is at each point. Upon completion, youth will be given a "code" (e.g. Red=V) to unscramble a word.
- During the program, participants will maintain 6-feet of distance between one another while traveling from point to point.

## **Fishing Activities**

### *Cleaning Procedures*

- Wipe table, tent, chairs, and bins down before and after the program.
- Wipe down each rod prior to use and after each person uses it.
- Wipe off door knobs, keys, key code pad, and locks before and after using them.
- Participants are not allowed to get more than one rod. They must take a rod and that is the only one they can use for the duration of the program that day.

### *Social Distancing*

- Prior to the program start, Xs should be created along the walkway indicating a spot to fish. These Xs should be at least 6 feet apart. Participants will be instructed to remain on these Xs and call for help if needed.
- Use gloves to hand out materials and practice social distancing.

## **Fire building Activities**

### *Cleaning Procedures*

- Have participants replace fire building materials in a pile. OEs should use gloves to place materials in a bin and label that bin at the conclusion of the program.

### *Social Distancing*

- Prior to the program start, Xs should be created along the walkway indicating a spot to build a fire. These Xs should be at least 6 feet apart. Participants will be instructed to remain on these Xs and call for help if needed.
- Use gloves to hand out materials and practice social distancing.

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- The OE will light all the fires. When lighting fires, practice social distancing. Have the participant step away from the fire while the OE lights it.

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## Appendix A: Activity Talks

### Paddle Talk

"Hello everyone and welcome! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I've been going out on the water for about \_\_\_\_\_ year(s) (insert fact).

Kayak Pittsburgh is a project of Venture Outdoors, a local membership based non-profit organization whose mission is it get people outside. We have been servicing the Western Pennsylvania region since 2001. If you have any further questions about our mission, please feel free to ask me, or any staff member, after the conclusion of this paddle talk.

I'll be giving you some brief paddling instructions and some water safety information. Who's been paddling before? How about here, at (location)? (This all depends on what level of experience the paddlers have... if they are experienced, try to tell them one new thing, or just tell them the water safety about the spillway (North Park), the dam (Aspinwall) or the wake zone (North Shore).

Let's start with your life jackets. First, you want the buckle fastened at the bottom of your life jacket, then zip the front, and finally make sure the straps are tightened on the sides and on the tops of your shoulders. Be sure you can breathe but have the life jacket secure enough that you can't pull it up above your ears. (Check everyone multiple times. Sometimes they need assistance with the ones on the sides. Have everyone pull them up with their thumbs to make sure they can't be pulled up overhead)

Hand out paddles according to boat & size of person.

This is your paddle, if you hold it above your head, you want your elbows at a 90-degree angle like so. Bring the paddle down in front of you like you are putting yourself into a box, keeping your elbows bent. You want to be able to read the writing on the paddle like a book (depending on paddles... you want to see the logo on the paddle face right-side up), so the scoop of the paddle is in towards you. (Demonstrate)

To paddle...

Enter the water by your foot, exiting at your hip using a TORSO rotation. Using your arms will tire you out pretty quickly, but when you rotate at your torso, you'll

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have a much longer, more enjoyable paddle. The majority of the paddle should be in the water, the side of the paddle that is out of the water should be at about shoulder height. Going too vertical is what we call "wind-milling". You don't go very far and get tired out very quickly. Going too horizontal will just get you wet and once again, you don't go very far.

To steer....

If you want to go to the left, on which side do you think you'll paddle? You want to paddle on the right side to go left. It works in opposites when paddling.

To back paddle, enter the water at your hip, exiting at your foot.

To stop or slow down, simply rest your paddle on the sides of the boat or dip them back and forth.

Our boats are very secure, flat water boats, and will not tip unless you're rocking back and forth too much or having a dance party.

### **North Park Kayaking Instructions**

Stay clear of the spillway, it's at about 11 o'clock from here straight ahead. Its right by the roadway and the tower. The only other thing to be aware of is to watch out for fishermen and their lines by staying closer to the center of the lake.

### **North Shore Kayaking Instructions**

The entire river is free to explore but we recommend that you stay between the shore and the first bridge buttresses. This is the safest place for you to paddle and is free of commercial traffic, motor boats, and sightseeing tours. If you do choose to cross the river, you may, however make sure that you have a boat-free river to the right and to the left to allow yourself enough time to safely cross (just like you are crossing the street).

Always remember you are the smallest craft on the water and DO NOT have the right of way. Tour boats, motor boats, and barges are large and have a hard time changing course, so it is your responsibility to stay out of there way at all cost.

