

Camp Chief Hector YMCA



Outtripping Handbook

Students' poems written during Outdoor Schools at Camp Chief Hector YMCA

I Am One with the Wind

I am one with the wind
as I sit here as it blows me away, I'm flying now
higher and higher over countries,
over the clouds I am going, I am seeing
heaven now, it's a beautiful place
in the wind.

The Strong Scent of Spruce

I am sitting in what seems like perfect scenery in a large painting.
Crispy, crunchy autumn leaves beneath the tall aging tree.
If only this was my backyard – HUGE, MOUNTAINOUS Mountains,
are in the background, towering behind trees
and long, rolling hills.
This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to have the privilege
to come out here and just write.
Have you seen mountains? Large mountains, huge mountains,
stretching to the sky mountains, making shadows on the other side mountains.
Have you seen mountains?
The strong scent of pine, spruce and other smells is so relaxing I could fall
asleep.
Ha, ha, maybe I will if we have time.
Z. Z. Zzzzzzzzzzzz

Table of Contents

The Spirit of Living Outdoors: Camp Chief Hector YMCA Outtrips	4
Safety: Quality Adventures = Safe Adventures	6
Camp Chief Hector YMCA RISK MANAGEMENT MISSION & GOALS	10
Creating a tested and trustworthy handbook	10
YMCA Outtripping Values, Characteristics & Opportunities	11
Law and Leadership: Legal Obligations & Negligence	13
Our Team and Its Expectations	14
Learning & Teaching	15
Risk Management	18
Group Leadership Skills	24
Sleep – Food – Space – Shelter: Basic Needs	26
Healthy camper-centered/staff-involved leadership Initiative	27
Comfort and Reassurance	28
Effective and Respectful Communication	29
Respectful Control	31
Professional Boundaries and Area of Permission	32
Sense of Fun and Optimism	34
Conflict Resolution	35
Reducing Stress	37
Leadership Strategies – Directive to Delegate	38
Storm, Norm, Perform, Transform	39
Receiving/Giving Feedback	41
Self-Awareness	42
Tolerates Adversity & Uncertainty	44
Providing Choices	45
Relationship-Building	47
Encouragement and Recognition for Effort	48
Outtripping Games & Songs	49
Co-counsellor Check-Ins	50
Time to Oneself	51
Staff and Camper Roles on an Outtrip	52
Managing Weather: Rain & Cold, Heat & Sun	53
Personal Clothing/Gear Checklist	59
	64

Backpacks: Packing, Wearing, Caring	65
Hiking Pace	67
Blisters	69
The Rest Step, Talus, Scree & Snow	70
Peaks, Cliffs, Ridges	72
Creek and River Crossings	74
Day Hikes	76
Off-trail Travel	76
Lightning	77
Going for Help	79
Navigation	79
Lost	83
Compass	84
Wildlife	84
Bear Encounter	89
Random Campsites and Minimum Impact	91
Water for Drinking and Cooking	91
Pooping: Managing Human Waste	92
Washing Clothes and Bodies	92
Rules: Campsite & Cooking	94
Rules: Hiking Backpacking	97
Rules: Canoeing	102

Reading this Handbook does not minimize or point out all the inherent risks and hazards of wilderness travel. The Camp Chief Hector YMCA Outtripping Handbook can assist our trained staff in teaching clients. It is not an instructor's or counsellor's qualifying text. It is supplemental to prior learning in the field and to sound judgment based on evaluated experience. No person associated with the authorship, publication or distribution of this handbook accepts responsibility for any property damage or injury resulting from participating in activities described in this book. Information in this Handbook does not indicate an endorsement from the referenced organizations.

The Spirit of Living Outdoors: Camp Chief Hector YMCA Outtrips

Two stories capture very well the spirit and the experience of outtrips from Camp Chief Hector YMCA. The stories are told to us by Canadians who lived long and well with the joys of the outdoor life.

Bill Mason (1929 – 1988)

“Most people call it “camping,” but I prefer “living outdoors.” Living outdoors suggests a closer relationship to the land. It is an art, but it is even more than that. It is the beginning of a relationship with the world of nature, a world of lakes and rivers, plains and sea-coasts, hills, mountains and canyons.

Films, books and stories almost always portray wilderness as dangerous. Even children’s stories are loaded with all the terrible things that can happen to you in the deep, dark forest, from being turned into gingerbread to being attacked by a big, bad wolf. We love to watch or read about other people enduring all kinds of adversity. I’ve seen films in which the hero breaks his leg in a plane crash, goes over a waterfall, is attacked by a grizzly and a pack of wolves. Our culture calls it adventure, but really it’s adversity.

I have always loved doing adventurous things, sometimes walking that thin edge, but I’m not all that keen on adversity. It’s not much fun being cold, miserable, hungry and lost. Adversity is usually the result of poor planning, inadequate equipment, incompetence or a combination of all three. Occasionally, through circumstances beyond our control, we do run into difficulties. I’ve been uncomfortable many times. I’ve suffered because of bugs, cold, heat, wind, rain, and exhaustion, but none of these rates as adversity unless it is sustained over a long period of time. It’s the contrast between an arduous day and the sheer comfort of the camp that makes living outdoors interesting and exciting.

One way to avoid adversity is to stay at home. Another way is to learn the skills and acquire the equipment that will make adversity a remote possibility. Much of the hardship experienced in North America by early European explorers could have been avoided if they had adopted the ways of the Native people. The polar explorers, Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen, illustrate the point very well. Scott dressed his men in clothes that were best suited to sailing. He and his men perished. Amundsen had great respect for the Native people and he marveled that they could survive in so harsh a climate. He paid close attention to how they clothed themselves. He made loose-fitting clothes of fur like theirs, using the layering principle. Their clothing was drafty, but that allowed moisture to escape. Amundsen made it to the South Pole and back.

On my first outtrip in 1946, we arrived at our campsite in the dark, burnt our food, and became soaked in the rain. This was my introduction to adversity and I didn’t like it. I am sure many kids on that trip never set foot again on an outtrip. I just knew

there had to be another way. Things have improved since then; that camp now has one of the best outtripping programs in Canada. And I, personally, have been trying to stamp out adversity and rigor in all kinds of camping ever since.”

Song of the Paddle, Bill Mason, Key Porter, 2004

Bill Mason reminds us all – insists of us all – that adventures are to be enjoyable. After all, outtrips are, for many people, greatly anticipated vacations! For us as for so many, outtrips are not “proving grounds” or a “test of one’s mettle”. Framing outdoor experiences as “epic” or “hard-core” is a very limiting view: it goes so far as to prepare one to perceive adversity where it may not even exist. *Providing* a rigorous or unpleasant experience, on the other hand, is simply a poor showing. Under that sort of lack of leadership an OT could be the last outdoor experience for many young people. What a tragedy that would be, considering how ever-giving and ever-inspiring the natural world is.

Yes, outtrips are to be enjoyed! “Tough” or “macho” descriptions of OT’s are bound to have their bubbles burst: everyone eventually discovers that outtrips are in fact *relaxing* and *refreshing*! Similarly, outtrips that are described as “the first time ever”, are also headed for disappointment: we all know that journeys were made upon this earth for tens of thousands of years by generations of families: women, men, children, grandparents and infants. The paintings, homes, tools and middens of our ancestors abound in every spot on earth, in every valley and upon every plateau. Those early journeys must have been astonishing...as are ours today. Bill Mason is right in saying that journeys upon the land build our relationship with the world of nature. At Camp Chief Hector YMCA, we build this relationship to be inspiring and lifelong.

Phyllis Munday (1894 – 1990)

“We didn’t go into the country to climb among the mountains and run out and leave it. We went in to find out all we possibly could about glaciers and mountains and animals and nature and everything about it so that we could bring out the information for the interest of other people as well as for ourselves. There just aren’t any words, but in the mountains you are so very close to nature. Mother Nature can be severe with the careless, but I always feel a friendship with mountains, almost as if they were human. What a life we’ve had. Nothing can take away our mountain memories!”

Off the beaten track, Cindi Smith, Coyote Books, 1989

In the early 1900’, Phyllis and Don Munday made several dozen journeys into Canada’s western mountains. Just like Phyllis, we immerse ourselves in rich learning and friendship – in what nature has to offer to a well-prepared group of adventurers. We

live with a grand curiosity for all that is around us, acting on it intelligently by playing in the natural world with our new friends and with our old friends. When we are really playing together, in a focused kind of calmness, we make surprising and rewarding discoveries about ourselves, about our friends, and about the natural world.

Quality Adventures = Safe adventures

It has to be true that a good adventure with children – with minors away from their parents – is a safe adventure

The word “safe”, though, can mean several things. To begin this journey into Outtripping Leadership, let’s clarify our understanding of the word “safe”.

“Safety” at Camp Chief Hector YMCA means providing the competent leadership that supports the words and the spirit of Camp Chief Hector YMCA’s rules, guidelines, training and experience. Safety means managing risks within the YMCA’s risk tolerance.

The **risk tolerance** of Camp Chief Hector YMCA (the amount of risk this camp is willing to accept) has been carefully designed, chosen and communicated as acceptable by the staff and families of the YMCA.

Providing experiences and care within Camp Chief Hector YMCA’s risk tolerance is our deepest and strongest promise to families, staff and the community. It is our ultimate commitment. It is our four values – Responsibility, Honesty, Caring, Respect – rolled into one solemn pledge.

A person’s **competence** is their behaviour based on an interactive combination of their skills:

- Attitude
- Confidence
- Knowledge (including knowledge of Rules)
- Experience
- Judgment
- Group management
- Mechanical skills

Importantly, competence also includes the ability to improve competency by integrating new learning from a previous experience (of one’s own, or of others’).

The Rules and guidelines of Camp Chief Hector YMCA must be supported by us all – individually and as a team – complemented by our judgment. By being competent in this way, we accomplish these essential tasks:

1. We respect the commitment we have made to our families
2. We respect the commitment we have made to the YMCA and the YMCA's community relationships
3. We protect campers and ourselves from traumatic situations
4. We empower campers by teaching to them authoritative risk management practices
5. We protect ourselves from legal challenges regarding our professional conduct

Safety does not mean that risk is not present, or that incidents cannot (or will not) occur. Safety means that the Rules and training of Camp Chief Hector YMCA is being supported during each and every activity. This is stated clearly on our website for families and staff to read, understand and acknowledge. Here is part of our Risk Awareness information as presented on the website:

Risk Awareness

To be clear, any of the activities at Camp Chief Hector YMCA involve certain emotional and physical risks and many of them include the risk of disability, death or psychological trauma in the event of a serious incident.

Some of these hazards may be familiar to us in our home communities: motor vehicle transportation, lightning, tree-fall, uneven ground, inclement weather, fire, hot liquids, infectious illnesses, and equipment failure.

Some of these hazards may be more unique to the setting at the Camp Chief Hector YMCA: lake water, river water, entrapment in vegetation or equipment while in moving water, falls from a High Ropes facility due to equipment failure or an error in judgment, wildlife encounters (including cougar and bear), falls from horses, bites/kicks/other-encounters with horses, rock fall, uncontrolled slide on snow or rock, a fall from heights, steep terrain, and remoteness from emergency medical services.

The hazards listed, and other hazards not listed, can pose a risk to even a well-trained leader. Any of the Camp Chief Hector YMCA's activities can, due to an error in judgment, or to the factors of nature beyond a leader's control, become hazardous and potentially life-threatening.

A family must weigh the risks that may be encountered at camp with the strengths of the Camp Chief Hector YMCA's risk management plans and with the benefits of the camping experience.

Adventure

Safety, though, is more than simply meeting the standards of Rules & Guidelines. The Oxford Dictionary provides a definition that fits very well our purpose: safety is “the state of feeling safe, stable, and free from fear or anxiety”. We all agree that we do not want to work in an environment of “fear or anxiety”. People do not function well when fearful or anxious – neither campers nor staff members.

How do we integrate this commitment to safety with our joy of adventure? After all, we do like adventures!

All adventure has an element of uncertainty in the future. Uncertainty is essential to adventure. The word adventure is from Latin: “ad” + “venire” = “comes” + “towards”. Something uncertain is coming towards us: a new morning, a new friend, a new idea, a new activity, or a new vista. The thrill of adventure is that we aren’t sure how our interaction will go with what “comes towards” us.

Competency creates adventure – and a sense of personal effectiveness. A lack of competency (relying on luck, on chance – on a gamble) creates anxiety, adversity and frustration. With competency, we expect the outcome will be positive.

Do we really expect a positive outcome?

More than might be expected, we emphatically can and do expect positive outcomes – outcomes free from physical or emotional trauma. When we follow our training and experience and when we use our judgment based on our training and experience, there is ample data demonstrating that the outcomes are overwhelmingly positive, even when we include “instructor error in judgment” as a contributing factor to incidents.

Example of Incident Data: American Camp Association – Healthy Camp Study

American Camp Association initiated a five-year Healthy Camp Study – a national injury and illness monitoring program in U.S. camps. Over 170 day and resident camps have participated in the study to date, submitting weekly online reports of significant injury and illness events experienced by campers and staff. The consistency of the data provides insights into organizational practices for the health and safety of campers and staff.

Research on injury rates from camps and youth sports shows that children are less likely to be injured in day and resident camps than in organized sports in which youth are involved.

- The study's average showed an injury rate of fewer than 1 out of 1,000 resident campers (injuries included required that the camper took more than four hours out of program, or injuries that required hospital/clinic care)
- Summer camp injury rates are four times lower than injuries rates in children's organized football
- Summer camp injury rates are lower than injury rates in children's organized soccer, volleyball, softball, baseball and wrestling
- Relatively speaking, summer camps are quite safe!

Adventure Program Risk Management Report

What does incident data say about outtripping – about hiking in mountains, paddling on lakes and rivers and oceans, and riding along trails?

Data was collected in the 10-year Adventure Program Risk Management Report (APRMP). Forty-Three organizations submitted incident data. Over 800,000 program days were reported. The participating organizations provide extensive outdoor education programs. NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School), for example, has programs on four continents involving canoeing, horse-packing, kayaking, sea-kayaking, backpacking, multi-pitch rock climbing and high mountaineering.

Again, injury rates were lower than those experienced in organized traditional team sports. Specifically, the data showed an overall backcountry injury rate of one injury per 2000 days of activity for a single person. Sixty-five per cent of the injuries reported in the APRMR were strains, cuts and bruises – not dramatic injuries. When professional outdoor leadership is provided, living outdoors is a relatively safe experience.

At Camp Chief Hector YMCA, if all of the outtrips from one summer were done by a single person, that person would be hiking and paddling and riding for 8000 days. In order to achieve the level of safety reported by the APRMR, Camp Chief Hector YMCA would have 4 reportable incidents for all outtrips during an entire summer. That is a goal to work towards!

The message is very clear: when we are performing our work with professionalism, a quality and exciting outdoor adventure is indeed a safe adventure!

Camp Chief Hector YMCA Risk Management Mission

Camp Chief Hector YMCA is a leader at risk management within the child-focused outdoor activity community. Camp Chief Hector YMCA shows this clear leadership in its instruction, administration, oversight, and risk management development.

Camp Chief Hector YMCA Risk Management Goals

1. Prevent fatalities, disabling injuries and serious illnesses.
2. Reduce all injuries and illnesses:
 - a. Continually improve staff skills, administrative systems and programs
 - b. Continually improve communication amongst staff teams and within the outdoor activity community

Creating a tested and trustworthy handbook

The Camp Chief Hector Illustrated Outtripping Handbook is an authoritative text, edited specifically for Camp Chief Hector YMCA's activities and risk tolerance.

This book has been reviewed and approved by respected outdoor leaders that have worked closely for many years with the Camp Chief Hector YMCA. Reviewers include examiners for Paddle Canada and Paddle Alberta as well as Swift Water Rescue courses. Reviewers include backpacking guides, backpacking guide-examiners and outdoor recreation professors. These professionals come from a wide range of institutions, including NOLS, Mount Royal University, Parks Canada, Outward Bound, ACMG, and, significantly, accredited camps associations from Alberta, Canada and the USA. Public safety professionals from Alberta Parks and Parks Canada, who have long worked with the Camp Chief Hector YMCA, have also reviewed sections of this text. Camper-parents with professional outdoor guiding certifications have reviewed this text. Staff members from Camp Chief Hector YMCA and from YMCA Calgary yearly review this text and provided helpful revisions. The wide diversity of expertise and experience that has reviewed revised and approved of this text help it to be truly authoritative: the information presented comes from the very best outdoor leaders – leaders that are mentors, leaders that inspire.

At the same time, these very leaders, as well as the spirit of this text, insist that all leaders think for themselves – within the context of their employer's risk tolerance and core values. All leaders must share their concerns and significant lessons/observations with their supervisor at the soonest available time. Observations are shared in a professional manner. Resolving misunderstandings/miscommunication is a strong way

to prevent potentially dangerous errors. Timely reporting increases the likelihood that all groups may benefit from a leader's concerns and lessons. This system of feedback can save lives. It will certainly improve the experience of all. Feedback is an essential feature of an enriching outdoor life. Providing, receiving and acting on feedback - learning – is the mark of an outdoor leader.

YMCA Outtripping Values, Characteristics & Opportunities

You are a leader for Camp Chief Hector YMCA – whether for the first or for the fifteenth time. You are a contracted, legally obligated leader of children, youth, families, and of fellow staff. You will be demonstrating the values that Camp Chief Hector YMCA promises to provide for all of its families and staff members. Understanding and acting on these values is, without any doubt, your most important, most fundamental responsibility. It is from these values that the Rules & Guidelines are owned and acted upon by each and every staff member and camper. In cases where neither Rules nor communication with a supervisor are available, judgment, choices and action can be extrapolated from these values.

YMCA Calgary and Camp Chief Hector YMCA Core Values

YMCA Calgary and Camp Chief Hector YMCA is committed to practicing and demonstrating the core values of respect, honesty, responsibility and caring in all aspects of the organization.

The Values of YMCA Residential Camping:

1. An educational experience
2. Group living
3. Respect for each other
4. Leadership
5. Cooperation
6. Growing in spirit, mind and body
7. A sense of responsibility toward the natural environment and each other

The YMCA's unique characteristics provide campers with the opportunity to:

- Build leadership skills

- Establish good daily health habits
- Increase their strength and endurance doing fun and adventurous activities in a supervised and safe outdoor setting
- Fulfill emotional needs for affection, acceptance, new experiences and a sense of worth
- Understand and appreciate people of other religions, cultures, nationalities and races
- Develop a sense of responsibility toward the natural world and one's place in it
- Participate in democratic group living, gaining a sense of independence, self reliance and appreciation of one's interdependence with others
- Learn and enjoy a wide range of skills and activities, physical, social, cultural and environmental that may contribute to a healthy and well rounded life in later years

Law and Leadership: Legal Obligations & Negligence

(From Charles Gregg, in Lessons Learned II, Ajango, 2005)

Doing our job well is a legal obligation. Being competent is a legal obligation.

It is a legal and ethical obligation to know and to act according to our competence, and specifically, according to the following:

- The YMCA's values
- Camp Chief Hector YMCA's Rules
- The training provided by the YMCA
- One's personal experience, as it complements (without contradicting) the YMCA's values, rules and training

It is satisfying to know and act these points. But it is more than that – to be clear: it is also legal obligation. It is a legal obligation with legal consequences. This legal obligation for care rests on every person in every position at the YMCA. Acting competently includes acting with teamwork, and using effective communication. Although we may act independently often, overall there is a clear legal expectation that we act as a team.

