



Principles and Guidelines on Outdoor Activities

This circular supersedes Programme Circular No. 99/2011 issued on 15 August 2011.

All leaders should follow the principles and guidelines stated below when organizing outdoor activities such as Swimming, Expedition & Mountaineering, and Camping.

Procedures in other related Guidelines such as “Contingency Measures in Cases of Inclement Weather and Air Pollution” must be complied with during Scouting activities.

Swimming

I. Principles

1. Choose a beach carefully. Avoid swimming in a beach that is remote, unfamiliar or unguarded.
2. Beginners should avoid swimming in deep water.
3. Before swimming, do not eat too much and should take sufficient rest after a meal.
4. Do not swim when feeling hungry or drunk.
5. Avoid swimming alone or staying in the water for too long.
6. Shout for help or raise your hand in case of difficulty.

II. Personal Guidelines

A. In Swimming Pools

1. Beginners should learn to swim in shallow water.
2. Do not chew gum while swimming to avoid suffocation.
3. Do not use any masks / fins.
4. Do not run at the pool surround to avoid injury.

B. At Beaches

1. Swim within the boomline of the beach.
2. Pay attention to the direction of current and beware of sudden waves.
3. Do not swim against a strong current to avoid exhaustion.
4. In case of danger, stay calm and wait for rescue.
5. Do not swim when the Red Flag or Shark Warning Flag is hoisted.

III. Leaders' Guidelines

1. Seek prior consent from parents and respective Scout Unit, and consideration must also be given to the team members' physical capability before conducting the activity.
2. Ensure sufficient Scout Leaders are on duty (one Scout Leader to 10 Scouts).
3. Have knowledge on First Aid and lifesaving skills as well as rescue procedures and methods.
4. Choose familiar waters and indicate safe zone for swimming.
5. Wear notable signs, such as coloured swimming cap, for easy identification.
6. Divide the Scouts into teams for easy caring and do not allow Scouts to swim alone or dive.
7. Ensure the Scouts take sufficient rest, and perform headcount before and after the activity.
8. Bring along the first aid kit and equipments for assembly such as whistle, signal flag, loudspeaker, etc.
9. Be alert to any sudden changes of water condition, so as to give full attention to the safety of the Scouts.
10. The use of masks, snorkels, fins, ear plugs or swimming aids are not recommended.

Expedition & Mountaineering

I. Principles

1. Adequate equipment for expedition and mountaineering is essential.
2. Bring along a mobile phone, sufficient dry provisions, map, compass and flashlight for emergency use.
3. Expeditions and mountaineering should be led by experienced leaders.
4. Check the weather forecast before departure. Pay special attention to the warning signs of thunderstorm, cold weather and rainstorm.
5. Participants should know the route, expected duration and level of difficulty of the activity.
6. Concerned agencies should be informed before the activity. A copy of the detailed route chart should be given to the responsible person of the sponsoring authority. Appropriate action should be taken when the team fails to return within the scheduled time.
7. Stay calm in case of accident and discuss for solution, paying special attention to safety. In case of injury, apply first aid to the injured first and then take appropriate action. Falling back to the starting point is usually more advisable.

II. Personal Guidelines

1. Wear quality and suitable trainers or hiking boots.
2. Bring along a sun cap, rain coat and wear quality thick socks and comfortable clothing.
3. Maintain a constant speed. Do not lag behind or get too far ahead.

4. When feeling tired or exhausted, do not proceed and inform the team leader as soon as possible.
5. Know the international mountain distress signals (Long whistle blow for 6 times, long flash for 6 times or shout for help loudly, repeat the signal after pausing for one minute) and response signals (same as above but only for 3 times).

III. Leaders' Guidelines

1. Seek prior consent from parents and respective Scout Unit, and consideration must also be given to the team members' physical capability before conducting the activity.
2. Divide Scouts into teams (10 Scouts per team is recommended). The speed of the slowest team member should be taken as the speed of the whole team.
3. Besides the team leader, one experienced assistant should be deployed at the back of the team to ensure that members would not be left behind or get lost.
4. The team leader and the assistant should work collaboratively and have an agreed mode of communication. In case of accident, they should inform each other, and make arrangements to take care of the team members.
5. Identify the locations of hospitals and police stations along the route prior to the trip and bring along sufficient dry provisions, nylon strings, first aid kit, team member list and mobile phone.
6. In case of adverse weather, prompt decision should be made after careful consideration. Make good use of the map and compass.
7. When seeking rescue, team members should be paired up with a written message, containing full information of the situation.

Camping

I. Principles

1. Check the weather before departure and listen to the radio weather forecasts at regular intervals.
2. Do not go camping when the thunderstorm warning or a tropical cyclone warning signal is in force.
3. Lay out the tent on a flat surface sheltered from strong wind. Avoid pitching a tent close to the beach or riverbanks.
4. Do not camp in the woods or amid dense vegetation. During rainy seasons, avoid laying out the tent on the mountain peak or under a tree.
5. When the Red Fire Danger Signal is in force, use dry provisions and avoid lighting any fire.
6. Always cook outside the tent, and keep inflammables away from the cooking area.
7. Boil stream water before drinking and make sure that the source from which the water is taken is clean.
8. When camping in remote sites, it is advisable to inform the nearest police station and other related agencies the location of the campsite beforehand.
9. Be familiar with the locations and contact numbers of police stations, Country Park Management Centres and hospitals near the campsite.

10. Carry along a first aid kit, map, compass, whistle, flashlight and enough dry provisions for emergency use.

II. Personal Guidelines

1. Before departure, inform parents of the location, time, date of the camping activity and the contact number for enquiry in case of emergency.
2. Do not leave the campsite without approval and carry out activities in groups.
3. Do not eat or drink too much and take sufficient rest, so as to avoid exhaustion.
4. In case of accident, keep calm. Take stock of the situation and decide on what to do.
5. Know how to treat minor injuries, snake and insect bites, and bring along personal medications.

III. Leaders' Guidelines

1. Seek prior consent from parents and respective Scout Unit, and consideration must also be given to the team members' physical capability before conducting the activity.
2. Inform and report to concerned agencies before and after camping.
3. Know the environment of the campsite and have knowledge on how to call for rescue.
4. Possess good knowledge on camping skills and have sufficient experience in camping activity.
5. Recruit sufficient assistants for performing different tasks and monitoring the activity regularly.
6. Stay alert at night when camping in remote areas.



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