River rescue is the brown building to the right of our launching area. They have their building surrounded by yellow buoys to create easy access in and

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out of their garages in case of an emergency. You are NOT allowed to paddle inside these buoys, NO EXCEPTIONS. Further downriver from River Rescue is Heinz Quay. This is the launch that The Just Ducky tours use to enter and exit the water. Please do not dock your kayak on this launch area as it could be dangerous for you and all the people on the tour if the driver does not see you.

We do recommend that everyone starts their paddle by going upstream (point left) towards Millvale first. This provides for a more challenging paddle when you have the most strength, and when you are tired, you can relax and paddle back with the current. Upstream provides a more scenic view of Pittsburgh, compared to the paddle downstream (point right) where you have a full view of the city and Point State Park. As always, please use common sense while you are on the river and keep yours and others safety in mind.

### **Aspinwall Kayaking Instructions**

The entire river is free to explore but we recommend that you stay between the shore and the first bridge buttresses. This is the safest place for you to paddle and is free of commercial traffic, motor boats, and sightseeing tours. If you do choose to cross the river, you may, however make sure that you have a boat-free river to the right and to the left to allow yourself enough time to safely cross (just like you are crossing the street).

Always remember you are the smallest craft on the water and DO NOT have the right of way. Tour boats, motor boats, and barges are large and have a hard time changing course, so it is your responsibility to stay out of there way at all cost.

Everyone must start their paddle by going upstream (point left toward the yacht club) first. Reason #1 is that to the right just past the bridge is a dam – it is not safe to approach or go over. Stay on our side of the bridge to be most safe. Going upstream first also provides for a more challenging paddle when you have the most strength, and when you are tired, you can relax and paddle back with the current. As always, please use common sense while you are on the river and keep yours and others safety in mind.

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Enjoy wildlife from a distance, but please do not disturb any animals/plants you come across.

Alright, any questions? Enjoy your time out on the water!”

Warning about storms: (Weather depending)

We do have a \_\_\_ % of precipitation today. If it begins to rain in a way that will make us miserable, we will turn around and head back to the launch pad. If it is lightly sprinkling, we will continue with the trip UNLESS lighting or thunder is seen/heard.

In this event, listen for my whistle:

- 1 whistle blast: Means stop paddling and look at me.
- 2 whistle blasts: Means gather up.
- 3 whistle blasts: Means this is an emergency, gather up and await instruction.

## Bike Talk

"Hello everyone and welcome! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I've been biking for about \_\_\_\_\_ year(s) (insert fact).

Venture Outdoors is a local membership based non-profit organization whose mission is it get people outside. We have been servicing the Western Pennsylvania region since 2001. If you have any further questions about our mission, please feel free to ask me, or any staff member, after the conclusion of this instruction.

I'll be giving you some brief biking instructions and some safety information. Who's been biking before? How about here, at (location - usually Washington's Landing, where we keep our trailer)?

Here at Venture Outdoors, we utilize beach cruiser bikes. This means there are no hand brakes! To break or slow down you must peddle backwards! Because of this, we encourage you not to stand up on the bike because it may cause you to suddenly stop.



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To keep safety in mind when riding, stay 5-10 feet back from the person in front of you. This way, if they need to stop or swerve, you have time to prepare and react.

You are always required to wear a helmet. Buckle the chin strap so that it fits snugly against your forehead and keep it on throughout the duration of the ride.

Keep to the right of the trail/bike lane, move to the left to pass others. When passing others on trail/bike lane, say loudly, "Passing on your left!" This prepares the individual for you to pass them.

When shifting, make sure you are continuously peddling! A low gear (1) is useful when going uphill. A medium gear (2) is useful when riding on flat surfaces. A high gear (3) is useful when going downhill.

Enjoy wildlife from a distance, but please do not disturb any animals/plants we come across.

As always, please use common sense while you are biking and be safe.

Alright, any questions? Enjoy your time out on the trails!"

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## Appendix B: Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk Forms

### Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk Form

To view our current digital waiver [click here](#). We do have paper copies of this waiver, but try to encourage the use of digital waivers for easy tracking and storage. The paper Assumption of Risk form is usually printed on yellow paper and is available in the OE cube. These forms must be filled out by ALL participants with the following terms:

