

The DREAM Program

Trip Safety

Most problems are preventable. It is up to us to think through the possible dangers and then to teach the kids how to avoid them. Some kids will want to do unsafe things for the fun of it, or to be “cool.” We must hold our ground on safety. They will respect us for it!

Erring on the side of caution

Supervising – always!

Kids should never be left alone! Whether in small groups or one large group, having a reliable count-off procedure is extremely helpful.

Sticking together

No kid should ever be left alone. There may come times in the trip when the best decision is to split the group up. This may be an emergency or it may make an activity more enjoyable. If the group does split up, make sure that there is at least one leader for every 4 children. Have a specific meeting place and time, and communicate that with all members of the group.

Hydrating: clear and copious

Guard against dehydration by drinking lots of fluids. People shouldn't wait until they are thirsty to drink. This will be new to most kids. An easy way to know if you are hydrated is to check your urine – dark yellow and a scant amount? You're dehydrated! Clear and copious? Good to go. Potassium is a vital element, especially during activity. Bananas are the best way to combat this.

Eating well

Ensure adequate nutrition for everyone – limit junk food, and keep an eye open for any eating disorders. Challenge the group to finish off every meal!

Preventing

Prevent typical safety and health problems by being sensible and cautious – no bare feet, check for blisters, rashes, high temperature, loss of appetite, sluggishness...

Sanitation-ing

Maintain group health by encouraging good personal hygiene. Tell kids to wash hands after going to the bathroom and before handling food products. Take showers when possible. Brush teeth regularly.

Being Safe in Public Places

The “Buddy System” is a good way to keep track of your group, especially in high-traffic public areas – each kid should know where their buddy is at all times. Also, stay together when using public transportation.

Safety Procedures

Searching and Rescuing:

If someone is lost, missing, or has runaway, follow these steps:

1. One mentor should stay with the group while the other mentors search for the lost child.
2. Search the immediate area for 15-20 minutes. Make 3 blasts on the emergency whistle every minute or so.
3. Contact Central Office to notify them of the situation.
4. Search a bigger radius for 15 minutes. Continue to use the emergency whistle.
5. If lost child are still not found, contact local police or other appropriate professional.
6. Contact home office again to update them on situation. Have them contact child's parents.
7. Continue until child is found.
8. Once found, notify all parties.

*Instruct kids that if they are lost in the woods, to stay where they are unless they can head in the direction of the emergency whistle. If they are on a trail, they should go back to the last trail intersection and wait there. It doubles their chances of running into someone, and does not get them any more lost than they already are.

Driving Guidelines:

In addition to DREAM's driving policies, there are a few additional points to keep in mind for longer trips:

1. Manage the group during your drives. Don't allow music-management or van games to interfere with your driving!
2. Mechanical breakdown guidelines
 - a. Pull way off the road.
 - b. Have children stay in or out of the van as your best judgment dictates.
 - c. Put out reflectors at 100 yards and 200 yards.
 - d. Call for roadside assistance and contact your van supplier for further instructions.
3. Protect your van. Most damage to vans comes from backing into things. Check behind the van before you back up or have someone stand outside the van and direct.

Stove and Kitchen Safety:

90% of all camping injuries occur in the "kitchen."

1. Don't let anyone use a camp stove without:
 - a. first having been instructed in the stove's use, and
 - b. demonstrating competence
2. Never let stove fuel be confused with water bottles!
3. Keep non-cooks out of the "kitchen"
4. Only cut on a cutting board, never hold items in hands while cutting
5. Only use stoves or fires with mentors present!

Wading & swimming

1. Lifeguards: No swimming can occur unless a certified lifeguard is actively guarding. This applies to all water activities where the water is above a child's head.
2. Swimming Test: Make sure to determine, before a major swimming activity, whether a child is a weak, average, or above average swimmer. Those who are weak swimmers should wear PFDs.
3. Safe stream and river crossings: For water crossings while backpacking, make sure all kids unhook their waist belts.
4. Life jackets: All mentors and children must wear U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFD) of the proper type, size, and fit for each user when engaged in boating activities. The PFDs must be sufficiently buoyant to support the person's weight and they must be safety checked immediately prior to use.
5. Keeping track of your kids: Utilize the "buddy system" to keep track of kids in the water. Each kid should know where their "buddy" is at all times.