When any significant incident occurs at camp or during camp's programs, there is an investigation conducted by YMCA Calgary. Some incidents may have legal consequences. As it relates to legal liability, an investigation of an incident (including a near-miss) includes a review of three questions:

1. Were there **warnings** of impending danger (warnings communicated, in part, by an organization's training and values/rules, and a person's competence, etc)?
2. Should/could the staff member and/or organization have seen what was coming and somehow **avoided** it – through physical action, verbal instruction or any other strategy of a staff-member/organization?
3. Did the staff member and/or organization in any way **enlarge** (make greater, increase) the risks of the activity?

When an investigation is legal in nature, it looks for **negligence**. Negligence is a wrong committed by one person against another, with four elements:

1. Duty: Duty is the legal obligation to act as a reasonable professional would have acted in the same or similar circumstances. This duty CANNOT be waived for persons under the age of 18 in the care of those other than their parents.

2. Breach of That Duty: A staff member (or any person) charged with having acted negligently must have failed in his or her duty to not cause harm to the person making the claim (i.e. the person suing the staff member).

3. Injury: There must be harm (in the form of property damage or loss, emotional trauma, other injury, or death) suffered by the person making the claim. NOTE: The claim may come from person having directly experienced a harm, or having experienced a near-miss (emotional trauma) or from an observer of a victim (again, claiming emotional trauma).

4. Causation: There must be a causal connection between the breach and the injury; that is, as articulated in the laws of many provinces, the injury would not have occurred “but for” the breach. NOTE: Lack or absence of supervision is certainly one of many forms of “causation”: although it may be a child, youth or even adult who harms him/herself, the harm would not have occurred but for the lack or absence of supervision.

YMCA Calgary does have legal counsel and insurance against legal action. YMCA Calgary does support staff members who have demonstrated that they have acted as a reasonable professional with similar training and experience would have acted. YMCA Calgary is not able to defend a staff member who has NOT acted the way a reasonable professional with similar training and experience would have acted. This is not an ethical choice, but a legal reality.

Apart from legal considerations, there are moral/ethical obligations. With professional competency comes not only professional satisfaction, but personal satisfaction as well. Conversely, with negligence, there are not only negative legal consequences but also negative personal consequences – consequences that may stay with a person for a long time.

Providing competent leadership manages legal risks as well as personal risks for those in one’s care, for one’s team-members, and for oneself.

Our Team and Its Expectations – Colleagues, Partners & Stakeholders

Each of our performance is interdependent on many other people all working towards the same goal: to provide a great experience at camp for campers and for staff members.

One purpose for listing many of our colleagues, partners and stakeholders is to help us all appreciate that respect for each other is important in our large organization – there

are a lot of people busy on a lot of different projects, all trying to achieve the goal stated above.

Another purpose to share this list is to highlight how many people are depending on all members of this team to support our goal, and to meet each of our expectations. An experienced outdoor leader from Alaska captures the responsibility of this very clearly: “Employees need to know that, in addition to clients, whole companies (including the livelihoods of the employees) are riding on their decisions. If guides can’t abide by the rules, they should quit and find different employment. Employees need to align themselves with their companies’ missions and follow their requests. Knowing and supporting what is in a training manual is a positive first step.”

Here is a partial list of the people we seldom meet, but whom without we would never be able to work at camp:

- Administrative staff in Calgary managing registration, wait-lists and changes in registration
- Community members who help raise \$300,000 for Strong Kids at Camp Chief Hector YMCA
- Managers who manage Camp Chief Hector YMCA’s insurance, banking, IT systems, legal support, payroll, and construction permits

Closer to our experience at camp, there are people who have expectations of us:

- YMCA Calgary & Camp Chief Hector YMCA
- Campers
- Parents
- Fellow staff members
- Outdoor recreation colleagues (other camps, park officials, rescue personnel, etc.)

Learning & Teaching

Teaching Tips

When learning is challenging at just the right level for us, it excites us.

If the challenges we give campers are consistently too easy, they may become disinterested – and the result may well be what we would call ‘misbehavior’: by their terms ‘trying to make life interesting as it should be’. They will invent their own challenges – some which we will admire and some which we won’t!

Too many challenges that are too difficult will similarly cause a camper to “tune-out” or become frustrated. The results will look like the same sort of behavior described above, but with an added mood of embarrassment and discouragement. These emotions are difficult to undo without an apology (followed by improved caring). A sincere apology is easy to give. Be aware that interest in further learning by the camper may seem tentative until the leader has proven that they really have changed their how they will teach.

Here are some simple tips to help us set up the mood for learning:

- Show the campers that you, too, are still learning:
 - Take on new challenges – try something that you have avoided
 - Re-view old habits, review old perspectives – and don’t let self-resistance to new ideas stand in the way
 - Show yourself to be seen learning from campers and from fellow staff members – learning simple and challenging lessons
- Be brief with instructions
- Give ONE instruction at a time. (Wait until that instruction is followed or completed well before giving another instruction)
- Teach in a progression. (Teach from skills campers have, to skills they are learning). For example, allow for practice and a high level of competency with basic canoe stroke before presenting more challenging strokes or new strokes.
- Seize teachable moments. (Teach when campers express an interest in a new skill.) For example, when a camper is asking many questions about a certain skill, or shows great interest in it, then the time is right FOR JUST A TOUCH OF THAT SKILL TO BE EXPLORED
 - Be careful not to subdue natural curiosity with over-teaching each time they express this interest;
 - In other words, leave much of the learning to them – give only as much instruction as is (a) necessary for safely and (b) desired by the camper
- Importantly, allow campers to teach. Create opportunities for campers to teach. People remember better when they teach what they have learned. For instance, allow a camper to teach how to approach a horse, or how to light a fire/stove, or how to resolve a conflict, or how to sing a campfire song

Encourage the love of learning: A **learning orientation** is a healthy and resourceful perspective to have – and we can help children develop a learning orientation. A person with a learning orientation enjoys the process of learning and persevering. They are not

hoping to be “the best among others” or to be evaluated by anyone in particular (except by themselves, perhaps). They hope to increase their ability and mastery for their own sake, and for the satisfaction that the process brings them, not to display their learning. This point of view helps people persist at difficult tasks; it helps them feel effective, by their own standards. It helps them want to keep on learning.

Building a learning orientation is done more with encouragement than with praise. Here are some good ways to encourage a learning attitude:

- Ask what the camper’s goal is/was
- Believe in a camper’s positive stable/innate ability
- Ask about what they did and how they did it
- Ask how they feel about how much they are learning or getting better

You are sharing in the fun, as opposed to evaluating the fun – so, ask about how they feel about their efforts, or recognize the specific actions they demonstrated to accomplish a goal (therefore focusing on the process and not the goal):

“It looks like you calmed down the horse by speaking to it and patting it on the shoulder. How exactly did you decide to do that?”

“How does it feel for you, when you are focused on doing that?”

Recognition and asking about positive behaviour for routine actions is especially important. It is the little things that make up the bulk of the day. Good, simple habits build character in people. Good, simple habits build a strong team.

“I think it really helps the team when you say please and thank-you.”

“You sure seem to help with the chores quite a bit.”

“You really made your tipi mate feel better by hiking with him/her. That’s what good friends are for.”

“You certainly seem to care for the canoes. Do you go canoeing when you are at your home, or is it mostly at camp?.”

Risk Management

Risk Management is the skill of earning the benefits of an experience while wisely and intelligently managing the risks of an experience so that they are encountered (if at all) at an acceptable level. At Camp Chief Hector YMCA, we **MUST** manage risks at the very specific level that we have promised to our families, to our association (and our professional peers/partners) and to ourselves. As stated earlier, there are legal and ethical obligations to managing risks at this level.

Risk: Risk is the potential to lose something valuable – something physical (belongings, health, even one’s life) or emotional/cognitive (confidence, friendships, clear conscience, curiosity, enthusiasm, joy).

Benefits: There are benefits to all of the activities Camp Chief Hector YMCA has to offer: forming friendships, strengthening fitness, increasing confidence at healthy activities, exploring new ideas and places.

There are hazards associated with all of the activities Camp Chief Hector YMCA has to offer.

External Hazards (potentially unsafe conditions): Hazards can come from outside of a person, such as cold or hot weather, failed or inadequate equipment/clothing, or uneven ground. These outside-of-a-person hazards are called external hazards. Often, external hazards are easy to identify. If they are hard to identify to the inexperienced eye, reading and authoritative instruction can make some of these hazards easier to identify.

Internal Hazards (potentially errors in judgment): Hazards can come from within a person, such as being in a hurry or being unaware of a route or having plans inappropriate for a particular group. These within-a-person hazards are called internal hazards. Often, internal hazards are quite difficult to identify. It seems that the more important it is to identify and adapt to internal hazards, the less able a person is to identify them. Often, only the observations of an honest and supportive peer (or a camper!) can identify an internal hazard.

Potentially unsafe acts: From the information above, it follows that for an undesirable incident to occur, there must also be an actual act – an action of some sort or another – that brings internal and external hazards together. For example, the potentially unsafe act may include the following: inadequate instruction, inadequate food/water, poor position on a mountain or a lake/river, or using an unauthorized procedure.

Near-Miss: A near-miss is a “close call” – a dangerous situation where the health of a group or of an person was compromised – where the group or person narrowly missed a real misfortune, but where there was no significant injury. Of course the “near miss” itself is an incident of sorts – but in a near-miss, no significant injury or illness results. It is VERY important to report a near-miss: the report can provide additional information or advice that may save others from a significant incident.

Anatomy of an Incident (Williamson & Meyers)

Potentially Unsafe <u>Conditions</u> + Potential <u>Judgment</u> Errors + Potentially Unsafe <u>Action</u> = Incident					
slippery rocks in a stream + do not want to change footwear + rock to rock jumping = ankle injury					
OR...		OR...		OR...	= ?
challenging weather	+	complacent	+	hiking in shorts and t-shirt	= ?
inadequate equipment		rushing		k up hot pot with hands	= ?
wildlife		desire to please others		too close to wildlife	= ?
inadequate equipment		over-confident		equipment not tied into canoe	= ?

Example of an undesirable incident: This example will be a near-miss, in order to illustrate that a near-miss can have many very real consequences.

Activity: Hiking with a group.

Benefits: Feeling of confidence that comes from comfortably exploring a new area, or from comfortably revisiting a familiar place with friends.

Risks: Possibly being hurt physically, or possibly having an emotional set-back, or possibly learning an unsafe practice.

External hazard: slippery rocks in a small stream (as well as the many other external hazards that a staff member is attempting to manage).

Internal hazard: complacency – believing the slippery rocks to be an insignificant risk; being in a hurry; many other internal hazards a staff member is attempting to manage.

Error in judgment: The act of leaping from rock to rock through the small stream, in order to save time, and because the leader feels they won’t fall – despite having slipped on rocks many times in the past (or perhaps because the leader has not slipped on rocks in the past).

Incident: The leader slips and falls without being injured. The leader feels somewhat embarrassed. Instead of apologizing to the campers and then demonstrating the correct way to cross the creek (walking, not leaping), the leader nervously laughs off the incident, without correcting his/her behavior or this behavior in others.

Consequence: The leader has taught unsafe habits – the act of leaping from rock to rock itself, as well as the act of teaching the concealing of errors. This consequence may have any number of further consequences: an experienced parent may lose confidence in the camp, upon hearing of the incident; the leader may repeat this unsafe behavior, having “got away” with it and having not reflected upon it. (The next leaping event may end in injury – ending the trip, losing families’ confidence, and requiring an evacuation stressful to the campers and the staff members.

The Satisfaction of Managing Risks

Risk management is the skill of obtaining the most benefits from each activity while minimizing or eliminating the hazards that are to be found with each activity. It is a skill that is satisfying to have, and just as satisfying to continue developing. In other words, risk management is both (a) a means to an end (it helps us enjoy benefits while avoiding or reducing risks), and (b), an end in itself (it is challenging and satisfying develop one’s skill in this area, and to teach this skill to others.

Systems Concept in Risk Management: The Necessity of Relationship Building

Safety really is everybody’s responsibility – we work together: we’re a team. This is more than a neat idea – it’s a fact. To illustrate ‘systems risk management’, let’s look at the incident of the injured ankle due to leaping from rock to rock during a creek crossing.

It may be easy to identify the “unsafe act” that contributed directly to the incident: a particular staff member jumped on rocks during a creek crossing. However, consider the other teams that had a hand in preparing that hiking experience:

1. At the point of hiring, management staff conducted interviews. Was the correct information conveyed at that time? Was the staff member interviewed placed in the position that was appropriate to his or her experience? Was the proper gear (hiking boots) recommended or insisted upon?
2. During pre-camp, there were opportunities for supervisory staff to provide training and for clarifying Rules. Was the correct creek crossing technique demonstrated and learnt? Was there feedback for unsafe actions? Was the appropriate route chosen? Was the correct team environment created?
3. A route was selected for the group and the Outtripping team delivered the group to their drop-off. Was it the appropriate route, given the group and the weather?

4. The Camp Chief Hector YMCA and YMCA Calgary leaders have an obligation to set a tone that makes clear that safety is the top priority, that safety is modeled by these leaders, and that formal opportunities to share comments or questions about safety are available. Did the full-time directors and their peers model and communicate this commitment to safety? Are there specific ways to share safety news, such as near-misses, other incidents or concerns?

This example includes only members of five teams within the larger camp team: the counsellor, the full-time staff, the section director, the outtripping staff, and the YMCA Calgary leaders. Also, on the whole camp team there are other very important members: the campers, the parents, the maintenance team, the food services team and the administrative team. Working together, this team can create a very safe and very exciting program.

Think of the incidents you are aware of, from Camp Chief Hector YMCA or from other organizations: it is a rare incident indeed that can be attributed solely to the leader at the scene of the incident. Much more often, the contributing factors are spread throughout a series of teams.

The better the teams at Camp Chief Hector YMCA communication with one another, the better will be the experiences for those in our care – and for staff members as well. The highest of the priorities of the various debriefs, section meetings, Support Team meetings and inter-department meetings and other feedback opportunities is to maintain and improve the quality of the experiences we provide at Camp Chief Hector YMCA.

External Hazards – Identification and Responses

External hazards can be identified using authoritative sources, such as government websites, land managers' documents available to the public, and guide-books or DVD's. For instance, Camp Chief Hector YMCA uses the Parks Canada website, Paddle Alberta training and Certified Horsemanship Association documents to inform external hazard training.

Particularly helpful are local information sources for hazards that are found in a specific region. To give an example, some mountain ranges do not have populations of Grizzly bears, whereas our local mountains do support Grizzly bears – knowing this provides local information about a significant external hazard. To give another example, ocean waves and currents are external hazards specific to some marine environments; ocean currents and ocean waves may seem invisible to a traveler new to that environment (thereby creating significant risk), even though the traveler may have a great deal of backpacking experience from other regions.

Local information is available on government websites. For instance, Camp Chief Hector YMCA uses trail and river information from government websites to update information on local weather, wildlife, water levels and trail conditions.

Responses to external hazards follow the well-defined Rules and training at Camp Chief Hector YMCA. This training is a compilation of authoritative practices from several sources such as government agencies, outdoor recreation associations and camping associations.

Internal Hazards – Identification and Responses

Here is a list of some internal hazards. Discuss these hazards with campers – find out which ones are the most identifiable, and which ones can be added to this list.

- **Complacency:** Being sloppy, so that if an accident happens, somebody says, “How stupid of me! I knew that could have happened!”
- **Risk perceptions:** Experience begins to minimize potential risks in the mind, but not in reality.
- **Overconfidence:** Being too long without a peer’s critique.
- **Poorly understood goals or poor goals:** Not discussing different goals, or when there are selfish or ‘hidden agenda’ goals.
- **Impatience and schedules:** Rushing for the van door or wanting to get to that amazing campsite as soon as possible.
- **Peer pressure:** Acting on pressure to do something not based on your own well thought-out goals.
- **Position power:** Inappropriate or unpracticed showing off of skills that others expect a person of authority to possess.
- **Immortal staff:** Thinking that training and experience makes hazards irrelevant.
- **Incorrect information:** Traveling in anticipation of terrain, or of a situation, which is not the actual case.
- **Distractions:** When hazards begin to pile up, or when focus is elsewhere.
- **Incomplete or incorrect individual or group assessment:** Incomplete or inaccurate readings on how an individual or group is feeling.

Internal hazards are sneaky. We hide them from ourselves! As Phil Powers of NOLS says:

“We carry internal hazards with us into the wilderness as unseen baggage – like the smelly sock that lurks in the bottom of our sleeping bag – and bring them to every decision-making session.”

There is no doubt: it is ONLY possible to have one's own internal hazards identified by someone other than ourselves (a supervisor, a fellow staff member or a camper), preferably someone with a different perspective than ourselves.

Don't let those internal-hazard or "smelly socks" stay in the sleeping bag unnoticed. Bring them into the light of day – talk about internal hazards specifically, with a fellow staff member. But, know this: there is no sense identifying internal hazards without making a plan to manage them – to reduce or eliminate them. S.M.A.R.T plans, with their specificity, are really only effective way to manage internal hazards. The question is not just, "What smelly socks have we got in the bag?" It is also, essentially: "What, specifically, should we do about it?"

There is a saying: "The mountain does not know you are an expert." Whether on a mountain, on a horse or on the water: risks and consequences do not change because of our experience, certification and knowledge. Risk only changes due to specific behaviours.

Improving Judgment

Judgment is our ability to call upon all our past experiences to create a specific plan of action to address a specific situation.

Good judgment is a skill distinct from mechanical skills such as paddling or riding. Physical skills without good judgment are inadequate and are likely to add to a group's risk.

Many of us do specific exercises to develop mechanical skills. Do we, as often and as specifically, do exercises that build good judgment? How can we increase our good judgment?

We can improve our good judgment by reflecting on our experiences. Good judgment grows quicker with INFORMED reflection. In other words, we have to find sources outside of ourselves that will bring fresh points of view to our actions. Informed reflection is very important, because whatever level of skill we are at, we will always have an "information horizon" past which we do not know what it is we do not know. (Sometimes, unfortunately, pride obscures this fact!) For that reason, we take accredited courses and ask for feedback from those who have recognized skill and judgment.

Teaching Risk Management

Campers are certainly members of our risk management team – legally and ethically. We have both a legal and ethical responsibility to inform campers of the risks of activities, and to actively include campers in discussions of acceptable ways to manage the risks of particular activities. From the youngest camper to the oldest camper – campers are intellectually and physically capable of understanding risks, participating in plans to reduce risks, and acting on the plans. To be clear: this does NOT absolve the

camp staff of the care they must provide. Actually, including campers in risk management is an essential part of creating a safe experience. It also leaves the camper with a higher level of judgment – a skill that they will take with them and continue to develop in new settings in their home community.

Here are fundamental questions to ask and points to discuss (and to have answered and acted upon) when facilitating risk management. These questions are appropriate for children and youth of all ages – from 7 to 17.