- **Staff & Volunteers** – All staff and volunteer trip leaders MUST sign this form annually. The form covers them when they participate as a leader of a trip only.
- **Community Programs** – each participant must provide a waiver for EVERY trip attended. I.e. if Sally comes on a hike on Sunday, they must fill out a waiver. Then if Sally comes back to hike the following weekend, she must fill out another waiver for that event. Volunteer trip leaders and part time staff do not have to sign waivers when leading trips but must sign a waiver following these same rules when attending a trip as a participant.
- **Custom Outings (one-time)** - Each participant must sign a waiver for EVERY one-time custom outing attended.
- **Custom Outings (ongoing)** - In some cases, custom outings are created for a particular group that will last throughout a summer or school year, etc. In these cases, students/participants who are regularly attending this program must sign this waiver just once, and it will be kept on file.
- **YORP/Leadership Outings (ongoing)** - For any student regularly participating in our school-year or summer grant-funded activities, their signed waiver will be kept on file for the duration of the academic year.
- **Kayak Pittsburgh locations** – paddlers obtaining a season pass will have their waiver kept on file for the entire paddling season. Paddlers who come to kayak without a season pass will need to fill out a waiver every time they come to paddle at any of our locations.

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## Appendix C: Materials Forms

### Equipment & Materials Checkout/Check-in Form

When you check out materials and equipment, you will sign a checkout form (located in the OE Cube and in Storage) that states you take full responsibility for the Venture Outdoors equipment that you are borrowing and agree to return the equipment where it was found and in a timely manner. Always return the equipment in the same if not better condition that you borrowed it. Please consult your supervisor if you have any questions about cleaning or returning equipment.

\*If damage occurs, it is your responsibility to report damages on the [Damaged Equipment Form](#) and/or let the Equipment and Facilities Manager know. Items should be marked with orange flagging tape with a description of what is broken.

\*If you do not know where something goes or if something is broken, please place items on or near the prep table with a note of why that item has been placed there.

\*Please remember to mark the broken item with Flag Tape and write a note on it and place items on or near the prep table.

\*If anyone was injured or could have been injured please fill out an [Incident/ Near Miss Report](#) and file it with the appropriate party.

### Supplies Order Form

If you need supplies for an upcoming program activity, fill out the OE Cube Supplies Order Form, available in the OE Cube as well as storage, and return it to your supervisor. Alternatively, if you are not in the office, you can send an email to your supervisor.

## Equipment & Materials Locations

<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
GPS units & AA batteries	Storage
Compass	Storage
550 Cord	Storage
Small Education Boxes (Leave No Trace, Night Hikes, Bike Ed, etc.)	Storage
Jeopardy Game Pieces	Storage
Markers, Crayons, Dry Erase Markers, Art supplies	Storage
Prizes, Stickers	Storage
iPads, GoPro, chargers	Storage
Flipchart paper, Leave No Trace poster	Storage
Portable S'mores maker (2)	Storage
Mini Magnifying Glasses	Storage
Geocaching routes & clues	Storage
Lesson plan materials	Storage
GPS USB cords	GPS Bin
Go Bags (Large, Small, Med)	Storage
Venture Outdoors table cloths, table runners	Office
Venture Outdoors Outreach bags/outreach materials	Office
Backpacks	Storage
Cache Boxes	Storage
Button Maker w/ Supplies	Storage
Popsicle Sticks, Construction paper, glue, paint, tissue paper, googly eyes, other art supplies	Storage

Fishing poles	Storage
Snow Shoes	Storage
Hula-Hoops	Storage
Chalk	Storage
Water/hydration packs	Storage
Layers Race Bins	Storage
Shelter Building Bin	Storage
Fire Building Bin	Storage
Stewardship Hike Bin	Storage
Ink Pads + Stamps	Storage
Children's bikes (+ bike rodeo materials)	Storage
Bike Tire Bowling	Storage
First Aid Supplies	Storage
Coolers/thermoses	Storage
Gas stoves, propane cylinders	Storage
Hot/Cold Cups, Plates, Napkins, Pots/pans, Cutting Boards, Serving Utensils, Lighters, Can Openers, Knives	Storage
Cleaning products, paper towels, hand sanitizer	Storage
Pop-Up tents	Storage
Nature Art Bin	Storage
Cold Weather Gear	Storage
Tarps	Storage
Demo paddles & youth life jackets	Storage
S'mores sticks & mountain pie makers	Storage
Tables & chairs	Storage