Accident Prevention

Electrical storms

If, despite all your planning and caution, you still get caught out in the open in a thunderstorm you must find a safe place. In general, avoid these dangerous spots:

- Bodies of water
- High and/or open places
- Tall objects
- Metal objects
- Low and damp places

Thick growths of small trees are best. Spread out the group to provide more safety, but stay visible to each other. Sit on some other non-conductive object, and make yourself as small as possible (huddled in a ball, with feet close together). Once you've found a safe spot, spread out the group and make yourself small on an insulating layer

On a mountain, the most dangerous spot is the peak – strikes frequently occur on mountain peaks. Occasional strikes occur somewhat lower than the peak and on outcroppings. Shallow caves are dangerous; even large caves can be trouble. Relatively safe sites are those off the peak, off outcroppings, away from overhangs, and away from moist spots that conduct ground currents after a strike.

Avoid open areas or under a lone tree. Safer positions include forested areas and crouched between boulders. On a mountain in a storm, squat with your feet facing downhill. Regardless of where you are, stay low to the ground (squat) and keep your hands off the ground. Put something dry and non-conducting underneath you.

Storms move quickly so get to a safe spot as soon as you see thunderheads. Watch for hair standing on end and a bluish ring around objects. Listen for high pitched "singing" sounds because they indicate that a strike is imminent.

Hiking safety

Here are some hiking basics:

- Have at least one mentor at front and rear
- Watch out for loose or slippery rocks and logs, cliffs, steep grades and inclined hard-packed snowfields where a misstep can cause an uncontrolled slide or fall
- Stay together!
- Before taking hikes, explain the emergency whistle to your group.
- Plan ahead!

Grizzly Country

There are two types of bears out west – the smaller black bear (a forest animal that can climb trees) and the larger brown bear (a plains animal that has been forced into the mountains). Both types of bears are unpredictable and don't like surprises.

Black bears are more common and pose all kinds of potential problems (from getting into your food supplies to challenging you if you get between a mother and her cubs).

Black bears should be scared out of camp before they get into your food. If they are already in camp, try to scare them off, but do not approach them. Bang pots and pans together. Always get a ranger if a bear comes into camp. Black bears will generally only attack if they have cubs with them. This is a reflex action and is designed only to eliminate the threat to their young. If you are charged, hold your ground. If physically attacked, play dead and the bear will leave you alone.

Grizzlies are brown, and are known to be aggressive. It is unlikely that a grizzly will come into camp after food.

What If's... If you see a bear, stand still; if it sees you, wait and it will probably leave. If at a distance and the bear has seen you, travel upwind of the bear so your scent drifts to the bear and it can reference your location. If it doesn't see you, travel upwind around the bear and keep your distance. If you surprise a sow with cubs at close range, it could charge and maul you, so play dead. If a bear charges then head towards the nearest tree and climb it. Dropping something (a daypack, etc.) is sometimes wise as it might capture the bear's attention.

Males surprised at close range will often bluff charge, perhaps many times. Stand your ground, then start to slowly walk backwards, looking away and talking softly to the bear. If the bear mauls you, play dead until it leaves (easier said than done, of course). If you are caught by a bear, lie on the ground with your knees to your chest and your hands clasped behind your neck. Bears have passed by people in this position. Do not try to outrun a grizzly – it will only excite them and they can easily outrun you (running downhill is your best “flight” alternative, since the grizzly isn't too well balanced for downhill running).

Use the boxes provided in front country sites or store food in the van. Place eating and cooking areas well away from camp and never allow food in tents. Put all food and smelly products in the vans. If you cook a smelly meal, put cooking clothes in the vans overnight.