1. What specific and significant external hazards exist today?
2. What specific and significant internal hazards could exist today?
3. Share specific ways to manage each hazard (or the hazard being discussed), so that risk of the hazard is at a level that is legally and ethically tolerable for Camp Chief Hector YMCA.
4. What are the ways that Camp Chief Hector YMCA insists on managing the hazard?
5. If Camp Chief Hector YMCA does not have Rules and Guidelines for this activity, based on what we know of other Rules, what does our judgment tell us we should do, to act within Camp Chief Hector YMCA's risk tolerance?

Risk Management Skill-Transfer Bonus Questions

When away from Camp Chief Hector YMCA, each person might ask themselves these questions when confronted with a risk, (one we have accepted before or one new to us) whether at home, at school, alone, with friends:

1. To what degree am I willing to accept the consequences of a foreseeable and negative incident (even if it seems relatively improbable)?
2. If I am not willing to accept the consequences of a foreseeable incident related to the activity I am considering...what specific actions must I take to lower the possibility of a foreseeable incident to a level that I am willing to accept?

Group Leadership Skills

Group Leadership Skills are a leader's foundation. These skills relate to the group as a whole, to relationships between group members, and to individuals (including the leader themselves).

Competent group leadership skills create a positive feedback cycle: A well-functioning group is a safer group; and, a safer group is a well-functioning group. Far from being the

“icing on the cake” or “soft”, group leadership skills are the very bedrock skills that a leader uses to create a positive experience.

Group leadership skills and mechanical skills are very closely linked – so closely linked that often they cannot be separated.

For example, let’s look at a leader assisting a camper to light a stove. The mechanical skills necessary to (a) care for the stove, (b) correctly fill the stove, (c) pump the stove, (d) sit in an appropriate position, and (e) safely and comfortably light the stove are inseparable from the group leadership skills of (1) behaving and leading in such a way that the stove has been cared for and will function when needed, (2) maintaining the camper’s focus/compliance by having gained her/his respect, (3) teaching the skill in a motivating/encouraging way so that the camper is safe and likely to remember/repeat the skill, and (4) managing the cook-site so that distractions are low and the other campers are comfortable and supervised by a co-counsellor. It is clear that mechanical skills cannot function apart from strong group leadership skills.

Furthermore, there are some important differences between mechanical skills and group leadership skills:

- Mechanical skills are relatively unchanging – a stove, compasses and throw bags operate very much the same under many different conditions; whereas, a group’s character is ever-changing
- The list of mechanical skills for the sorts of outdoor adventures provided by Camp Chief Hector YMCA is relatively short and relatively easy to learn; whereas, the diversity of human behaviour (goals, motives, moods, etc) makes for quite a long list of useful interpersonal skills a leader may use; additionally, the acquisition and development of group leadership skills is an ongoing journey of refinement, innovation and re-learning
- Many mechanical skills are required at discrete moments (when the tents are to be put up, when a creek is to be crossed, when paddlers are to be rescued, and so on); whereas, group leadership skills are called upon every moment of the day – throughout the morning, the day and the evening, and often at intervals during the night

Group leadership skills have an enormous impact on safety and harmony. This section helps to provide a format for providing group leadership, as well as a good many strategies upon which to draw, depending on the changing circumstances of a group.

Sleep – Food – Personal Space – Shelter: The Almost-Magic Group Leadership Strategies

Before describing the many strategies available to an effective leader, it is important to describe the four BIG and almost-magic group leadership strategies. They are called “almost” magic because there is no guarantee that if these basic needs are met that a group will function effectively and harmoniously – but not only are they almost always effective, but if they are not being provided, then it is unlikely that other strategies will be effective. In other words, these are the basic needs of a group – the needs that must be met regularly in order to increase the likelihood that a group will function effectively and harmoniously.

Sleep: Young people and adults need 7.5 to 8.5 hours of sleep in order to behave with care and good judgment. The myth of the “warrior who does not sleep” is just that: a myth – it is emphatically not true. Much research has shown how inadequate sleep has led to many serious incidents. Proper sleep is in a professional leader’s skill set.

Food: A group nourished on regular snacks is a happier group than a group hungry and wondering when the next bite is available. A group that is beginning to squabble likely needs something for their stomach before a debrief of their dynamic. In many cases, a tasty bite or a satisfying meal resolves what seemed to be difficult conflicts.

Personal Space: In modern medicine, oftentimes a cure is developed before the cause of a condition is known. Similarly with group quarrels – their source is often difficult to identify, and even identifying the source of a quarrel does not mean the quarrel will go away. On the other hand, 5 – 10 minutes of alone time (supervised, at safe areas and within the safe ‘control-able’ distance of the leader) can put people back into calm and patient moods. Finding a short period of alone time is amazingly easy, safe and effective. Each person, on their own, can read, write, draw, day-dream, focus on one’s breathing, sing songs, etc.

Shelter: It’s easy to laugh and play cards or sing a song when there is a roof over one’s head – whether that is a tipi canvas, a tent roof or a tarp. It’s harder for a camper to put on a brave face, let alone a silly face, with rain falling on his or her head – or with a hot sun beating directly down on them. A simple but effective shelter can make a great improvement in a group’s morale.

Healthy Camper-Centered/Staff-Involved Leadership – the leadership of Camp Chief Hector YMCA

Defined

With camper-centered/staff-involved leadership, camp staff focus on campers' goals, and they are "right in there" with the campers, doing the activity with them, rather than observing the campers.

This is a dynamic style of leadership: group and individual goals (and the strategies to attain those goals) are chosen/pursued by the camper with the direct and interested support and involvement of their staff member. In other words, the staff member is engaged IN THE SAME ACTIVITY as the camper

In this style of leadership, the camp staff may alternate between leading and facilitating each activity, depending on the necessity of a particular outcome (from a physical and emotional safety perspective).

Significance

Healthy camper-center/staff-involved leadership creates strengths and an outward-orientation within a child or youth: more supports, more skills, more relationships. This leadership avoids dependency; it avoids the poor sort of independence that is gained through lack of an adult's supervision/involvement. (See, Appendix: Search Institute Evidence-based Developmental Assets.) Healthy camper-centered/staff-involved leadership maximizes the campers' ownership, empowerment and hands-on growth. Experiences are more meaningful to campers and learning is more effective.

What it looks like in action

Examples include simple acts as well as more complex actions:

- Sweeping the lodge along with campers
- Having campers sing songs and read stories to the group at night
- Having apprentice lead/sweep on outtrips
- Joining in early morning activities (if campers decide to attend)
- Letting campers help create consensus on the OT menu

Sometimes, it is helpful for the staff member to initiate a plan, an action, an adventure – but then, if and when campers take the activity in a direction of their own choosing, the

leaders steps back from initiating the action and participate alongside the campers. A good example of this would be during a day-trip on an OT. The staff member would facilitate (with campers) the night-before planning, the preparation and the breakfast. During the day-trip, when the group finds themselves focused on some un-anticipated and highly interesting activity, the leader would let that activity continue, and be alongside the campers, playing with them.

Initiative

Defined

Initiative is the power or ability to begin or to follow through energetically with a plan or task. Initiative shows enterprise (innovative ideas/action without another's direction) and determination (perseverance to see a project through).

Significance

Initiative is an important characteristic of an outdoor leader: it allows a leader to take action on the many unforeseen circumstances that are a part of outdoor activities and that are part of the attraction of outdoor activities.

Initiative shows that a person can take responsibility for their circumstances. The person acts in a way that improves the group's condition, whether that is by the leader's own direct action, or by consultation with the group (followed by supportive and assistive action).

Importantly, the ability to begin a task presumes that an effective leader has the skill to perceive that an action ought to be taken.

What it looks like in action

A leader demonstrating initiative will be seen doing the following (and many other actions not listed here):

- When at program areas, guide their group in helpful chores without being asked to do so. After these chores are done they will ask the program area staff, "What else can we help with?"
- Assist or facilitate the tidying and reorganizing of a cook site while it is still in operation.
- Call a meeting of the group to discover a fun, empowering and effective way to begin the day at "wake-up" time.
- Leading a group that volunteers to take on projects and chores.

- Keep a very tidy and secured-for-difficult-weather campsite. This will have been achieved with ready and willing assistance by the group; or, the clean-up may have been initiated by a camper (perhaps with a friendly reminder by the leader) and actively and cheerfully assisted by the staff member. In this case, the leader shows the initiative to follow the camper's directions, thereby not only making themselves helpful to the camper, but demonstrating to the camper that the camper is capable of leading.

Comfort and Reassurance

Defined

Comfort and reassurance is acting so that all members of the group are sufficiently fed, clothed, kept warm and dry, provided with sufficient sleep-time and provided with friendship. It is letting those in one's care (and one's colleague) know that they will be well-cared-for. It is showing that all members of the group know that they will be given qualified help if they are injured or ill. It is acting so that all members of the group are listened to and respected. By doing so, it is also letting the group know that this level of care will be available in the future.

Reassurance and comfort also includes providing information to the group: a clear and specific plan of the adventure they are about to embark on, for instance. Reassurance and comfort includes integrating group goals and individual goals.

Significance

Reassurance and comfort removes from a group and from individuals personal concerns and allows for cooperative action, empathetic thinking and creativity.

A saying that captures the significance of reassurance and comfort is, "The tiger hunts in peace." The tiger is able to focus and be creative when its primary needs are met, when it is not distracted by mental or physical discomforts.

A group (and each individual) that receives trustworthy reassurance and comfort is able to do the following: make good decisions, support each other, share emotions with each other (thereby re-establishing goals and re-establishing a positive group dynamic), take on fulfilling adventures that are inspired by their own well-considered goals. A group experiencing reassurance and comfort can perform well at the basic tasks of camping. (It is not possible to do so when basic needs have not been met, or when basic needs are not expected to be met.)

What it looks like in action

Comfort: Physical comfort & Emotional comfort

Physical comfort:

- Stopping for a nourishing and tasty snack “just at the right time” (before someone asks for one).
- Being warm and dry (oneself) and keeping others warm and dry.
- In rain, using proper clothing, a tarp-bubble, and setting up tents so that they are dry.
- Cooking a tasty and timely meal (always, and particularly when circumstances are difficult or challenging).
- Staying found
- Staying on a comfortable timetable.
- Providing warm drinks once everyone is warm and dry. It includes, in hot weather, stopping IN SHADE for sunscreen re-application, sun hat checks, water drinking, foot drying and blister checks (a boots off everybody break).

Emotional comfort:

Providing emotional comfort includes checking in to see how campers are feeling. It includes believing, empathizing and caring for tired/worried/un-well/scared campers. It includes telling campers you enjoy their company and telling each camper that they are important to have on the adventure – and specifically why this is so. It includes asking campers for critical feedback (advice) on how one is doing as a leader; and it includes acknowledging the camper’s feedback by repeating it to them, by thanking them for it, by acting on the feedback and by checking in with them to ask how they feel since the feedback.

Reassurance

Reassurance is ONLY effective if, consistently, a leader has provided comfort for the group. If a leader has failed to provide comfort, particularly in “difficult” circumstances – rain, night-time situations, uncertainty, etc, attempts to provide reassurance will backfire and may cause declining morale. Therefore, to re-state, a leader must have demonstrated a consistent ability to provide a comfortable environment (emotionally and physically) in order to be able to provide reassurance.

Reassurance looks like these actions:

- Checking in with (and listening to) each camper regularly throughout the day. (Checking in individually allows a camper to speak without the influence of his peers.)
- Checking in regularly with each camper as circumstances become more challenging.
- Checking in regularly with the group.
- Providing ample information that is specific and understandable for the age of the group/individuals – information such as times, distances, elevations, meals, hazards and safety plans, etc.

A leader can only provide comfort and reassurance when they are leading WELL within their ‘comfort zone’ – not when they are leading at the edge of their experience. This is because the leader is leading not just themselves or peers, but eight children (or youth) – young people who are still learning how to respond to the changing conditions within the scope of the activities offered by Camp Chief Hector YMCA. This essential reality is enthusiastically accepted by those leaders who have had prior experience with having to work hard to provide comfort and reassurance during conditions that fell well within their comfort zones and well within the scope of activities offered by Camp Chief Hector YMCA. It is likely that, for some leaders who have not had prior experience with responding to these conditions, there is a temptation to lead beyond (a) one’s own comfort zone, and (b) beyond the scope of Camp Chief Hector YMCA’s activities. This temptation must be turned down: the legal and ethical implications of leadership errors have been described above (“Law and Leadership”).

Effective and respectful communication

Defined

Communication is effective when it clearly and easily shares ideas from one person or group to another person or group, without misunderstandings.

Communication is respectful when the people involved all feel that the communication is clear and that (a) rights and feelings have been treated fairly, (b) voices have been given the appropriate amount of time, given the circumstances, and been actively listened to, and (c) the communication has been solution-oriented (i.e. not focused on problems so much as focused on ways forward).

When discussing a particularly challenging issue, it is helpful to provide “back-up” and agree-upon trustworthy and authoritative persons for either party to consult if they wish (parents, supervisors, etc).

Not all communication reaches a conclusion that is desired by all. However, to be respectful, the process and the conclusion need to have met the criteria above.

Significance

Effective and respectful communication allows people to (a) understand the subject before them, (b) share their feelings and their goals, (c) revise their feelings and goals, and (d) have an effective hand in shaping their experience.

Effective and respectful communication creates trust and teamwork. Effective communication delivers and receives safety information.

It has been stated that a safe adventure is a quality adventure. As it relates to communication, the more effective and respectful is a leader's communication, the more successful is the group's adventure.

What it looks like in action

A leader with effective and respectful communication will be seen doing the following:

- Checking in with individual campers, checking in with the group
- Giving simple sets of instructions (giving one step of instructions at a time)
- Asking individuals for advice/feedback
- Walking with a camper or sitting with a camper or doing a chore with a camper – knowing that it is during these times that the camper is relaxed and more able to share what is on his/her mind
- Regular (scheduled and non-scheduled) check-ins with her/his co-staff member, sometimes using the Staff Check-in Card
- Is informed and has initiative, but at the same time asks questions.

Respectful control

Defined

Respectful control is the ability to find compliance while being well-reasoned, patient, and fair – while using a fair tone of voice. In other words, respectful control does not coerce with punishment/rewards; it does not use a loud/scary/frustrated voice; it does not use a voice that betrays a lack of confidence in the listener.

Respectful control is the ability to have others compliant, and to integrate the control so that the control is more likely to be internal either the next time or sometime in the future – the control comes from within oneself.

Significance

Some situations call for clear directions to be followed closely. A very clear health and safety situation might be responding to a Grizzly bear encounter. A situation, more frequently encountered, might be to have campers stop running and jumping on slippery rocks and to have them find a safer area (softer, better grip). With respectful control, a leader can prevent minor and significant injuries and illnesses.

With respectful control, a leader creates trust and comfort. This creates more creativity and cooperation within a group and by individuals.

What it looks like in action

A staff member using respectful control demonstrates the following:

- Equal tone of voice and body language – this tone can be cheerful and firm or “firm” and fair, depending on the circumstances. The tone is NOT frightening or frustrated or a mixed message of angry voice and joking body language (or the other way around)
- Asking those she/he is addressing to “please look at me now”
- Stopping what that staff member is doing in order to give a clear message
- Taking the time to give the reasons or the control
- Reflecting with the group afterwards about the need at that time for control and how people felt about it
- Thanking the group for their attention and for having followed the instruction
- Allowing one-on-one time for anybody that has questions about the instructions or the tone of the way the instructions were given
- Respectful control may use a fun and easy game to find control or attention – such as “if you can hear me, touch your elbow (clap twice, etc)”, or it may use an agreed upon fun signal to round up
- Respectful control may use a song, a parade or a story to draw the group in before giving instructions
- A leader showing respectful control may ask the group to meet up a short distance away from a distracting situation before giving instructions – drawing them over with interest.

Professional boundaries and area of permission

Defined

Professional boundaries (and area of permission) are the healthy limits to our interactions with campers (and with fellow staff members), based on our program descriptions, training (including counselling skills) and Conditions of Employment. It is the healthy limits we put on our interactions with campers whether it be (a) the activities we provide, or (b) the conversations we share, or (c) the physical interactions we have (giving a hug, providing first aid, and assisting putting on equipment. In most cases, these limits are clearly stated. Where these limits are not stated, they are judged as extensions of stated limits. For instance, the degree of difficulty of hiking is clearly stated; while caving is not written as a not-permitted activity, it can be understood as not-permitted by using judgment and extrapolating from the hiking degree of difficulty limits.

Put another way, our area of permission refers to those actions and words we use that are supported as healthy choices by all of the interested parties in our camp experience:

- Ourselves
- Campers
- Camper's parents
- YMCA
- Canadian law

Professional boundaries exist in a legal sense as well as in an ethical sense. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, our relationship with campers is arranged by a contract between the YMCA and the campers' parents. In other words, we did not strike up a friendship with campers as private citizens by meeting them at a park or by visiting their home – we establish our friendships through an arrangement with the YMCA.

Secondly, our relationship with campers is uneven, in the sense that an adult authority figure has a greater influence over a child/youth than the other way round.

Thirdly, our relationship with campers assumes the ethical and legal expectations of our profession.

Boundaries and areas of permission include communication with campers (under 18 years old) AFTER a staff member's contract has ended for the season, whether in person, by letter-mail or by e-communication.

Significance

Respecting our area of permission creates trust and inspires confidence in those we care for. It respects the healthy levels of trust a child and young person (and a fellow staff member) should put in an adult.

Correct boundaries and areas of permission also maintain a leader's authority – and authority is important to have in order to best serve those in our care: authority is used to benefit those in our care. Sometimes, an adult may break appropriate boundaries with the intention of relating better to the youth or children that they care for. However, rather than increasing understandings, this confuses the young person: the young person now has to integrate the idea of their leader supporting rules, with their leader also breaking rules. There is no need to be concerned that children and youth will view us as “too perfect”: although we are strong leaders, we are all sufficiently imperfect that children understand very well that we, too, have a lot to learn.

What it looks like in action

Establishing and maintaining professional boundaries looks like the following:

- Ensuring that Rules are followed – and explaining why (so that the camper will continue to learn to care for themselves)
- Allows personal space when dressing/undressing; they never swear
- When topics become focused negatively on unhealthy choices, or fart/poop talk that is going on just a bit too long, a staff member with professional boundaries asks, “out of respect for me, please change the topic”
- Discussing only those topics that are comfortable, fair and healthy for a camper/staff-member to discuss
- Asking staff-members/campers to do only those actions that are comfortable, fair, and healthy

Sense of Fun and Optimism

Defined

A sense of fun is the body language, actions and words that shows clearly that a leader enjoys their work (including the challenges). A sense of fun is the body language, actions and words that shows clearly that a leader can be light-hearted – that they can see the big picture.

A sense of optimism is the body language, actions and words that show that the leader believes that each individual (and the group as a team) will succeed at their goals. Perhaps goals have to be revised; perhaps the original goal is not as important as the journey; either way, the group and each individual has the ability to succeed in the eyes of an optimistic leader.

Significance

Like the other group leadership skills, a sense of fun and optimism allows a group (and individuals) to relax, focus and perform better.

What it looks like in action

A sense of fun does not often sound loud, brash or look funny; most often it is not. A leader with a sense of fun is seen by others as happy, content, focused and able to be light-hearted at the right times (rather than simply loud, childishly silly or foolish).