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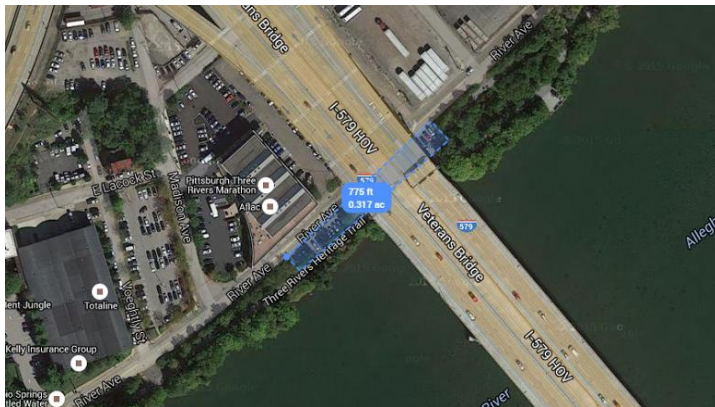
Demo Kayaks	Outdoor Storage
Bike Trailer (adult bikes)	Outdoor Storage
Kayak Mobile Fleet	Outdoor Storage

## Appendix D: Parking Suggestions

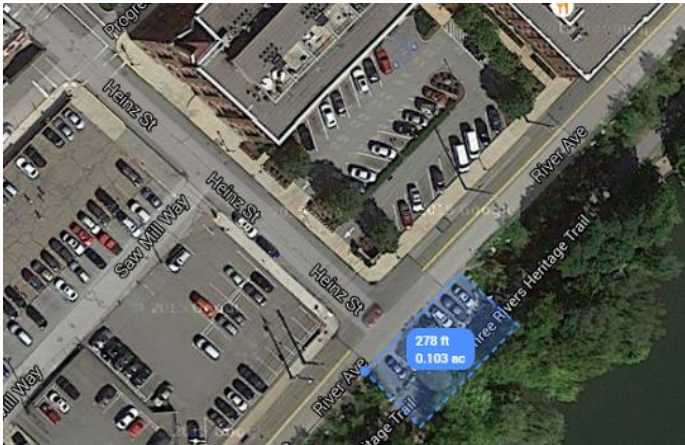
### Parking at Storage



### Parking at Kayak Pittsburgh-North Shore

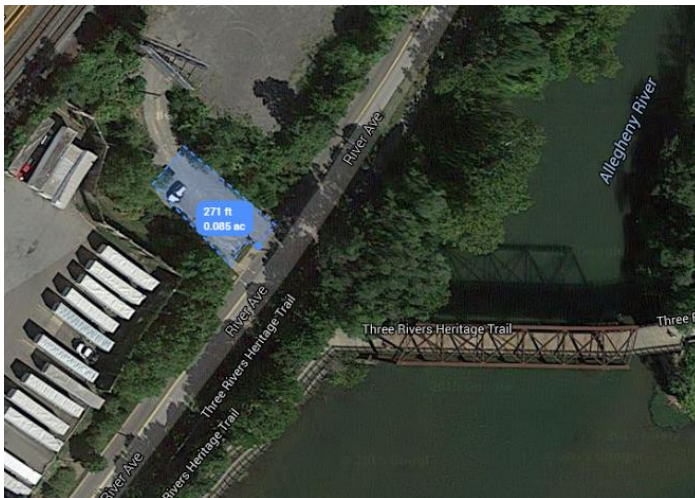


This option is the closest free parking to K.P. It is first come first serve and fills up fast during the week between the hours of 9AM-5PM. Use this address in your GPS to find it: 829 River Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15212



This option is available as first come first serve free parking. Use this address in your GPS to find it: 300 Heinz St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

This option is also first come first serve and free but further away from K.P. (give yourself extra time to walk to K.P. or bring your bike to cut down on commute time). This parking lot requires that you back in your car! Use this address in your GPS: 1395 River Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15212



This option is also free but further away from K.P. (give yourself additional time to walk before your shift start time). Use this address in your GPS to find it: 1398 River Ave Pittsburgh, PA 15212





This lot is the furthest from K.P. It is free and usually has open spots. (Allow yourself ample amount of time to get to K.P.) Use this address in your GPS: 90 River Front Dr. Millvale, PA 15209