First Aid Reminders

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a subnormal temperature of the body that may lead to mental and physical collapse. Hypothermia is caused by exposure to the elements, not necessarily cold, and it is aggravated by wetness, wind and exhaustion. It is the number one killer of people in the outdoors. Hypothermia occurs in two stages – the first stage includes exposure and exhaustion that your body battles by conserving heat in the trunk and brain; the second stage occurs when the trunk and brain are cooled and judgment is deprived. Without treatment the first stage progresses to the second, and the second to death. To prevent hypothermia, stay dry and warm by wearing proper gear. Proper hydration is key to keeping normal body temperature. If you or your group are exposed to wind, cold and wet, watch out for these symptoms:

- Uncontrollable fits of shivering
- Vague, slow, slurred speech
- Memory lapses, incoherence
- Immobile, fumbling hands
- Frequent stumbling, lurching gait
- Drowsiness (do not allow the victim to sleep)
- Apparent exhaustion, inability to get up after a rest

Many victims deny any problem. Indeed, grouchiness when questioned is another typical symptom of hypothermia. Believe the symptoms, not the victim. Even mild symptoms demand immediate treatment.

1. Get the victim out of the wind and rain
2. Strip off all wet clothes
3. Dry the victim completely, take time to do this, even if it means more exposure to the cold; water takes heat from the body hundreds of times faster than air, so get them undressed!
4. Place a plastic tarp on the ground, place a ground pad on it, and a dry sleeping bag open on top of that. Put the dry victim in the sleeping bag, zip it up, and fold the tarp around the patient like a burrito so only the head face is showing. Be sure to cover the head and feet completely, seal them in (except for the face). They will make their own heat, this is the most effective method of stabilizing their temperature, then increasing it to normal levels. Keep them in until they are sweating and are mentally normal.
5. Have them eat fatty foods, and drink lots of fluids if they are coherent.

Unconscious victims should be treated exactly the same way: make sure they stay dry, put them in the “hypo-wrap,” and seek immediate medical intervention. This will stabilize their body temperature, but they may be too hypothermic to increase it on their own. Get help for these people on the double!

Providing Immediate Care

As a mentor you may find yourself faced with any number of medical emergencies. The extent of your role in this situation will depend on where you are (front or back-country) and the seriousness of the injury. Here are some basic reminders of common potential medical problems:

Wound Management

- Control bleeding with direct pressure and elevation
- Clean the wound thoroughly
- Cover wound with a sterile dressing and bandage
- Splint if necessary and monitor for infection and shock

Strains and sprains

- RICE: rest, ice compress, and elevate the injury
- Let the injury re-warm for approximately 15 minutes then repeat above
- Repeat RICE 3 to 4 times a day for 48 hours

Fractures

- LAF: Look, Ask, Feel for signs of a fracture
- Signs: swelling, discoloration, asymmetry, pain, point tenderness, instability
- Rule of thumb: when in doubt, splint!
- Splints should completely immobilize the joints both above and below the suspected fracture.

Heat Injury

- Stay well hydrated and eat salty snacks
- Rest often out of the heat
- Wear clothing that allows evaporation
- For heat exhaustion: lots of water and rest
- For heat stroke: cool rapidly by pouring water and fanning, evacuate

Anaphylaxis

- Know the allergies of your kids before they arrive (see Health Report)
- Be prepared to use an Anakit if necessary
- If an allergic student is stung, keep them calm
- Give them antihistamine tablet if they can swallow
- Give them an injection if they cannot breathe and evacuate
- Be aware of the potential for a secondary anaphylaxis reaction 8-24 hours after the initial reaction. If in the backcountry, evacuate anyone who needs an Anakit injection. A second attack is possible and can be fatal. The Anakit is equipped with a two-dose syringe for this purpose, so make sure you monitor the patient carefully during evacuation.

When handling body fluids and medical waste, remember to wear the rubber gloves provided in the First Aid Kit. Properly dispose of all medical waste (syringes, needles, dressing), and wash your hands thoroughly after any treating injury.