A leader with a sense of optimism is seen being patient with the actions and the progression of the group. A leader with a sense of fun and optimism is sensitive to others' perceptions of a situation; for instance, if a camper (of staff member) is worried/uncomfortable/sad/angry, the leader does not simply convey that "all is well – cheer up, trust me!" Rather, the leader empathizes, listening actively, re-stating the other person's concerns, and then explains why they, themselves, are optimistic. Of course, actions speak louder than words: an optimistic leader must have clearly demonstrated by their actions that they have the right to be optimistic, thereby earning the trust of those they lead.

A leader with a sense of fun knows how to be light-hearted in difficult circumstances without highlighting (thereby increasing) the difficult circumstances. Rather, a fun leader acts (and assists/teaches) to improve circumstances, and in doing so creates the conditions for light-heartedness and fun.

It is important to note that an optimistic leader – a leader with hope – does not use words like "sucks" or "hate" (and other words with the same intent), as in "this weather sucks" or "I hate granola". The optimistic leader is not ironic or sarcastic. In fact, an effective leader does not complain about anything! A leader who gripes with negative words is just setting up their group for poor morale; it's anti-leadership.

How, then, does a leader empathize with those around him or her about difficult conditions such as cold, fatigue, hard rain or slim rations? It certainly does not help to act as though the difficult conditions do not exist (even if – *or particularly if* - the leader is warm and well, being used to difficult conditions.) A wise approach is to describe the

conditions objectively, but without adding judgment: “It sure has been raining down a cold rain for some time now.” This lets the group know that the leader is aware of the group’s circumstance. The lack of judgment (leaving out the sentence, “...and I am very cold and miserable, and I bet you are too, and if you’re not you should be!”) allows each member of the group to decide for themselves how the conditions are making them feel – the leader has not tipped the balance one way or another. One might think that by sharing how a leader feels (“I am exhausted!” or “I can’t stand pasta and tomato sauce”), the group will feel relieved that their leader is a regular person just like them. This is not true, however. The truth is that the group needs someone that they can rely on in difficult circumstances – for their spirit as well as for their real needs – and the observant, sharing, caring, and strong/persevering leader can help a group believe in itself because they know their leader will not let them down.

Conflict Resolution

Defined

Conflict resolution is the ability to move forward, boldly, to solutions; to find common ground; to negotiate where fair to do so; to empathize and to compromise where fair to do so; it is the ability to improve relationships, in the opinions of all those involved.

Significance

Conflicts, disagreements, misunderstandings, and uncomfortable silences: these all will occur with any relationship and with any endeavor. Therefore, it is essential to be skilled at a variety of strategies to resolve these differences and to improve relationships. A well-functioning person (and a well-functioning group) is safer, has fun, and acts on goals with energy and optimism. Conflict resolution improves the experience of both campers and staff members.

What it looks like in action

A leader committed to conflict resolution, and skills in conflict resolution strategies, will be seen doing the following:

- Regularly checking in formally (with a check-in card) and informally with fellow staff members and with campers, using body language and words that clearly indicate an interest in building positive relationships
- Being patient at the check-in with a peer
- Paraphrasing what the other has said
- Not making jokes that would throw the sincerity of the check-in into question

- Re-stating goals that come from the meeting
- Addresses concerns with:
 - The right person – the person involved or the appropriate supervisor
 - At the right time – sufficient focus, not putting it off
 - In the right place – sufficient privacy and comfort
 - Using the right tone of voice – fair, neutral, patient, curious, optimistic of the outcome
 - The right content – staying within one’s professional boundaries and area of permission
- A leader demonstrates conflict resolution by sincerely thanking the other person(s) for joining in the discussion and the solutions

Reducing the effects and the source of Stress

Defined

Reducing the effects of stress is the ability to find successful and appropriate ways to be calm, patient and understanding in a stressful situation. Reducing the source of stress is identifying the source of stress and then finding successful and appropriate ways to either (a) reduce the source of stress, or (b) eliminating the source of stress, or (c) reducing the effects of that stress.

Significance

Stress in short episodes, recognized and handled intelligently, can be beneficial – it is the body telling the mind that an influential and time-sensitive concern needs to be addressed! However, un-necessary stress (the source of the stress is not in fact very dangerous, and is likely less dangerous than the possible responses to the stress), or intense stress, or (especially) stress that lasts longer than short period is unhealthy, can cause behaviour that harms relationships, and reduces good judgment. Stress, in short, can lead to emotional and physical injuries – to the person under stress, her/his colleagues, and those in her/his care.

What it looks like in action

During staff interviews, when asked, “Camp can be stressful at time, with several competing demands at a single time, long days and interrupted nights. Tell me about a time that you did something that reduced your stress,” the responses include the following actions:

- Taking time to oneself – not visiting with friends (in this case), but rather going for a 10-minute walk, pre-arranged with one’s co-staff members
- Planning ahead and preparing – giving oneself enough time to understand the task to be accomplished, to collect the proper equipment, to set goals, and to visualize successful events
- Getting enough sleep: for our age group, that means 7.5 to 9 hours of sleep; a 10 minute nap is also very helpful; on an outtrip, this requires that a group arrives at a campsite in time to have all the evening activities finished by 9 PM, with the campsite tidied/organized and prepared for the next day.

Adding to these strategies, past experience shows that not over-drinking alcohol (0 – 3 drinks over an evening) greatly reduces the likelihood of (a) fatigue, (b) injury, (c) interpersonal conflicts and (d) illness. Instead, it seems that time-off spent in healthy activities increases ones energy and optimism.

As well, exercise and meditation reduces stress. Meditation (or simple in-and-out focused breathing) can be very short in duration to be effective in the short term – as little as 5 minutes of simple focused breathing.

Ultimately, reducing the source of stress requires either that a person identifies and avoids the source of stress, or teaches themselves to view the source differently, or replaces unhealthy habits with a variety of healthy habits – hoping one of the unhealthy habits turns out (unknowingly!) to have been the source of stress.

Leadership strategies – directive to delegate

Defined

In this format, leadership strategies are described along a continuum, from Most Directive to Least Directive.

At the Most Directive end of the spectrum is the Directive strategy: one tells those in their care how to do a task, why, when and where – always with close supervision and support.

Next is the Tentative strategy: the leader states their opinion(s) about what ought to be done, and then asks those in her/his care what their opinions are. With this strategy, the campers have the benefit of the leader’s opinion – they can safely opt for that, or they may think of other options.

Following that strategy are two democratic strategies: (a) majority vote, and (b) consensus. With the majority vote, a vote is held on courses of action proposed by the

leader; the action with the most votes is the action taken. With consensus, a course of action is proposed by the leader, and when all agree to it (or some revised version of it), then the action is taken.

Finally, there is the Delegate strategy. With Delegate, the leader states what must be done, and delegates (or, better, takes volunteers) to attend to the task(s).

When considering which strategy to use, there are a number of questions to consider:

- Is the outcome very important to be done precisely (safety)?
- How likely are the campers able to create a precise outcome?
- Is there room for not meeting the outcome? If so, what would be the consequences?
- To what degree is empowerment important for this task? (Democratic strategies generally create the most powerful teams; the Directive strategy creates the least effective team; the delegate strategy must ALWAYS include active staff members directly involved with the projects campers have taken on – the staff members can be assistants/apprentices.)
- To what degree are group members expecting a simple decision, as opposed to a debate? Why is this so?

Significance

Choosing the appropriate leadership strategy is important because it may have a great impact on the group's safety and comfort; it will also have an impact on the degree to which the group functions effectively (and happily!).

What it looks like in action

A leader consciously using these strategies can be seen:

- Circling up the group regularly
- Uses these strategies efficiently, not dragging out un-wanted debates, but instead getting quickly to the point
- Asks questions frequently of the group and of individuals
- Knows and acts on the facts that:
 - Rules and safety judgment takes priority every time
 - Participatory leadership creates an engaged, empowered, positive, healthy and effective team – therefore, this leader can be seen coaching

delegated camper-leaders, and actively assisting campers as they work at tasks

- This leader's group transforms well at the end of their experience, having learnt many skills – with the reasons the skills are important
- This leader's group is happy at the end of an experience – though sad to miss each other and the experience, the group will be sharing stories, making future plans in their home communities and, importantly, asking others about their experiences – they will have integrated the habits of participatory leadership.

Storm, Norm, Perform, Transform: Group Development Stages

Defined

Typically, groups pass through stages in the development of their performance/cooperation together.

Storm: First, (after a short period of easy cohesion and cooperation due to their newness) a group “storms”: they struggle to discover their roles, hierarchies, habits, standards and alliances.

Norm: Following this phase, a group “norms”: they settle into learning to cooperate and achieve tasks with their newly created culture, though their performance is strong, typically it does not innovate or surpass expectations.

Perform: Next the group “performs”: the group works increasing well, often with performance innovations and re-inventions of their standards/roles/leadership.

Transform: Finally, and importantly, the group has the opportunity to “transform”. In this stage the group finds closure to the experience and with their present roles/standards and takes specific actions to look forward to future challenges, opportunities and situations.

These stages of group development can occur in “miniature” within the big picture. For instance, a group could be in the “perform” stage, generally, but may go to the “storm” stage when encountering a new and significant task.

The stages can move forward and backwards according to personal and external circumstances. For instance, a group that has “performed” for some time may need to re-shuffle its expectations (to achieve a more mature level of group-dynamic). The group may return to the “storm” stage in order to re-form the group so it may grow in a new direction.

Significance

Being aware of these stages of group development can help a leader understand the group they are leading. It can also help a leader be aware of the dynamic on their own staff team. This awareness can be helpful in a number of ways: the leader can plan appropriate activities for each stage of development; the leader can be more patient; the leader can ask helpful questions and make helpful suggestions based on the stage of the group's development; the leader can ask a supervisor for help, knowing that there may be particular strategies appropriate for a group in a particular stage of development.

What it looks like in action

A leader aware of the stages of a group's development does the following:

- In the leader's thoughts, the leader is cautious about entirely defining a group by a stage of development – they may be mistaken
- In their actions, the leader prepares activities for each stage:
 - In the "storming" stage, a leader will prepare and play get-to-know-you games, ice-breakers. They will involve the group in establishing clear and specific expectations
 - In the "norming" stage, the leader will help the group create scheduled tasks and specific leadership to-do check-lists
 - At the "performing" stage, the leader can be seen assisting campers who have been delegated roles. Also, the leader provides opportunities (like sharing circles) for the group to share feelings and ideas
 - In the "transforming" stage, the leader may have discussions about how each person will share/use their new talents, and how each person will engage with their friends/activities back in their home communities. The leader may have the group draw pictures of the group's accomplishments and the group's feedback/compliments for each other (closure) and may have the group draw/sing/discuss where they are headed back to.

Receiving & Giving Feedback

Defined

Receiving and giving feedback are essential communication skills. They are also specific skills, in the sense that the certainty that feedback has successfully been received or given increases with the amount of structure that is provided when the feedback is

received or given. In other words, successful feedback cannot be left to chance or to informal settings.

Significance

Receiving and giving feedback is essential to understanding each member of a group's feeling, thoughts, comfort, goals and health.

What it looks like in action

Receiving Feedback

- Preparation – understand feedback as helpful information for professional learning and growth – do not define yourself by critical feedback, it is one aspect of a person's changeable behavior
- Preparation – arrive at the meeting with an attitude of appreciation and of moving-forward
- At the moment – ideally, say back to the person giving the feedback these 4 parts:
 1. Re-state the feedback (so that both of you know that you perceived it correctly)
 2. Thank the person for the feedback (and/or ask for more examples/clarification)
 3. Explain how you will change
 4. Stay open for more feedback – ask: "What other feedback do you have for me"
- At the moment - begin using the "new", committed-to behavior immediately
- After the feedback - check in soon to ask if the new behavior has improved the situation

Giving Critical Feedback

- Giving critical feedback can be difficult and therefore may be awkwardly given. To be successful, plan ahead with a specific plan, including specific examples of positive behavior that outnumber the behavior that needs to change.
- Use "I" statements, such as "It seems to *me*," or "*I* want to know more about..."
- Be solution-oriented: look for solutions, state strengths, find common ground, do not dwell on theoretical causes – again, look for solutions.
- Be timely – critical feedback is better to give closer to the behavior in question

- Be SPECIFIC – give specific examples of the behaviour, only give what was observed/heard (do not read motives into the behaviour)

There are the 5 rights to giving feedback:

- Right person (give the feedback to actual person, or to their supervisor)
- Right place (find a sufficiently private and comfortable area to give feedback)
- Right time (close to the situation, but with sufficient time for ample listening and attention)
- Right tone (a respectful, hopeful and inquiring tone of voice and body language)
- Right content (specific examples, keeping with one's area of permission)

There is also a sequence of least-to-most intervention that is good to follow. The person goes to a level of greater intervention only if the person receiving the feedback does not understand or seems reluctant to receive the feedback:

1. Ask for more information, referring to the specific behavior (perhaps the person will identify the behavior and create a plan for change, all of their own initiative – this gives the greatest ownership)
2. The next level is to state the observed behaviour – again, perhaps the person will then create a plan for change of their own initiative
3. The next level is to state the observed behavior and provide, using “I” statements, the impact on others from that behavior – perhaps at that point the person will make a plan for changing the behavior
4. Finally, after stating the behavior and stating one's own perceptions of the behavior's impact, the person giving the feedback may need to create a plan for change with the person receiving the feedback

Self-awareness

Defined

Self awareness is the degree to which a person accurately knows (a) their leadership style, (b) their strengths, (c) their priority areas for growth, and (d) their personal agenda or their personal goals.

Significance

The greater a leader's self awareness, the greater a leader can lead effectively for the group, caring for themselves while at the same time facilitating the campers' goals. As well, the greater a leader's self-awareness, the more effectively they can continue to

learn as a leader. Strong self-awareness (when used with the YMCA's professional boundaries) will greatly increase the likelihood that a group is safe, happy and acting on appropriate challenges.

What it looks like in action

Self aware leaders (who are also strong and positive leaders for the YMCA) will be seen:

- Communicating often
- Frequently checking in with campers individually and as a group
- Checking in with their co-leader
- Doing those things that they have found helps them stay well-rested and stay aware of their role as strong and positive leader

Tolerates Adversity & Uncertainty

Defined

Within an organization (cooperating with other people) and in outdoor settings, there will be times when a leader encounters mental or emotional or physical hardships (adversity). This adversity may be caused by human factors of one's own, or of others' or of a combination of one's own and others': mistakes, failures, errors, miscommunications. Adversity may be caused by natural-environment factors (weather, wildlife). Adversity may be caused by a combination of human factors and natural-environment factors.

Similarly, there will be times, working within an organization and in an outdoor setting, when there will be uncertainty – when considerably less information is available than would be desired or even would be necessary to act with clear judgment and confidence. And, similarly, this lack of information may be due to the human factors listed above, or by factors within the natural-environment, or by a combination of the two.

That adversity will threaten a group and that uncertainty will occur are predictable, inherent aspects of outdoor leadership. They are NOT unexpected events.

On the one hand, pro-actively responding to threat of adversity and the phenomenon of uncertainty in a positive manner IS a leader's responsibility: a leader IS expected to improve the situation in a positive manner (for themselves, for their campers and for their fellow staff members). It may happen that the leader must tolerate considerably more mental and physical adversity than their campers, while improving a difficult

situation for campers – this, too, we anticipate and accept. (Imagine setting up tents in a downpour for campers while they wait under a tarp we have set up, and then cooking for those same campers while they warm up in the tents.)

On the other hand, it is NOT within the expectations of a leader to either (a) create uncertainty, or (b) create adversity, or (c) fail to respond with positive leadership to uncertainty or adversity.

Because we know that expecting and tolerating adversity and uncertainty is a leader's responsibility, and because we accept that they may be caused by human factors, we know that there are professional, positive, hopeful and teamwork-oriented strategies to communicate with our colleagues.

In a way, tolerating adversity and uncertainty is like a back-up generator in a well-built and well-maintained machine: one does not build errors or weaknesses into a system, one does not go looking for adversity or close-scrapes – however, should there be some adversity or uncertainty, should the power be reduced momentarily, then that reliable back-up generator turns on, just as expected.

Significance

Tolerating adversity and uncertainty allows a leader to provide a safe and positive experience for campers when circumstances become too adverse for campers. Importantly, the greater a leader is able to tolerate adversity (while at the same time NOT exposing the group to adversity – i.e. pro-actively avoiding adversity) and to tolerate uncertainty, the greater that leader will be to their group, either to a group of campers or to a group of staff members. It is important to note the greater a leader is to their fellow staff members, the more likely it is that campers not even in that leader's group will have a satisfying experience – because her or his fellow staff members will perform better partly because of the positive leader's influence.

What it looks like in action

A leader who is able to tolerate adversity and uncertainty has campers who never experience adversity! Their campers will certainly speak with hope and satisfaction of the great challenges they overcame, and these challenges may indeed seem monumental to the campers – but the adult hearing these success stories will know clearly that the campers did not experience the kind of adversity that in fact does present itself to poorly led groups.

A leader able to tolerate adversity and uncertainty helps to develop mature and capable campers and fellow staff members (as opposed to campers and fellow staff members given to inappropriate risks and bravado regarding avoidable hardship).

A leader who is able to tolerate adversity and uncertainty responds with a positive attitude to unexpected turns of events, whether created by human factors, by natural factors or by a combination of the two. That leader maintains their teamwork – strengthens their teamwork – when they encounter human-factor uncertainty or adversity. That leader strengthens teamwork by communicating professionally with their colleagues regarding human-factors seem to have led to adversity or uncertainty.

Providing Choices

Defined

Providing choices means believing in and acting on the fact that choices are ALWAYS available. Choices may be many or very few. Choices are ALWAYS in support of our training, the YMCA's Rules, and the spirit of the YMCA's mission.

Significance

Providing choices helps initiate action. Providing choices increases ownership (motivation, focus, effort). Providing choices strengthens a team. All of these factors increase the safety the satisfaction of an experience.

What it looks like in action

Frequently, the situation calm, comfortable and proceeding as planned. In these situations, there can be a very wide range of choices – what to do, where to go, when and who to get work at a task. "Where should we go, and how should we get there?"

Sometimes the choices are less broad, because of the group's dynamic or because of external factors. "We can cook up some cinnamon scones or we can go exploring towards that hill – what do this group want to do?"

Less frequently, choices are narrowed further: "Are you going to put on one or two sweaters?" "Would you like to do such-and-such now or in one minute?" "We can read "We can read one more chapter or we can go to sleep now. What is our preference?" "Would you like to clean the pots and pans with me, or would you like to stuff the tents

with (the co-counsellor)?" "Are you putting on your shoes and PFD to go floating, or are you doing something on shore?" "Are you going to wear shoes and socks before you begin cooking, or would you like to help put up the shelters?" "Would you two like to

find ways to become better friends now, or would you like to think for a bit and solve it together after dinner?" These choices are clear and stated by the counsellor. There is a time commitment as to when the action will happen. (Be open to productive-but-unanticipated choices offered by campers – commitments that are concrete and that may solve the challenge.)

Sometimes you might hear what seem to be unsafe or disrespectful or irresponsible choices selected. A workable response is something like, "Yes, that is an idea. We've chosen not to do that. We've chosen to do other things on our trip." OR "We don't do that here and here's why [it's not fair to the other person... it's too risky...]" It is important that the leader's tone of voice and body language is genuine, not sarcastic.