### Parking at Kayak

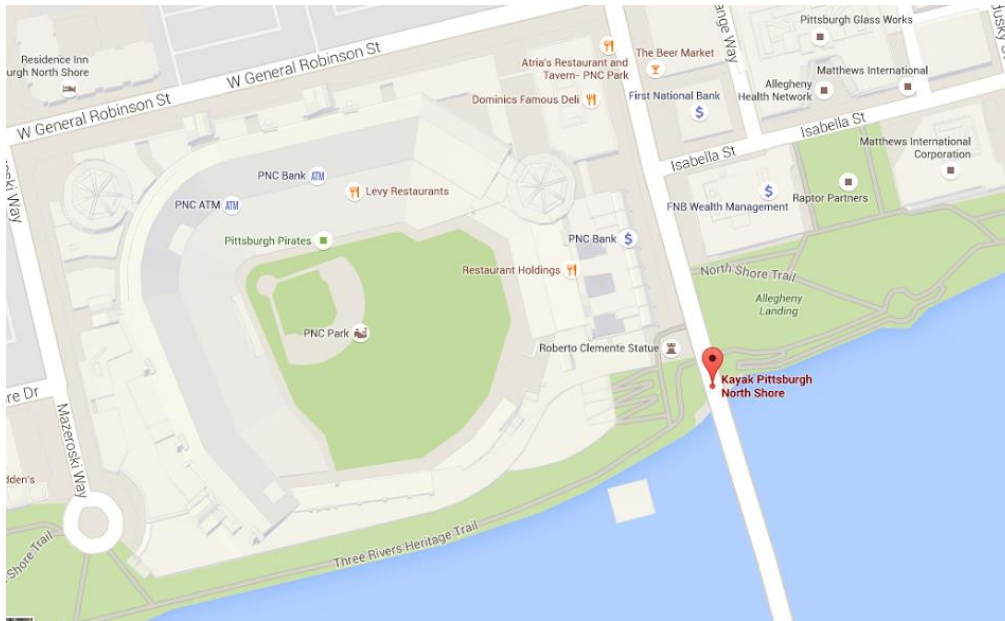
### Pittsburgh-North Park

These parking lots are free and first come first serve. Double check to see if there is a race in the park that day, this could prevent you from finding a parking space. Use this address in your GPS: Tennis Ct Rd. McCandless, PA 15101

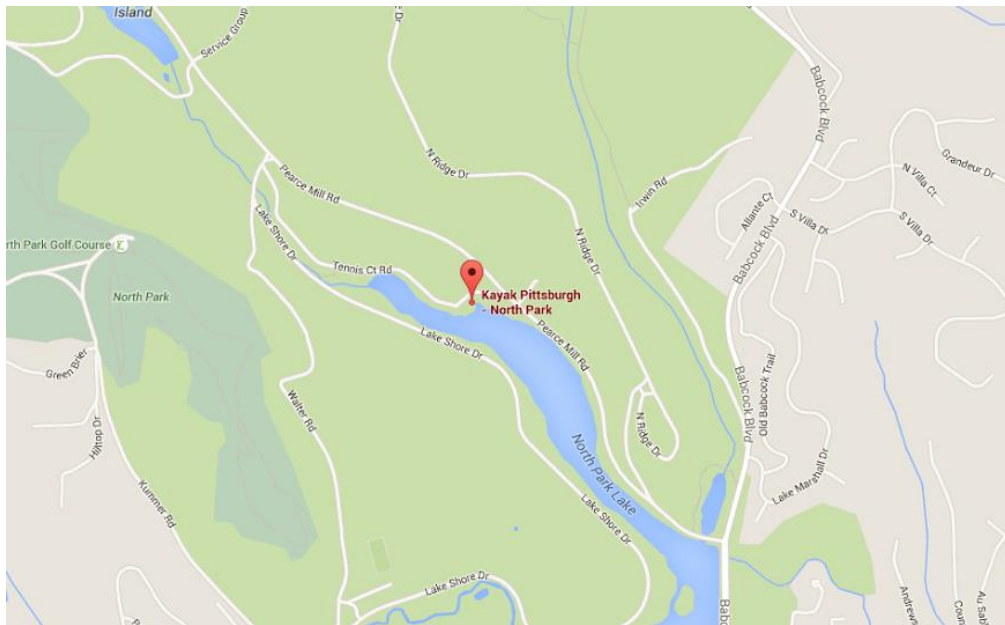


## Appendix E: Kayak Pittsburgh Locations

### Kayak Pittsburgh-North Shore



### Kayak Pittsburgh-North Park



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## **Appendix F: Leave No Trace**

Leave No Trace refers to a set of principles that encourage conservation in the outdoors. The following principles were created by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, a non-profit organization founded in 1994.

### **Plan Ahead and Prepare**

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.

Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.

Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.

Repackage food to minimize waste.

Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

### **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.

Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.

Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas:

Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.

Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.

Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

In pristine areas:

Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.

Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

### **Dispose of Waste Properly**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.

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Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

### **Leave What You Find**

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

### **Minimize Campfire Impacts**

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.

Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

### **Respect Wildlife**

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.

Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

### **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.

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Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.  
Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

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# Statement of Understanding

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this OE Handbook in full. I understand what is expected of me and I know what I can expect as an Outdoor Educator with Venture Outdoors.

If I have any questions about what I have read, I will direct them to my supervisor as soon as possible.

**Outdoor Educator Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