Sometimes choices are re-stated – sometimes this happens not long after they have just been stated! That's okay. Be patient. Re-state the choices: "You can add sticks to the fire, you can help start the fire next time, and you can collect firewood from outside. Playing with burning sticks is not a choice."

Very rarely, in emergency response situations, there may not seem to be room for choices. "I need you to sit over there with the group. I need you to do that now." However, stay open to alternative choices offered by campers (who may be in a stressful situation) that achieve the goal safely, though not in the way the leader had anticipated.

Relationship-Building

Defined

Relationship-building can be considered all of the other Group Management strategies, as well as spending one-on-one time asking questions about a camper's interests, recognizing strengths and facilitating growth.

Significance

Of course, the benefit of relationship-building is that a friendship develops and deepens. Of other importance to an outdoor leader, with relationship-building comes clearer communication (therefore a better understanding the camper's needs and a greatly likelihood of helping the camper meet those needs), increased compliance with safety instructions, greater motivation to help with group task, and a more positive attitude. This increases the chances of a safe and satisfying experience of the individual and for the group.

What it looks like in action

A leader successfully building relationships can be seen doing the following:

- Makes one-on-one time available with camper and with co-leaders
- Asking about the camper's interests
- Sharing personal information that is of interest to the camper and that is healthy for the camper to know
- Ensuring that their one-on-one time is shared with all the campers – with eight campers, this may take some specific effort, such as making notes in their Outtrip Logbook. However, the leader will find these one-on-one times throughout the day – at the Cooksite, at water breaks, in the evening, and so on

Encouragement and Recognition for Effort

Defined

Encouragement and recognition for effort is known as creating a LEARNING ORIENTATION. A staff member of a camper with a Learning Orientation works on goals, but with a focus on the process, as opposed to one particular "success". They are not working on a task to be "the best among others" or to be evaluated by anyone in particular (except by themselves). They hope to increase their ability and mastery for their own sake, not to display their learning.

Significance

A Learning Orientation helps a person persist with a positive attitude at difficult tasks. It helps them feel effective by their own standards. It helps them want to keep on learning and learning. It is a lot like playing!

What it looks like in action

Building a learning orientation is done more with encouragement than with praise. Here are some good ways to encourage a learning attitude – sharing in the fun, as opposed to evaluating the fun:

- Ask what the camper's goal is/was
- Believe in a camper's positive stable/innate ability
- Ask about what they did and how they did it
- Ask how they feel about how much they are learning or getting better

- Encourage their efforts – describe to a camper what they did well and remark that with their effort they can learn more of whatever they would like

“Wow, you’re learning a lot. What was your goal?”

“Well, you certainly are a calm, strong person during exciting times!”

“What did you do? You calmed down the horse or something? Right. And how exactly did you do it?”

“How does it feel for you, getting better at your goals?”

“Your horse still has some energy! I’ll bet that with your talent and imagination you’ll just keep trying to calm it down further. You’re good at that.”

Encouragement for daily, routine actions is especially important.

It is the little things that make up the bulk of the day. Good, simple habits build character in people. Good, simple habits build a strong team.

“You seem to enjoy saying please and thank-you.”

“I noticed you’ve been changing the chores you help with. That’s very helpful for the group. Thanks.”

“I think you’ve helped a lot of people hear the announcements, by the way you focus during them.”

“You really made your tipi mate feel better by hiking with him/her. You’re a good friend.”

“You should work hard to care for your canoe. You’re very considerate.”

Outtripping Games

Defined

Outtripping games are fun and simple games that are suitable for the group given the group’s distance from a trailhead, and the difficulty of an evacuation. The difficulty of an evacuation, in many cases, is quite similar whether the group is two kilometers from a trailhead, several kilometers from a trailhead or several dozen kilometers from a trailhead. Outtripping games use few or no props/equipment, mostly use just the imagination, and are quick to set-up: songs, word games, clapping games and improved celebrations.

Significance

Games and songs along the trail and at a campsite can maintain and improve morale/group-cohesion. Games and songs can open opportunities for relationship-building between staff members and campers and between campers – and between staff members. Games and songs, rather than being inconsequential add-ons, can be pivotal to safety, because a group that is cohesive and hopeful is likely to work together well and therefore be more likely to act wisely. Importantly, like having a sense of fun and optimism, the groups basic needs have to have been met before games and songs can be effective in maintaining or improves group morale.

What it looks like in action

Outtripping games include songs along the trail:

- Campfire songs and made-up songs
- 2-minute mysteries
- Word games such as naming countries (or other things) that start with the last letter of the previous item
- Improvised games include having unlikely celebrations, such as an OT birthday party, Christmas, or a music/theater festival, or a formal dinner
- Games include table games, card games, and role-playing games
- Experience has made it clear that outtripping games do NOT include games that involve fast running, chase-type games, bouldering or physically challenging group initiatives, etc – this is because of the possibility of in injury occurring during these games in a setting where managing the injury would be difficult

Co-counsellor Check-ins

Defined

Co-counsellor check-ins are times set aside for the two counsellors on an outtrip to have formal check-ins using Counsellor Check-in Cards to guide the meeting.

Significance

While informal check-ins between counsellors on an outtrip are important and must be done regularly, formal check-ins using the check-in cards are also essential. In this way, the communication is thorough, going through the check-list, making sure that all the important points to cover have been shared. This professional communication is

essential to maintain a high level of leadership – safe and successful group management.

What it looks like in action

Co-counsellor check-ins using the check-in cards produce great results, with counsellors who are good friends, with counsellors who are new acquaintances, and with counsellors who are experiencing some conflicts.

With good friends, the check-lists ensure that the counsellors share with each other important points that might otherwise be left unspoken.

With new acquaintances, the checklist ensures that the many topics are covered, thereby sharing new perspectives and goals.

With counsellors who are experiencing some conflicts, the check-in cards will help them find common ground, to provide each other with positive feedback (thereby increasing good feelings and cooperation), to isolate the conflict and to find effective solutions.

Setting aside this time for these check-ins can be tricky – often the end of the day provides an opportunity but a staff member may be quite tired, sometimes lunchtime provides a good opportunity after all the food has been laid out and campers are well into their meal. Of course, counsellors have to be providing effective and active supervision during their check-in, which is why an end-of-day check-in, while perhaps at a time when one is tired, seems to be work well.

Time to Oneself

Defined

Time to oneself is a brief time (5 to 20 minutes) for everybody (all the campers and the counsellors) when everyone gets some personal physical and mental space for themselves.

Significance

Most people say that one of the most effective and easiest ways to reduce their stress and rebuild their good judgment is to spend a short time by themselves. Therefore, it is important to make these times available.

What it looks like in action

Time to oneself can be quite short – 5 to 10 minutes – and should probably be not more than 30 minutes.

As well, time to oneself can be found surprisingly close to one another: when spread out in a clump (as opposed to in a line) each of the eight campers can be within 20 or so paces of their leader. Of course, effective supervision is always essential – the leader must be able to communicate easily with each camper, and must be able to control each camper's behaviour appropriately for the circumstances (i.e. closer if greater hazards are present).

Time to oneself can and should occur at camp as well as on OT, in an age-appropriate manner. Even with teenage campers, no camper may be at time to oneself unsupervised. Over-night solos, therefore, are not permitted – they are not offered by Camp Chief Hector YMCA, they are not advised by land managers and they are not agreed to by parents.

Time to oneself occurs during daylight hours, and not during twilight or dawn, when cougars/bears are more active at hunting. There must be appropriate shelter from rain/sun and appropriate comfort from the weather for time to oneself to be facilitated responsibly and effectively.

Roles on OT

Trip Leader – Staff Member

The Trip leader is ultimately responsible for the emotional & physical safety of the group. They are responsible for the success of the trip: a safe, enjoyable and growth-oriented trip for campers and for staff members according to the values and policies of Camp Chief Hector YMCA.

It is important to know with clarity that the camp staff are accountable for all the actions and checklists of responsible backcountry group travel, much of which is specified in this Handbook. For example, should the Leaders of the Day not be able or willing to complete some of their tasks, it is the responsibility of the camp staff to see that the tasks are completed at the appropriate times. Leading by example, and (if appropriate) asking politely a camper to join with the task, is the recommended practice to complete tasks that the Leaders of the Day are not able or not willing to complete.

Trip Co-Leader – Staff Members(s)

The Trip Co-Leader is also responsible for the emotional & physical safety of the group. They are also responsible for the success of the trip: a safe, enjoyable and growth-oriented trip for campers and for staff members according to the values and policies of Camp Chief Hector YMCA.

The difference between the Trip Leader and the Trip Co-Leader, is simply that the Trip Leader is ultimately answerable for the conduct of the trip. The Trip Co-Leader likely has less experience leadership experience relevant to the trip; however, this in no way reduces the “say” of the Trip Co-Leader, if for instance, the Trip Co-Leader feels that the campers deserve more care, or that a safer course of action should be taken, or that a policy is about to be disregarded and that the policy does need to be followed.

Leadership Tasks for Camp Staff, Leader of the Day Tips for Campers

The Leaders of the Day direct the positive and safe functioning of the group during the entire day, by role-modeling and facilitating the actions and decisions of the day. The Leaders of the Day communicate very often with staff members. The Leaders of the Day travel just in front or just behind a staff member and receive the staff member’s feedback and recommendations often.

The Leaders of the Day are responsible for seeing that each individual member of the group is involved with the decisions and goals of the day. The Leaders of the Day, therefore, are NOT solely responsible for the overall performance of the group. The Leaders of the Day should show that everybody is valuable and that everyone in the group can take initiative.

Leaders of the Day need to have the tools necessary to do their jobs effectively: maps, compasses (as applicable), watches, menu-plans, OT Handbook, Log Books (as applicable – written by a staff member, with input by the Leaders of the Day), and any other item deemed necessary. In fact, all campers have a need and a right to use all the basic tools that are needed by a Camp Chief Hector YMCA leader, such as a time-piece and frequent access to a map.

One strategy for Leaders of the Day to increase the likelihood that a task is completed (and completed well) is to get name and time commitments for actions. For example, a Leader of the Day might say, “Who would like to set up a small tarp to put the backpacks under? Sue and John in ten minutes – great!” This is MUCH more effective than stating that a task must be completed and then waiting to see who will (or will not) step up to the task.

Staff members need to make it very clear what are the responsibilities of Leaders of the Day. The Leaders of the Day will know that all the responsibilities are not on them. Staff members will always intervene when:

- Safety needs to be managed by a counsellor
- The group is about to make a very inconvenient mistake
- Basic emotional security is beginning to be ignored

First Thing in the Morning

- Positive wake-up and preparation of self
- Positive wake-up of group
- Cooksite set up and function (with a staff member)
- Campsite take-down and packing for the day completed, with rain gear and lunch handy (one of the Leaders of the Day leaves the cook-site from time to time to ensure this is being done well, and to lend a hand)
- See that all group members have drunk sufficient water and eaten sufficient food
- Oversee the pace and best-practices of breaking camp

Before Departing

- Establish Route plan with the group, using clear markers, handrails, backstops, distances and elevation gains
- Review goals established the night before – what changes are there to make?
- Delegate sweep position of the group, listing the responsibilities of the sweep position (then, later in the morning/day, changing the person in sweep often or as needed)
- See that the group is well-dressed, sun-screened, hydrated and fed
- Facilitate safety review before departing
- See that a site-sweep occurs – ensure nothing is left behind

While Traveling

- See that the pace is appropriate, with effective breaks (packs-on or packs-off, regular boots-off breaks, regular snack/water breaks, etc)

- Navigate (with a staff member), AND share/inform other group members of choices and updates
- Ensure the entire group is accounted for (use a fun sound-off game, for example)
- Make periodic eyes-closed/hold-up-fingers check to see how members of the group are doing – adjust decisions according to the results, using the Group Management strategies described in this book as a guide

Manages the lunch routine:

- Begin a search for a lunch spot at the appropriate time – around 12:00 to 12:30, letting the group know that they are looking for a lunch spot, asking for feedback on this decision (there is NO point putting off lunch to save time – putting off lunch merely lowers group morale and puts the arrival at the campsite further in the afternoon/evening)
- Ask if the proposed lunch spot is acceptable to the group
- State the amount of time for lunch – typically one hour or so, depending on the group’s needs/circumstances
- Retrieve the lunch out and lay it out on the ground:
 - Put in a place that will allow easy access, and without the need to step overtop of the food (thereby preventing food being kicked over, or dirt from shoes being dropped in food)
 - Plastic bags rolled down or removed to allow easy access to food without leaving a mess on the bags; put rocks on plastic bags to stop them from blowing away if necessary; keep empty-and-clean plastic bags for other uses or for recycling back at Camp Chief Hector YMCA
 - Provide a garbage bag with the sides rolled down so that when the sides are rolled back up to close the bag, the bag is clean – as opposed to a sticky, smelly mess that may attract a bear (staff members carry the garbage)
 - Provide the hand sanitizer and see that it is used by all of the group
 - Ensure that each group member has a newly treated liter of water during lunch, unless this is not necessary (younger campers, sufficient water already, etc)
 - See that mid-day Log Book entry has been made
 - Give a 15 minute reminder when there are 15 minutes left for lunch – pack up and redistribute the food and the garbage, get water, “use the

washroom”, put back on boots, lay out map and provide description of the afternoon’s route

- Give a 5 minute reminder when there are 5 minutes left for lunch – get on/off clothes as appropriate, prepare backpack and boots
- Do a site sweep, group check-in and short description of the route that lays in the immediate future

After lunch:

- If in random-camping areas, see that a search for a campsite begins at an appropriate time
- Ensure Logbooks are used throughout the day and are completed in the evening

Setting up the Campsite

- Oversee Cooksite set up, function, clean up and shut down
- See that campsite set-up is well-coordinated and completed (one of the Leaders of the Day leaves the cook-site from time to time to ensure this is being done well, and to lend a hand)
- See that all group members have drank sufficient water and eaten sufficient food

Closure for the Day

- Facilitate a review of the day just completed (positive-morale and effective appreciations/sharing)
- Facilitate a review of the day ahead (route details, goals, tasks, concerns, anticipations, roles)
- See that maps and any preparations specific to the next day is ready-to-go
- See that Logbooks and Incident Reports are up-to-date and filed in the Document Organizer
- See that a site-sweep is done:
 - All gear is accounted for
 - No gear, clothing, food, etc is left outside carelessly and with a cautionary anticipation of challenging weather (rain, wind, sleet, snow, wildlife)
 - Ensure tents and tarps will be able to withstand strong weather
 - The group is all-accounted-for and comfortable

Transfer Leaders of the Day to the next partnership:

- The night before a new pair of campers take over the responsibilities of Leaders of the Day, the staff members will do the following:

- Meet with the current day's Leaders of the Day to recognize their achievements and to see what goals they may have for their next roles
- Meet with the next day's Leaders of the Day to review the following:
 - Review of LOD responsibilities and communication strategies
 - Provide a paper checklist of the tasks and responsibilities
 - Wake-up and pack-up
 - Breakfast
 - Campsite sweep and pre-departure round-up (hazard talk, questions, assess readiness with clothing, sunscreen, snacks, water)
 - The next day's travel plans
 - Specific plans for the first leg of the morning travel

Tent & Tarp Team: Campers and a Staff Member

- Set up all tents:
 - At appropriate spot (designated tent-site, if applicable), away from dead tall trees/branches, away from trails (to avoid bear/human interactions), away from bear foods (such as Buffalo berry shrubs, etc), 100 m away from the Cooksite
 - Be sure to tuck the footprint under the tent far enough that it will not catch and pool rain/dew, including at the front of the tent; be sure to set up all tents/flyes/vestibules even if the weather seems sunny and warm
 - Set up the following tarps, minimally: 1. backpack tarp (small) amongst the tents, 2. Cook tarp (at cook-site, for the cook/dish-team of two campers and a staff member), 3. Community Center, beside cook tarp, for those awaiting the meal – also used as the location to serve and eat the meal
 - From time to time re-adjust the tents and tarps cords, making the tents and tarps effective against challenging weather – if that weather seems imminent or not
- Take down tents/tarps:
 - Sweep debris out of tents, putting litter in the group's garbage
 - Zip up all doors, leaving an un-zipped opening approximately 15 cm, to let out air as the tent is rolled
 - Roll the tent, brushing off debris from the bottom as the tent rolls
 - Put the tent/fly/vestibule in a compression sac, and compress the sac: PRESS DOWN ON THE SAC FIRST, CREATING SLACK IN THE WEBBING

FIRST, AND THEN TIGHTENING THE WEBBING – otherwise, the compression sack can be ripped/broken (by trying to compress the sac simply by tugging hard on the webbing)

- Roll up the tarps, brushing off debris as they are rolled
- Leave all the tarp cords exposed, and simply wrapping the cords tightly around the rolled tarp several times, in order to hold the tightly rolled tarp together and in order to be able to count the number of cords on the tarp is returned to OT (do NOT wind the tarp cords into small bundles – these bundles often knot themselves)

Campsite Stewards

The campsite stewards take up the tasks not covered by the tent/tarp team or the cook/wash team.

- Remind group members to pick up their items lying around and put them in the tent or put them under a tarp ATTACHED to some heavy item
- Help the tent/tarp and the cook/wash team, as directed by those teams (helping to set up tents/tarps, going to get food/cooking-gear, etc)
- Any other tasks that will help the group be organized and prepared for the weather, the evening, the morning and their next adventures

Managing Weather: Rain & Cold, Heat & Sun

Of the external hazards a leader and their group will encounter, being wet and cold or being hot and sun-burnt are significant because they are both very likely to be encountered, and if they are mis-managed, the consequences can be very serious – from a sad and group of campers determined never to go to the outdoors again, to an evacuation, hospitalization, emotional trauma and perhaps life-long side-effects (with radiation burns).

The good news is that these hazards are relatively easy to pro-actively avoid. Both the cold/wet and hot/UV can be managed well when they are encountered – if a leader acts decisively on a number of simple strategies.

If the weather is hot or if the weather is cold, there are a few wise practices to follow:

- Provide frequent and small snacks – this fuels the body and improves morale
- Be on the trail/river smartly in the morning – by 9 or 9:30 AM – in order to use the cool of the day, to make the afternoon a shorter travel time and therefore have less internal hazards such as rushing, uncertainty and lack of focus

- Encourage and allow changing into the right clothes whenever the time calls for it – do not let discomfort persist.

A: Rain and Cold

- Personal Rain Gear:
 - Check specifically (more than asking – look) to see that everyone has proper rain tops and bottoms and proper footwear for the rain, including the leaders.
 - Leaders must have very good rain clothing, because they may well be performing their duties in a very cold rain for quite some time, while campers stay tucked away inside a tent.
 - Leaders and campers alike **MUST** wear rain gear when even a light rain begins (rain that accumulates on clothing or hair, as opposed to a fine mist that evaporates before it can accumulate). A bad mistake is to not put on rain gear because one is quite warm (though soaked) while hiking in the rain – all the while, the person is losing great quantities of heat and energy, and they will be ineffective either whenever they stop movement, or as soon as their energy runs out, whichever comes first. Yes, it may be stuffy inside a rain suit – but it will be a warm-stuffy, and one’s hands will be able to set up a tent and light a stove. Only a well-dressed leader, in rain gear from head to toe, can effectively ask campers to wear their rain gear – and campers will need to wear rain gear more often than a leader might on their own adventures: children and youth lose heat more quickly than young adults, and they are less able to control their body temperature, either through behaviors or with their physiology.
- Shelters:
 - Bring all shelters: two tents (each with footprint, vestibules, and fly), a 10’ by 12’ Cooksite tarp, a 10’ by 12’ Gathering tarp, and a smaller backpack tarp under which to stow bags (etc) that will not fit in the tents but which will want to be kept near the tents.
 - Set up **ALL** the shelters **EVERY** night, even if it looks like it will not rain.
 - Re-check all guy-lines of tents and tarps from time to time, tightening them and working out wrinkles.
 - Tuck the tent footprint well under the tent (including in the vestibule – tuck the footprint away under the main tent), so that no water will pool on top of the footprint and soak through into the tent floor.

- Rain/Wet Hazard and Lightning Hazard:
 - Beware of over-responding to threats of lightening and under-responding to rain. If the group is in (or is very close to) a forest or larger stand of trees, the group is likely quite safe from lightning – the greater hazard is the cold and the wet: decisive steps must be taken to get the group warm and dry. Even if a group is exposed to lightening in the open (and in the rain) they will HAVE to eventually create shelter from the rain; therefore, leaders must pro-actively AVOID areas of lightening exposure when thunderstorms may be anticipated – whether seen or obscured by mountain ridges.
- Shelter while traveling: marshmallow:
 - Keep a large tarp handy while traveling.
 - If a shelter and warmth is necessary, it may help to use a large tarp to make a “marshmallow” overtop of the group, curling the bottom edges under people’s feet as the group stands in a circle, with the main part of the tarp forming a “marshmallow” over top of the group (some outdoor equipment companies make shelters specifically for this purpose)
- Setting up tents in the rain:
 - If the group has been traveling in the rain, they will likely be cold when they stop moving as they arrive at their campsite, if they are not already cold. A group in this situation, whether 7 or 17 years old, will rely on the staff members to set up shelters and cook/clean dinner. (Some 15 – 17 year-olds may be able to help with dinner and cleaning after warming up in the shelters). Here are steps to take to set up a warmer and drier site:
 - Staff members set up one tarp for the group to be under
 - While under this tarp, group members find the other tents and tarps
 - The small gear tarp is set up, in order to shelter the soon-to-be-created pile of not-to-go-in-the-tents equipment and food
 - The second large tarp is taken out and is set up over top of where one of the tents is to be set up
 - The first of the two tents is set up, as dry as possible, under that second tarp; then, half of the campers can then go into that tent, shaking off wet rain gear and wet clothes as much as possible, leaving it under the gear tarp
 - The tarp sheltering the set-up tent is now moved to where the second tent is to be set up – and the second tent is then set up, as dry as possible, under the tarp; the other half of the campers

can then go into that tent, shaking off well rain gear and wet clothes as much as possible, perhaps leaving it under the gear tarp

- Rain gear and wrung-out clothes can be passed to the campers in the tents: it can be kept dry either inside the tents or perhaps in the tent vestibules
- Campers are told to make sure to stay as dry as possible if and when they come to visit the counsellors at the Cooksite – in other words, avoid getting precious dry clothes wet (better to put back on wet clothes and wet rain gear for dinner and to get back into dry clothes for sleep)
- Finally, with the campers warming up inside the tents, the staff members move the two large tarps, the food and the kitchen gear to the Cooksite; they set up the tarps, and methodically begin to prepare what is very likely to be one of the tastiest meals ever eaten by the campers!
- At this point, campers may begin to come over to the Cooksite, or a camp staff can go and invite the campers to dinner; food CANNOT be taken to the tents or eaten in the tents (imagine complicating a cold/wet evening with a bear encounter – the results could be tragic either from the bear’s reaction or from more cold due to attempts to pack up and move); at this point campers may even be warm enough to help again with their roles, such as cooking, cleaning and being the site stewards
- Hooray! A feeling of confidence and pride wells up in the group and the staff members, and the evening likely ends in laughter and songs – truly, this has happened!

B: Heat and Sun (UV Radiation, Sunburn)

Drinking Water:

- Frequent water breaks: A leader that provides water breaks often, and that models drinking water often, will have well-hydrated campers. (Often, being thirsty is directly related to few water breaks and to rushing.)
- Amounts: Of course, the amount each person should drink varies according to a person’s size, the weather and their activity level. It is NOT permitted to have forced drinking or prescribed amounts of water to drink: rare but serious over-ingestion of water incidents do occur, not to mention the emotional and physical discomfort of being forced to drink prescribed amounts. Instead, as above, provide

ready access to water treatment and provide frequent breaks that are water-specific – and role model treating and drinking water. As well as frequent water breaks along the route, provide a fruit tea at breakfast, a tasty drink at lunch and a soup at breakfast. In the end, people’s bodies will tell them when to drink and how much to drink – no one needs water-drinking lessons! Instead, groups need frequent opportunities to drink. ALL THE SAME: it would be reasonable for 10-to-13 year olds to drink 2.5 to 3 litres during a 12-hour day: 1 litre by lunchtime, the second litre by the time the group has arrived at the campsite, and .5 to 1 litre by the time the campsite is quiet and ready for sleep. Teens and young adults are generally better at managing their water intake; teens and adults could drink 3 – 5 litres per 12 hour day, depending on the weather and the level of activity. Of course, if a person wants more water – if they are asking for it – they can go right ahead!

Clothing:

- Wearing (light) long sleeve shirts, long pants and a sun hat are simple ways to avoid UV exposure. The desert Bedouin know this – in the blazing desert they cover up well to keep cool and protected from the sun.
- Check to see that leaders and campers have appropriate sun hats; acquire them if some group members do not have them – and that leaders and campers wear them when in direct sunlight.

Sunscreen:

- It is the Leaders’ responsibility, for all ages of campers, to ensure that all staff and campers have sufficient sunscreen. Do NOT use bug spray – sun screen combinations, as experience seems to indicate that the sunscreen is insufficient – instead use sunscreen.
- Ensure that high-risk to UV/burns areas, such as the nose, neck, ears and lips, are adequately covered (and recovered) with sunscreen – consider using a full block, such as zinc oxide (available in the first aid kit).
- Re-apply sunscreen after exertion (sweating/wiping may have removed the sunscreen). Use the frequent water breaks to consider re-applying sunscreen/zinc.
- Start early if at all possible (on the trail by 9 – 9:25 AM), and take lunch in the shade between 12 and 1. This both keeps the group well-travelled in the fresh part of the day, and it avoids the heavy UV time of day by using a shady lunch-break. (2/3rds of UV occurs between 11 and 2 PM.)
- If a staff member or camper receives UV burns, treat according to the NOLS Wilderness Medicine text. If the burn is partial thickness or more, treat the burn and call Camp Chief Hector YMCA on the OT Assistance Telephone.

Breaks IN THE SHADE:

- Simple to do, dreadful if overlooked: take breaks in the shade. If trees, etc, to do not provide sufficient shade, make shade with a tarp – this has been done with great results on the Red Deer River and on many hikes. The group should leave a break feeling rested, cooled/warmed and hopeful.

Personal Clothing/Gear Checklist

Pack as a group and supervise/support each camper while they pack. Young campers need much less specialized camping gear. Younger campers may want to bring their Winnie-the-Pooh sleeping jumpers – at Tipi site A or B that's a great piece of gear!

This is a minimum list of gear, but younger campers or different trips (boating, horses) may call for specialized gear, more clothing or particular kinds of clothing.

Personal Gear

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping bag | <input type="checkbox"/> personal medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping pad | <input type="checkbox"/> sun block & lip balm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> multi-day pack | <input type="checkbox"/> personal hygiene items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sunglasses | <input type="checkbox"/> headlamp & battery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bowl, cup, utensils | <input type="checkbox"/> camera |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compass (staff) | <input type="checkbox"/> pocket knife (staff) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> water bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> lighter (staff) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> toothbrush | <input type="checkbox"/> notebook, pencil (staff) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> group toothpaste | <input type="checkbox"/> wrist watch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bandana for washing | |

Clothing

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pair hiking socks | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair suitable hiking boot/shoe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pair briefs | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair light camp shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 or 2 pairs long underwear tops | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 light wind jacket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 or 2 pairs long underwear bottoms | <input type="checkbox"/> rain jacket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair pants | <input type="checkbox"/> rain pants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair shorts | <input type="checkbox"/> hat with good brim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 t-shirts | <input type="checkbox"/> synthetic or wool mitts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 light pile jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> warm toque |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 heavy pile jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 warm long-sleeved shirt |

Items for a Day Hike

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sunblock/lip balm | <input type="checkbox"/> blister kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wrist watch | <input type="checkbox"/> water treatment gear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> emergency shelter & pad | <input type="checkbox"/> map & compass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rain jacket & pants | <input type="checkbox"/> personal medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> healthy foods | <input type="checkbox"/> natural history guide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> full water bottles | <input type="checkbox"/> headlamp & battery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lighter and matches | <input type="checkbox"/> Outtripping Handbook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> toque, mitts, hat | <input type="checkbox"/> notebook, pencil (staff) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> first aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> OT paperwork Docket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sufficient extra clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> radio |

Backpacks: Packing, Wearing, Caring

Packing a Backpack

A backpack can and should be each person's stalwart friend – their special and comfortable partner on their journey! It certainly is that way for experienced outdoor leaders. A person really can look forward to wearing their backpack, their old buddy.

The benefits to a group are great: dry equipment, better balance, more energy while hiking, food and fuel kept securely and easy to find the right food and gear during breaks.

- Supervise and assist campers packing effectively
- Staff members MUST carry the following:
 - One complete-tent-and-pole set
 - One stove, carefully packed to prevent damage
 - Hazardous/leaky material as necessary/possible: fuel, margarine, oil, etc. Some of these items (cheese, juice powder, tubs, garbage) need frequent cleaning/re-packing to maintain a safer, odor-free camp
 - The garbage – ideally mostly dry, well-organized and packed tightly into empty tubs (paper/food garbage may be burnt at the end of breakfasts, if possible)
 - First Aid Kit & text, communication devise, document holder, bear deterrent spray if applicable

Prepare the backpack:

- Waterproof the backpacks: line each pack with a garbage bag. Bring 3 or 4 extra garbage bags, kept by the Trip Leader
- Each sleeping bag stuff sac needs to be lined with a garbage bag, with the garbage bag on the INSIDE of the stuff sac, so it will not tear.

Basics to filling the backpacks:

- Make sure the pack is free from hard objects poking into the wearer's back. Use camp clothes as padding.
- Balance the pack evenly from side to side.
- Most of the weight goes to the upper-middle of the pack, AND as close to the wearer's back as possible.

Food:

- Ensure ALL food is DOUBLE-BAGGED. You will greatly appreciate the extra bags later, for everything from sock water-proofing, to over-mitts, to messy tub/cheese re-bagging, to food garbage double-bags.

Keep Handy (often just inside the storm collar of the backpack):

- Rain gear, the day's lunch and snacks, warm clothes to take off and on, water (kept upright – and usually NOT full: drink it, don't save it until the next water source!)

In the pack lid:

- Sunscreen and lip balm, map, toque, camera, sunglasses, folding knife, etc.

Wearing a Backpack

Before starting to hike, demonstrate to campers how the various pack straps work or ask for a camper to demonstrate.

- **Help each other on with packs.** It's friendly – it builds a cooperative group spirit. It saves plenty of energy.
- **Concentrating the weight of the pack on the hips** is generally more comfortable than carrying the weight on the back and shoulders.
- **Check the often over-looked "load lifter"** (high on the shoulder straps) **and the "hip belt compression straps"** (on the sides of the hip belt) – the straps that pull the pack in closer to one's back...or ease the pack away from one's back.
- **Check that the shoulder straps ride smoothly right up and over the shoulder blades and the front of the shoulder.** If they do not, lengthen or shorten them by adjusting a wide piece of webbing that runs down the center of the pack.

Caring for a Backpack

All the food and equipment is carried in backpacks. Therefore, it is important to care for backpacks – during the hiking day and at a campsite. As we know, backpacks are sometimes hard to repair in the field.

- Care for all equipment, including backpacks: this helps build respect, it helps the environment and it is a active way to demonstrate gratitude for what we have
- Always put a backpack down carefully. HELP EACH OTHER WITH PACKS. We should not see campers or staff slipping a pack off their shoulder straps, letting their pack fall to the ground. Again: help people take off their packs and model your
- Do NOT sit on packs during a break. Sit on a foam pad: it is specifically made for that purpose.
- Use zippers with care and with both hands. Take the load off zippers by pulling the two tracks close together. Otherwise, they may eventually break, creating an avoidable inconvenience.
- Try to secure packs from porcupines and other salt-loving animals.

Hiking Pace

An appropriate pace is VERY CENTRAL to an individual's and group's safety, comfort, morale and level of cooperation.

It is almost true to say, as in the story of the tortoise and the hare, "The slower we go, the sooner we'll get there." Really, however, a more accurate way to emphasize pace is to say, "The better we go, the better we'll get there."

An unconsciously chosen pace is usually too fast and it can lead to unnecessary fatigue, low morale, mistakes in navigation, items forgotten at breaks, unnecessary blisters, accidents, longer days and later arrivals at a campsite.

An appropriate pace is efficient, allows for thoughtful navigation and allows for well-considered choices from all group members – input on breaks, clothing changes and route decisions.

Pace is a learned skill – perhaps the most difficult skill to learn. It is not a natural/instinctive skill. It is a skill practiced throughout the whole hiking day. Pace for the group is consciously in a leader's mind. If it is not, the pace could probably be improved to the group's advantage.

Set a good pace by acting on some guidelines:

- Be mindful of everyone's pace.

Imagine you are hiking with the person you most admire and respect. Imagine you want very much for them to feel proud of their hard work and not diminished in any comparative way. You want to set a pace that honours their hiking goal – in fact, honouring their goal is your goal! Well – there they are with you – each one of the eight campers. And the person at the back, at that moment, demands your best efforts at setting a pace that is right for them. Such a pace occupies the mind much more than one might expect.

- Be aware of the “Front Phenomenon,” and use it as a helpful tool.

The Front Phenomenon accounts for the spring in the step of the person at the front: they almost always go faster – faster than they would elsewhere in the line and sometimes faster than anybody else in the line. Why? Are they occupied with the responsibility of leading? Are they overwhelmed by the unobstructed beauty in front of them? Who knows – never-the-less: you will have to slow yourself down; you will almost certainly have to ask a Leader of the Day at the front to slow down (you can explain the Phenomenon to them); and, you may find that asking an end-of-the-line person to come up front increases their pace effortlessly – perhaps changing everyone's habitual line-spots will change pace, morale, and group dynamics.

- Pace changes with the terrain.

Pace changes with terrain steepness and roughness, with views, with weather and with hazards... and it must change for the whole group. As that steep bit of ground levels off, the rest of the group is still labouring up the grade – stay at their pace until AFTER they have all gained the level ground. Similarly, maintain the group's pace until everyone is off the talus, scree, or out of the thick bush.

- Move through hazardous areas (rock fall from above, prime habitat for bears) wisely and without delay.
- Early to bed, early to rise

Sleep experts state that children and youth live best with NINE hours of sleep! Get to bed on time and get up so you can be on the trail by between 9:00 and 9:30 in the morning. It is reasonable for a group to take up to three hours to break camp and be moving: ten bathroom breaks, ten water treatments, ten sunscreen applications, ten stopping for a moment to enjoy the daybreak while walking back from tooth-brushing. Wake up early enough to account for this time.

- Supervise effective packing to save time on pack adjustment or gear/food searches
- See that everyone drinks sufficient water before heading onto the trail
- If writing a Route Summary, do it the night before with the next day's Leaders of the Day. This will also help with a good night's sleep, as the next day is planned and anticipated.
- Pack easily-reached snacks
- Play word games (campers know plenty), sing songs, have fun along the trail.
- Remember: the people-in-the-front go TO THE OTHERS to decide together where and when to break, change clothes, make camp, stop for someone to go to the bathroom, and so on. The people in front do not necessarily know where they are going, and they go back to the rest of the group to make route decisions. The people at the front have the same, not more, group rights as the people at the end and the middle of the line.

Blisters

Blister prevention:

- Reduce friction and/or pressure on the skin surface
- Discuss with campers what "hot spots" are and how to treat them
- Pro-actively put moleskin (NOT repair/duct tapes) on hot spots or likely blister spots
- Stop often to check feet and get everybody to take off their boots – this is only possible if both counsellors model it by taking off their boots. Some counsellors make this fun by having periodic 'foot clinics' staffed by themselves along the trail.
- Consider starting hikes with boots laced loosely – loose enough that a step in deep mud, might pull them off. (Boots may have to be tightened for some types of terrain, such as steep uphill or downhill grades, or rocky terrain. Some people will have their tried-and-true alternatives, but in general, a loose boot is a comfortable boot).
- Consider using a second thin sock in boots or short nylons
- Hot weather or wet feet can lead to blisters – do boots-off foot checks more often in these circumstances

Blister treatment:

- Only use products that are manufactured specifically for applying to feet and injured skin – moleskin, Band-Aids or athletic tape. (Do NOT use duct tape to treat or prevent blisters – removing the tape has in the past caused injuries requiring stitches.)

- Put a proper moleskin dressing or a large band-aid on a developing blister. For a well developed or open blister, put on a 'doughnut' moleskin covering. This prevents tearing on the tender skin beneath and at the edge of the blister.
- Treat a blister with the same care and attention as any other cut on the foot: keep it clean and covered. CHECK AND TREAT IT REGULARLY – EACH DAY, AT LEAST, until it is healed.

The Rest Step

When headed up a steep (or not-so-steep) pass, the rest step is a helpful strategy. The rest step works by momentarily lining up the bones in a leg within each stride. The leg muscles can relax while the bones take the weight. A rest step can last a minute or a second, but either way it will conserve energy.

People who experience pain in their knees during the rest step should not use it.

As with all steps uphill, shorter stride spans use less energy. Long strides use more energy. Longer strides may contribute to injuries to the Achilles tendon, knees and leg muscles.

Talus

Talus is made of boulders that have tumbled off mountains.

A boulder field (large talus) can be challenging to cross. It is time consuming because there are hazards to avoid, such as stepping in between two boulders and having boulders shift as a person steps on them.

- Shifting boulders are a hazard of travelling through talus. Inform campers of this hazard and be aware that boulders may shift when stepped on. Stay well-away from precarious rocks/boulders. Do not pull any rocks towards you – some large rocks/boulders may be just barely balanced.
- If a group must cross talus, EXPECT SLOWER THAN NORMAL FORWARD PROGRESS: be patient and do not rush.
- Recheck balance of loads – ensure the main weight is in the middle of packs, not in the top.
- Discuss proper foot placement and remind campers to not jump from rock to rock.
- **Hiking poles help on talus**

Scree

Scree is the smaller rock debris that accumulates in hills at the base of a mountain.

There are three goals in crossing scree:

- Safety from rock fall
- Building campers' confidence
- Minimizing impact

Of course, do NOT cross scree that would not stop a tumbling fall.

For Pioneers and Leadership groups, when crossing steeper scree, remember:

- Travel as a group on a route as directed by a staff leader.
- Do not cross above each other – except very closely, one or two feet apart, so that loosened scree will not gain enough speed to injure. • Especially in gullies, rocks can bounce far from their downhill course and in all directions. In such cases, move one at a time and give an “all clear” sign when each person has reached a counsellor-established safe zone.
- Do NOT scree “ski” – soft scree has a tendency to meld quickly into areas of ball-bearing-on-hard-pack scree, exposing the scree skier to unanticipated hazards.
- After having managed risks, be careful to Leave-No-Trace or to minimize impact. On gentle scree, this may mean taking paths a foot or two apart from each other. As above, do not scree “ski” – it leaves long-lasting trails in trail-less rubble, significantly adding to human impact.

Snow

Many serious injuries in the mountains result from ‘uncontrolled glissades.’ In other words, a slider cannot stop until s/he comes to rest on the snow, or worse, on the rocks below it. Only travel on snow that has a safer run-out.

A safer run-out includes the following:

- A slope that does not allow out-of-control speeds, through inclination or distance
- A slope that does not require any practiced techniques to stop a slider
- A slope with a soft, snow covered leveling run-out, where sliders will stop well before the snow ends
- A slope with snow soft enough to make stable steps

If you are unsure of the risks (too steep, too hard, bad runout), camp staff should not test the snow slope and the snow should be avoided. Keep in mind that softer snow at the edge of a snowpatch often gives way to harder snow in the centre.

Other snow-related practices include the following:

- Protect skin and eyes from the ultraviolet radiation reflected off snow. To protect from the abrasive snow, always wear long pants, long shirts and mitts.
- Exercise caution when entering or exiting snow, because softer snow at the edges can entrap a foot or leg in the rocks beneath it. These soft spots, caused by heat radiated from rocks, can also occur within a snowy area where rocks are buried close to the surface.
- AVOID snow covered ridges – this snow might collapse or slide down a cliff/steep hill. This is very dangerous.
- Snow that is hard in the morning (re-frozen) may be soft by mid-day or in the afternoon
- Travelling on permanent snow or glaciers is beyond the hiking level at YMCA Camp Chief Hector

Peaks, Cliffs and Ridges

Hiking attempts up to peaks, cliffs and ridges can provide satisfying challenges and wonderful views. They also present a number of significant hazards to manage.

As stated in the Hiking Rules, all specific attempts to visit peaks, cliffs or ridges must first be discussed with the appropriate Section Director to see if the attempt is permissible. Permission does NOT mean the attempt must be made, if external or group conditions change, so that making the attempt would be unsuitable.

Some External Hazards:

- Overhanging rocks and overhanging cliff edges that may collapse
- Steep pebbly slopes at edges that can create loose footing
- Snow cornices that may collapse or avalanche or contribute to an uncontrolled and unstoppable slip
- Strong winds that can cause loose footing or that can chill a group
- Rock fall from above

Internal Hazards:

- Acting on personal/adult goals as opposed to camper-goals – creating both a frightened and a macho perspective in campers who would not on their own adopt those perspectives
- Moving bit-by-bit beyond terrain guidelines – going further and further for a goal from acceptable terrain into unacceptable terrain
- Focusing on the peak/ridge to the point of weakening other essential points, and ending with too long day, dispirited campers, campers having learnt bad habits, the possibility of an unprepared night out on the mountain

Management Strategies:

Have a responsible turnaround time – equal time to get back to the campsite by four o'clock at the latest – AND STICK TO IT. Turning back without gaining the physical goal (but meeting OTHER goals) is one of the most valuable lessons one can learn in the backcountry – or elsewhere.

Make a Route Summary to see if the plan is realistic to begin with, and to provide guidance when the route becomes less easy to read than it was from the campsite.

With the campers' input, and the leaders' knowledge, select a number of places to visit along the way, perhaps leaving the furthest goals un-specified. That way, if the campers themselves find something wonderfully interesting along the way, they can stop and explore it as if it were the very best goal. As well, if several goals are selected along the way, the group will not be let down if the hardest goal is not attained – likewise, the group may not be too exhausted and resentful if the hardest goal was attained but at too high a price: the group will feel proud about the appropriate challenge or the interesting feature that they themselves selected.

Establish CLEAR rules of conduct at cliffs, peaks and ridges WELL BEFORE you arrive there. (Remind the group of this commitment when approaching the site.) Say something like:

“We can visit this lookout if we understand the risks and the ways we can reduce the risks. A fall or a slip from a steep edge can result in a serious injury or even a death. Getting lost or spending too long on the attempt could see the group sleeping in the cold and perhaps in the rain – a very dangerous situation. So: When we get to the lookout, and along the way, let's all commit to our turnaround time, to the terrain Rules and to staying one-and-a-half body lengths away from edges or steep slopes... or further if [the co-counsellor] and I recognize another hazard. That way, if there is an overhang, or if you lose your footing, you will be safer. Will we all agree to that? Hands up? Okay, thanks.”

“If we choose to go, then I will be at the front. Please, no pushing or fake-pushing or crowding around edges. Please do not throw anything off edges – even if you cannot see anybody down there, some people may be below the edge and rocks can bounce in all directions once they gain some speed. At the top we can have a snack, take some pictures, write in our journal – there is a lot we can do. Thanks for listening and agreeing. Now, shall we go?”

Be firm and consistent with the one-and-a-half body-length rule – or more if appropriate. Sometimes it is helpful to lay down a stick or a hiking pole a few metres from an edge (or further if the terrain, weather or group behaviour suggests it) and use that as a boundary.

Provide constant, close supervision at these sites. Take a snack or lunch break well away from edges (fifteen paces, or more), so that you can see if anyone is wandering off towards the edge – ask them to please wait until you can provide closer support.

Remember: the Leaders are assessing the group and each individual at all times. The peak/ridge should not be visited if any behaviour indicates that the risk would be unacceptable. Do NOT put excessive focus on the peak/ridge, so that if turning away from it seems appropriate, the group will not be let down. The goals are, necessarily, to (a) provide a safe experience, (b) promote social and personal growth, and (b) have fun; it has never been a YMCA goal, necessarily, to be on top of a peak or ridge.

Creek & River Crossings

For any creek or river crossings, be certain that the risks are low-possibility/low-consequence risks. In other words, the crossing should (following the guidelines below, and given the inherent risks of crossing water) be confidently manageable for the entire group. The challenge should not be the crossing itself, but rather the need for campers to work at communication and cooperation.

Footwear for creek and river crossing must be appropriate to manage the risks of the crossing. Simple flip-flops may be suitable for ankle-deep crossings, or very sluggish water or still water. Strapped on sandals or river shoes would be necessary for knee deep crossings with a current that moves at an average walking-pace.

A Small Creek Crossing Checklist

Points we must consider before we decide whether or not to cross:

Be on stable surfaces. Do NOT jump from rock to rock – some rocks are unstable, while others have slippery surfaces.

Hiking poles or similar supports come in very handy for river and creek crossings.

Make sure that all packs are well balanced and tidy with loose items all stowed, and that the hip belt and chest strap are undone.

A Larger Creek or Small River Crossing Checklist

Before crossing

NEVER use belays. Tying into ropes of any kind, even with quick release knots, creates unacceptable hazards.

Study the river for the best slow-water-to-low-depth ratio area. Find an area with easier footing – avoid boulders. Check that the downstream run is free of unmanageable hazards: deep water, too-fast water, sweepers, log jams, boulders, ledges or falls, or steep shorelines, and so on. An option is to wait to cross when suitable water depth occurs (usually early morning) and braided, slower and shallower sections, or re-route if necessary. Explain and rehearse on land what to do if somebody is washed off his or her feet.

They should:

- Immediately release their pack
- Float on their back, with their feet and eyes facing downstream, not stand up (guarding against foot entrapment) until the water is very slow and/or very shallow – coach and/or assist them

Practice a strategy on land before getting into the water:

- If each person crosses alone, they should cross one at a time, facing upstream, and with a pole or a dependable stick forward to create a tripod. Several small steps, slightly moving upstream, are better than a few long side steps.
- A group of three or four can cross in a supporting line facing upstream and parallel to the current. A counsellor or a stronger/large/capable/confident camper is in front with a stick to lean on, creating an eddy for the people behind. She/he is steadied by the line behind her/him – each person supports the person in front by holding his or her waist. The person at the back should be confident to cross with no support from behind. Small steps (not crossing legs) and timing helps. The leader readies the group, and calls out when the next side step will happen – “one, two, three, STEP...” Rehearsing this team approach on land will settle communication cues and timing.

During a crossing:

- A staff will stand downstream of the crossing to coach/assist anybody who has lost their footing.

Day Hikes

Here is some information that will help groups get away and return happily.

- See: “Personal Gear Checklist – Items for A Day Hike” to make sure the proper equipment is taken on the hike.
- The campsite should be “battened down” and secured so there are no worries (or hurries) when the group is far away from it:
 - The food is in bear vaults or park-lockers or park-hangers
 - Sleeping bags rolled and waterproofed
 - Extra clothes waterproofed
 - Shelters must be set up very well and well-sheltered from strong winds
 - Equipment is stowed with care
 - Have a full water-bag or pots of water ready upon return
 - Leave the campsite in such a state that you will be:
 - worry-free of it in the event of a storm or a curious animal
 - It will bestow pride in the group’s professionalism
 - It will pass an inspection from a Conservation Officer or National Park Warden

Off-Trail Travel

Wherever trail-less lands exist, hikers can be grateful to those who went before us for leaving no trail. It is an uplifting thing to imagine that no matter where a person is hiking, somebody has hiked before: other recreationalists, loggers and miners, hunters, explorers and scientists, voyageurs and native peoples- and, over the years, entire families – children and grandparents – going back one hundred and fifty earlier generations. We need to preserve the pathless places for future travelers.

To minimize impact:

- Spread out abreast (in a row, as opposed to a column) a safe and effective distance, if this will minimize impact. This way, a new path will not be established for others to follow and harden even further. In some terrain, just two people following in a line can create a new trail.

If choosing to move abreast, give each person a number and a buddy they will keep in sight. Periodically, any member of the group can call out, “Sound Off!” Group members count off, 1 to 10, establishing that the group is still together.

- Do not break branches
- Avoid deep soft moss and delicate soil; avoid stepping on rotting logs. Where we step says a lot about how we value the mountains.
- Be careful not to create a trail leading off the main trail. Leave the main trail with the group spread out.
- Avoid the delicate, sodden edges of streams. Look for a rocky stream edge. Cross at different points, if it will help.
- Stay on trails when possible.

Lightning

Lightning can strike up to ten kilometers away from the cloud producing the lightning – up to ten seconds away from the cloud that produced the thunder. At the same time, lightning clouds can form quickly overhead without the warning of a thunderous approach.

Lightning can be a hazard to people in two ways: It can strike directly; or, lightning may shock as it travels dissipating through the ground.

While lightning certainly is a real hazard, the experience at Camp Chief Hector YMCA is that the hazard of cold rain has had a greater negative impact. Most groups, by far, will have easy retreat to the edge of a forest or the shelter of a sizeable stand of trees. Even a shrubby river bank with trees higher up the bank is well protected from lightning. Be aware of the risk that lightning presents – avoid the risk pro-actively; at the same time, maintain a focus on responding decisively and effectively to the risk that a cold rain presents to a group and to the leaders.

Recognize signs of impending lightning:

- Lobes on the bottoms of clouds
- Hair standing on end
- Close lightning strikes (thunder heard less than three seconds after the lightning has been seen)
- Dark or olive-coloured clouds

When lightning is approaching, or forming overhead, avoid risky terrain: ridges, trees, summits and wide meadows.

Responding to a lightning threat

Some Forest Cover Is Nearby: If the group is near a forest of any significant size – even a stand of 40 or so trees – retreat to the forest cover, avoid the tallest trees and gather in the forest, and try to stand at least 10 meters or so away from ANY of the tree trunks.

No Forest Cover Is Nearby: Very few groups will ever be exposed to the kind of geography that presents a high risk of injury due to lightening. With simple pro-active leadership, it is reasonable to expect that all groups could avoid being caught exposed to lightning. It is important to note, as well, that the advice given below, from the National Outdoor Leadership School, is untested; it is simply the best educated guess for how to reduce the consequences of being exposed to lightning.

Again, pro-active avoidance of exposure to lightning is Camp Chief Hector YMCA's practice.

Therefore: when lightning is very close or above, AND the group is in a clearly exposed area with NO easy retreat to the shelter of a forest, a stand of trees, thick shrubs or a building, follow these instructions.

- Spread out, about 10 paces apart.
- Squat as low as possible with hands off the ground and **feet touching each other**. (Ground currents may then travel through the feet, and not through the entire body.)
- Crouch on a sleeping pad, or on a pack with the metal stays to the ground.
- Do not lean against trees or rocks, and do not crouch in shallow caves where charges may bridge the cave entrance through our bodies.
- Avoid standing in water. Water is a good conductor of electricity.
- Place metal objects away from the group.
- While it is true that something taller (like a tree) may attract a strike (rather than the lightning striking a person), a person still needs to be at least 30 paces away from it, to be safer from the dissipating ground charge.

Going For Help

Consider going for help if your notes on the Outtripping Emergency Form indicate that an evacuation is necessary and if you have repeatedly been unable to make radio/telephone contact with rescue personnel and YMCA Camp Chief Hector.

Sending somebody out for help takes serious consideration and thorough planning. Follow these guidelines:

Designate two people to go for help including a counsellor.

The two-person rescue team should leave when and if they feel safe to do so. Consider daylight, fatigue, weather and so on. Don't move at night unless you need to move some distance from a life-threatening hazard.

The two going must have with them a well-documented copy of the Outtripping Emergency Form. The original copy will stay with the casualty.

The two going must have appropriate clothes, food, equipment and shelter.

The two going must have adequate first aid supplies for their own unexpected needs.

The two going must carry AND leave behind a well-documented route description of the dependable route they plan on traveling, including marked maps where necessary.

The two going should have a written summary of the remaining group's plan including possible variations.

When the two going out reach help, they should (if possible) first notify YMCA Camp Chief Hector of the situation, using their Outtripping Emergency Form as their guide.

It may happen that help from Parks is contacted first and a rescue begins before YMCA Camp Chief Hector is notified. That is okay. It reflects the priorities of the rescue personnel's communications and rescue response. In this case, we must still ensure that we notify YMCA Camp Chief Hector as soon as we can, with the information well documented on the Outtripping Emergency Form.

If the group changes its trip route (whether there is an evacuation or not), be considerate. Communicate to YMCA Camp Chief Hector the new pick-up place before transportation is sent to the original pick-up place. Communicate the need for new campsite bookings, if applicable.

Navigation

Handrail: Handrails are unmistakable features that can guide a person along a route as surely as a sidewalk would. A creek is a handrail (as in "we follow the creek [handrail] for two kilometres..."), as is a lakeshore, a hydro-line, a ridge, a cliff/headwall, a road, a

trail, a distinct tree-line (but be careful: many tree-lines are not distinct), a fence (if it is marked on the map), and so on.

Backstop: A backstop is an unmistakable feature that will signal a person's progress when they arrive at it, stopping them from traveling off-course. All the items listed above, in Handrails, could also be backstops. "We hike along this ridge half way and then we descend to the north. If we come up against the headwall [backstop], then we have gone too far."

Markers: Markers are unmistakable features that will signal a group's progress. Again, the features listed above may serve as markers. "When we get to the lake we will have gone three kilometres and gained one hundred metres."

It is important that handrails/backstops/markers be unmistakable. Small creeks, slight elevation gains and long turns in a river are often NOT sufficiently obvious. Instead, use fewer but more obvious features to assist with navigation.

Route Summary: A route summary is a schematic description of the anticipated route, including handrails, backstops and markers, distances, elevation gain/loss, and estimated times.

Maps

Teach map reading in a confidence-building progression. To teach this, it is best to be outside with a topographic map on which the group is situated somewhere.

Here is a guide to teaching map reading outdoors. Campers can find where they are on a map by going through this list of map features. (This works well right at YMCA Camp Chief Hector because of the many lakes, highways, meadows and nearby cliffs.)

Green areas on a map indicate significant tree cover, such as glades or a forest. Is the group in (or on the edge of) a significantly forested area? Is it near one?

White areas represent areas without significant tree cover, such as a bog, a prairie, alpine vegetation or rocks. Is the group in an area like that? Is it near one?

Blue lines and shading mean a lake, river or creek. Is the group at a lake or watercourse? Is it near one?

Blue airbrushed colouring indicates a glacier or an icefield. Can the group see one from where it is standing?

Red lines, orange lines or black dashed lines indicate highways, roads and trails respectively. Is the group on or near one? Is the road a highway, a secondary road, or a trail?

Brown lines represent a change in height and steepness. (The space between brown lines is, depending on the map, 40 metres or 100 feet.) Very close brown lines represent

steep slopes. Close brown lines indicate gentler hills. Wide-apart brown lines represent more-or-less level terrain. What is the terrain like that the group is on? Are their cliffs very nearby? Hills? Flatlands?

Fine blue line squares are each one kilometre by one kilometre (on a 1:50,000 map.) How fast does a person hike? How long has the group been traveling? How many breaks did the group take and for how long? How far have we come, then, from our known starting point?

In this way, staff and campers may find their exact location! They will have some very simple and effective clues with which to make educated guesses.

Cliffs and other irregularities are not necessarily represented by the brown contour lines. The brown contour lines only show elevation over 100 feet (or 40 metres). Therefore, cliffs, gullies, hummocks, and holes less than 100 feet (or 40 metres) will not show up. Likewise, there are not necessarily any rapids where one contour line meets a river; but where two close contour lines meet a river, then there likely is fast water.

Teach contour lines by dipping water lines on a rock, or pen lines on hands, fingers and knuckles (See Figure 8). In a sandbox, contours can be explained very well by a group effort of “mountain” building.

Maps represent real land. Often it is best to **teach map reading outside** where campers can make immediate relationships between the map and the land around them.

Route Summaries

Campers and staff who make a Route Summary, using relevant features, should have in their minds an imagined, visualized idea of the day’s route progress.

Visualizing in your mind the anticipated terrain is a very useful and strong navigation skill to build.

The daily Route Summary should be done the day before, after dinner or during some relaxing time, so that it does not get put aside during the next morning’s tasks.

As the group comes across the various Route Summary landmarks, they will think, for instance, “Okay! This must be the long lake we drew. That means we have traveled four kilometres – a third of our total distance.

Next, we should begin hiking steeply uphill to the west of it – over there, see? We use the base of a long cliff as a handrail to get to the hill that’s probably the cliff over there.”

Route-Finding

The Overall Route

Preparation is the key to success on the overall route. Consult hiking guide-books, park pamphlets, alumni, fellow counsellors, support staff, outtripping staff, the maps... and the campers. Share information.

The Hourly Route

Here are some easy-to-try tips to hourly route finding.

- **Stay found.** Move only if the group knows where they are on the land and on the map. Use handrails, backstops and markers.
- **Consult the map often.** Identify the side valleys, small creeks and surrounding peaks as you approach and pass them.
- **Travel according to the landmarks** on your Route Summary!
- In many cases, a creek on a mountainside will eventually become very steep and slotted. It is sometimes wise to stay beside (as a handrail) but OUT of drainages.
- **Hiking off-trail, be aware of the aspect.** Aspect is the direction the land is facing.
 - Does the land face south (into the sun: drier, warmer), north (in shadow: moister, colder), east or west?...In other words, southern aspects may offer well-spaced lodgepole pine forests, and northern aspects may offer thick spruce, willows, or avalanche alders and avalanche vegetation.
 - West slopes are generally gentler, while east slopes are more apt to be drop-offs – this is due to the direction that thrust faulting occurred and is easy to detect this pattern: look at either Baldy or Rundle, for examples.
 - Which aspect has more or less gullies?
- **Are animal trails available?** Sometimes if there are no animal trails and the bush is especially thick, the message is this: the animals have probably chosen better terrain... you might want to try and find it! (Beware though: do not follow animal trails onto steep/exposed ground.)
- **Hiking flat-footed is easier than hiking on a sidehill.** Look for, and use, natural ramps and shoulders (small or large) if they are along your route.

Micro-Route

The micro-route considers two factors: using energy wisely and reducing impact on the land. To be as efficient as possible, constantly evaluate the route. Here are a few points to consider:

- It often makes sense to contour around some features (to stay at the same elevation), than to drop down only to have to climb up.
- On the other hand, sometimes it is better to gain/lose some elevation to hike on “flat foot” terrain.
- Off-trail, can we stitch together our hike from a series of diverging animal trails? (Animal trails almost always eventually lead in a direction different than ours.) If there are no animal trails, maybe our micro-route is too arduous; the animals are experts at traveling efficiently. Be careful to quit animal trails that lead to terrain too risky for us to follow!

To reduce our impact on the land follow off-trail travel guidelines.

Lost

Unsure of the Group’s Position? CALL Camp Chief Hector YMCA.

Here are a few points to remember when “turned around” in the backcountry:

- Stay together. Scouting parties often scout their way right out of the group for disturbingly long periods of time. During this time (and before they return) the main party divides up to try and find them, and the problem gets worse! STAY TOGETHER.
- Estimate your position:
 - Where was your last known position?
 - Was your last marker really what you thought it was?
 - Review your route summary.
 - Can you do some compass resections?
 - Relax and take a food break. Traveling at about 2 km/hr, how far could the group have traveled since the last known position?
 - As a group, gain some safe high or open ground to have a look around.
 - Eventually, the group has to move: make an informed decision. In the mountains, the group will soon come to an unmistakable feature of some sort (a major creek, a pass, a valley, a head-wall). The group’s position can then be re-established and a new Route Summary can be created to get back on route.

Common ways to become lost are to over-estimate how far a group has gone AND/OR to focus too much on the land farther away, as opposed to the immediate route.

Sometimes, a hiker can re-arrange entire mountain ranges to suit a desired positions. This can lead to troubles! Reduce the likelihood of this by **creating thorough Route Summaries the night before**. Listen to a co-counsellor's opinion of where they think the group is *before* stating your opinion. That way, your opinion will not influence theirs.

Compass

Map and compass skills are built upon a strong foundation of compass-less navigation skills. You must be skilled at navigation using the terrain and a map before a compass will be of much use, as the directions in this section will make clear. Certainly for campers, there is a lot of interesting learning about route-finding that does not use a compass but instead uses handrails, backstops and markers.

Orienting the Map using a Declinated Compass

- Set the declination, as described above
- Set the bearing dial to 0°/360° or north on the compass
- Lay the compass on the LEVEL map (away from the influence of metal objects)
- The direction of travel arrow (north on the compass bearing dial) should be pointing to north on the map (the words on the map should be right-side-up)
- Lay the compass on the map so that the orienting lines on the compass are parallel to the north/south map grid lines
- Turning the map-and-compass as one fixed object (i.e. the compass remains "glued" to the map), put the red magnetic north needle in the north orienting gate: put red in the shed
- The map is oriented; the land and the map are aligned

Wildlife Management

The Significance of Bear and Cougar Rules

It is a significant mission, to keep people safe from bears and cougars, and to keep bears and cougars safe from people. While attacks are rare, the consequences are well known and are highly traumatic. A single careless act may well lead to a tragic incident involving a camper or a staff member. Additionally a single careless act may force camp's temporary closure for an entire season; it may cause the closure of important outtripping regions; it may lead to discontinued programs and discontinued visits; it may lead to the otherwise avoidable destruction of a bear.

Previously at Camp Chief Hector YMCA, while an attack on a person has not occurred, the destruction of bears has occurred due to the careless acts.

Because of the possible consequences of careless acts, we must each and all of us be accountable for our actions. Support and compliance with the Wildlife Policy and Rules is necessary in all cases, according the details as well as to its spirit and intent.

Food, Food-garbage and Smellies storage on Outtrip (refer to Cook-site Rules for references to acceptable practices)

- When unpacking backpacks on an outtrip, food, food-garbage and smellies must be under direct supervision of a camp staff member or it must be in an approved bear-safe container stored at the correct location
- Approved bear-safe containers MUST be clean (not smelly or leaking juice or having un-covered food)
- Approved bear-safe containers from CCH are either 10-litre black or clear-plastic food vaults (NOT food-tubs or Nalgene tubs, etc)
- Approved bear-safe containers from land managers include food lockers (preferred) and food-hangs
- On canoe-trips, CLEAN and lidded-with-hasp-or-straps wannigans and barrels are permitted as food-storage containers – be aware that as these containers are NOT at all bear proof, they must be kept clean and not smelly and free from leaking juices or having un-covered food)
 - In other words, food, food-garbage and smellies can NEVER, not for a minute, be left un-attended and un-secured at a cook-site or tent-site (such as while setting up a camp-site)
 - Similarly, food, food-garbage and smellies in backpacks can NEVER, not for a minute, be left un-attended (for instance, if a group wanted to leave their packs behind while exploring a ridge or scouting a route or locating a camp-site)
- Food-garbage must be carried by staff members – the ONLY exception being if the food-garbage has been organized by a staff member such that it is tidy, not smelly, compressed and contained in not-leaking bags AND contained in a CLEANED white food-tub or Nalgene tub – when unattended, these must be kept in food vaults, food lockers or government-constructed food hangs
- Cook-site clean-up (including dish-washing, dish-rinsing and the re-organization of food, food-garbage and smellies, site-sweep) must be actively accomplished by a staff member (campers may provide help)
- Dishes and cook-site clean-up (see above) MUST be accomplished directly after the meal (not left until later)
- Cook-sites and secured food storage must be minimally 60 meters away from tent sites

Bear and Cougar Education for Campers

- All education regarding bear and cougar encounter responses MUST be given while in possession of an authoritative paper – the CCH-edited BearSmart two-sided sheet, or the BearSmart pamphlet or the Parks Canada Bears & People pamphlet

- The CCH-edited BearSmart two-sided sheet is recommended as the FIRST document to share with campers and participants, there-after building upon that knowledge with the other more comprehensive pamphlets
- During OT Plans, the facilitating staff member will use the CCH-edited BearSmart two-sided sheet to recall to campers the most basic preventative and reactive BearSmart actions

Travel and Supervision

- While on OT, all campers must ALWAYS be DIRECTLY supervised by a staff member, except:
 - When a camper is “going to the washroom” – and in this case the staff member must know their direction-distance and approximate time gone (campers are encouraged to go in pairs)
 - When a camper is travelling to and from a cook-site and a tent-site (NOTE: in the case where a group is split between the cook-site and the tent-site, a camp-staff must be at each location)
- Campers are encouraged to travel as a group or, minimally, in pairs
 - Provincial regulations, camp up-dates or, more often, camp staff judgment may dictate a more specific group formation such as traveling as a tighter group, travelling with a staff member at the front (lead) position and (if two staff members) a staff member in the sweep (back) position
 - Conditions that would lead to a specific group formation as described above, or as indicated in the Backpacking Rules (*Outtripping Handbook*), may include:
 - Reduced visibility (dimming light, thick bush, weather, etc.) or reduced sound-travel (increasing the chance of a surprise encounter)
 - Evidence of excellent bear food or habitat
 - Signs indicating “Bear (or Cougar) in Area”
 - Fresh signs of bear activity

Bear Spray

- Camp staff working in any capacity with designated hikes with Camp Chief Hector YMCA programs carry bear spray in the spring, summer, and fall seasons (staff member may be a group leader, a program staff, a support staff, etc., and will in all cases carry bear spray):
 - While on a hike in spring, summer or fall, the bear spray must be holstered and ready to be drawn with ease
- At other times, the bear spray is encouraged to be carried by each staff member, but need not be holstered, but may be carried (for instance) within a day-pack

- Bear spray may only be discharged IN PRACTICE with an authoritative professional wildlife manager, such as a Conservation Officer – otherwise, bear spray is NEVER to be discharged in practice
- Campers are NOT permitted to carry CCH bear spray
- Bear spray must be kept relatively securely from campers, such as in the lid of a day-pack
- All bear spray discharges must be reported as soon as is safe to do so, to a supervisor – if on outtrip, to the OT Assistance Telephone or called in on a radio

Reactions to Observations and Encounters

- If a bear or a cougar is sighted, get together as a group and respond according to BearSmart and Parks Canada information (see below: BearSmart)
- If a bear or a cougar is sighted, and the BearSmart or Parks Canada information cannot be recalled with confidence, follow these simple actions:
 - get together as a group
 - back away speaking calmly
- No staff member or participant may approach a bear, or stay within sight of a bear in order to observe it after it has been sighted and a retreat has been initiated
- Radio or call in all cougar sighting, Grizzly bear sightings or Black bear sightings as soon as it is safe to do so, whether traveling on-site, day-hiking, or on outtrip (call OT Assistance Phone, if on OT)
- Fill out and submit a Wildlife Encounter Report Form as soon as possible (same day) following a bear or cougar sighting or encounter – and any other wildlife observation that has risk management implications
- Communicate your animal sighting to a supervisor as soon as possible
- Report the wildlife sighting to Kananaskis EMS Non-Emergency line at 403-591-7755 (if on OT, the OT Staff will do this for you, after you have called your observation in)
- Neither camp staff nor participants are EVER to engage in “rescue missions” or engage in “aversive conditioning” (pro-actively trying to scare away a bear or to disturb a bear)

Elk/Moose

In rare situations, Elk and moose can be dangerous to people. As well, these animals are trying to feed in order to reproduce and to have sufficient food to survive the winter. Give them the right of way and stay back at least three bus lengths (30m / 100ft). If you spot an elk or moose put their heads down and paw at the ground, pull back at once and leave the immediate area.

Bow Valley WildSmart - Cougar Smart Advice

Avoid Encounters

- Cougars generally avoid people
- Travel in groups and keep everyone together
- Cougars can be attracted to children, due to their small size and their erratic movement patterns. Keep watch over your children, especially during dusk and dawn, when cougars are most active
- Make noise to alert cougars of your presence
- Leave the area if you see or smell a dead animal. Cougars usually cover their kills with forest debris

Handling Encounters

- Immediately pick up small children
- Do NOT turn your back on a cougar
- Maintain eye contact with the cougar
- Always leave room for it to escape
- NEVER RUN; it may trigger an attack
- Make yourself appear as big as possible
- Back away slowly

Handling An Attack

- Fight back with anything at hand
- Use bear spray (keep canisters easily accessible and warm in winter to improve effectiveness)

Bow Valley WildSmart - Coyote Smart Advice

Avoiding Encounters

- Never feed coyotes. Attacks are often related to coyotes that have been fed intentionally or unintentionally when food is left out for wildlife
- Store all possible attractants such as garbage and pet food inside or in bear proof bins
- Supervise children on the trail. Small children may be seen as easier prey by coyotes

Handling Encounters

- If a coyote approaches you, make yourself look as large as possible
- Pick up small children
- Shout in a deep voice at the coyote and maintain eye contact

- If the coyote approaches you don't run or turn your back on the coyote, continue to shout, wave your arms and slowly move to safety
- Throw rocks, sticks or other objects

Handling An Attack

- If you are attacked, fight back
- Use bear spray (keep canisters easily accessible and warm in winter to improve effectiveness)

***BearSmart*: Preventing an Encounter & Response to an Encounter**

Preventing an encounter

1. Travel as a group:
 - a. Travel tightly enough that a bear would recognize a single group and not a line of scattered individuals or clumps of individuals
 - b. As the likelihood of a surprise encounter increases (decreased visibility or sound-travel, bear signs, bear food sources abundant), your group will come closer together with staff member moving towards the front
2. Make sufficient noise (bear bells are not sufficient, but singing and laughing and talking and the occasional loud bear yell "Hi, hi, hi!" is often sufficient)
3. Observe and adapt to changes in the environment around you – entering an open area, entering denser vegetation
4. Keep food tidy (in bags, etc) and protected (inside circle of group, if stopped for a break or game)

What to do if you see a bear

1. **Bear is far away**
 - a. Stay close to the people you are with (if available, move slowly to a safe place like a building or vehicle)
 - b. Don't let anyone leave the group
 - c. Never run from a bear – it might provoke the bear to chase you

- d. Slowly, calmly, move away from the bear – if the bear is unaware or you, do NOT stay to observe the bear

2. The bear is surprised

- a. The bear may come closer, stand upright to get a better look, or circle around you to smell you better
- b. The bear may talk to you in its language – popping its teeth, huffing or growling: it is telling you to go away
- c. DON'T RUN AWAY – move closer to your friends

3. The bear is checking you out

- a. Help it understand that you are a human
- b. Slowly wave your arms and speak to the bear calmly
- c. Leave slowly, staying close to your friends, always facing the bear

4. The bear won't leave you alone

- a. If you talk to the bear and it still follows you – DON'T RUN AWAY
- b. Stop moving and follow the directions of the camp staff
 - i. **Defensive attack** (bear is protecting a carcass, protecting its young and/or is surprised by your presence – it attacks because it perceives you as a threat; it may bluff charge – come at the group and then turn away at the last moment): be non-threatening, stay calm, speak calmly and back away; use bear spray when applicable; if the bear spray is not effective and the bear continues its attack “play dead” by lying on front with fingers laced behind head and legs spread; defensive attacks are generally less than two minutes in duration; if the attack lasts longer that this it may be a non-defensive attack – in this case FIGHT BACK
 - ii. **Non-defensive attack** (bear is aware of your presence, has time to leave but continues closing distance on you – bear may be curious, indifferent or predatory): use bear spray; speak firmly and stand your ground; DO NOT PLAY DEAD; FIGHT BACK – intimidate the bear, let it know you are not easy prey

Random Campsites

To be bear-aware, sites should try to be free from dense brush, creeks, berry patches, animal trails or human trails.

Sites must be clear of standing dead trees or large, dead tree limbs on live trees.

Sites must be safe from lightning, rock fall, avalanches or ice fall.

Minimum Impact:

- A good campsite is found, not made – not landscaped or altered. Take the time to find a satisfactory site. Begin looking for a site early enough that one can be found that meets these criteria.
- Choose sites on durable ground.
- Choose sites out of view of trails and popular scenic spots. (Parks rules will apply in Random Camping Areas).
- Do not camp in a previously briefly camped upon area, in order to avoid permanently hardening the site.
- Do not modify sites by building, breaking, digging or uprooting.
- Cat-holes must be at least 70 paces from a drainage or water source, and they should be a similar distance from the shelter.
- Take care around the fragile water's edge (where water is collected)
- Take different micro-routes each time a person goes to the kitchen, water source, etc., so as not to establish hardened paths.

When leaving, erase impacts:

With fingers, groom the grass or herbage back into an upright position so that it will not die, or so the flattened vegetation does not entice another group to camp there. Return any branches, pine cones or stones that have been trampled or moved out of the way.

Water for Drinking & Cooking

Treat all drinking water. Untreated water may have giardia, cryptosporidia, or other illness-inspiring bugs.

Boiling

Water at sixty degrees centigrade will kill giardia and amoebae in approximately five minutes. Little bubbles will form at the bottom of the pot at sixty degrees; they look the size of fish eyes.

There is no need to filter or treat water if it is going to be used for cooking or making hot drinks – as long as it has “fish eye” bubbles for five minutes.

Pooping: Managing Human Waste

Outtrips are times to be clean. HYGIENE IS IMPORTANT TO BASIC SAFETY. In outdoor recreation, there are as many illnesses as injuries – many of the illnesses can be prevented by simple hand washing.

Campers look forward to camp all year. Suffering from an illness due to poor hygiene is no fun – gut aches, vomiting and missing out on the fun while lying in a bed. These illnesses spread quickly unless good hygiene is supported.

Help groups stay healthy. Specifically teach and model the following:

- Have sanitizer handy ALWAYS for before meals AND for using after hands have been rinsed after having gone to the washroom.
- Demonstrate how to wash and/or rinse hands well, by folding one set of fingers under the other and moving them briskly back and forth.
- Ask that hands be washed with water taken away from smaller drinking water sources – not right in it.
- DEMONSTRATE how to dig a proper cat-hole:
 - Dig 10 to 20 cm deep with the trowel
 - Fill it over completely when finished
 - Dig 70 paces from a water source or drainage
 - Dig a safe and respectful distance from a campsite: this will vary, with younger campers being closer than older campers – as a rough guide, at least 50 paces away.
 - For Leadership, teach about natural substitutes AS A CHOICE OPTION: smooth rocks, moss, smooth sticks, snow and leaves. Find a selection of these items and lay them out for campers to see. Plenty of laughs, there – and effective learning! However, DO take toilet paper for campers to use – just make sure a proper cat-hole demonstration has been done.
 - Bury toilet paper WELL. (Burning toilet paper creates a fire hazard, and packing it out is not hygienically safe with children and youth – do NOT burn or pack out toilet paper.)
 - Use out-houses where possible.
- Wash hands after all washroom breaks, including urinating.
- **Do NOT share eating utensils, lip balm, toothbrushes or water bottles.**

Washing Clothes & Bodies

If a person is washing, they need privacy. A counsellor can ensure this by sitting OUT OF SITE from them, but guarding the way to their private washing area.

- Take water away from the water source (50 paces or so) for washing and rinsing.
- Use biodegradable soap and a bandana.
- Washing a body will likely be a face, foot, mid section and armpit “bird bath.” It is a good idea to have a birdbath on a Leadership hike, from time to time.
- Do NOT wash bodies or clothing using cooking pots.
- Never wash with soap directly in a water source.

Campsite and Cooksite Rules

Written policies and procedures are not intended to replace judgment. Instead, well-written rules can help identify and communicate an organization's risk tolerance.

Lessons Learned II (Ajango, 2005)

Tent Sites & Sleeping Arrangements

- One staff member must ALWAYS be directly with the group providing direct supervision.
- During overnights, camp staff must make the following sleeping arrangements:
 1. Staff members must sleep in tents with campers, splitting themselves up between tents, sleeping separately from each other.
 2. If directed by their supervisor due to a group of 9 campers or another limited space situation, staff will sleep sharing on tent situated (ideally) between the two camper tents, or as close as practical, never further than 6 metres away from a camper tents. In this situation, male and female campers will sleep in gender-specific tents.
- Tents and tarp(s) must always be set-up at each tenting site, whether or not the group plans to use them. If the group sleeps under the stars, the camp staff will sleep directly amongst the campers.
- Tent sites must have some measure of shelter – minimally by landscape or by large boulders (larger-than-tent-size). Additionally, tent sites must not be (a) directly on a trail, (b) threatened by dead trees or large dead branches, (c) potentially below flood/tide water-line or (d) in conspicuous bear food sources or along noisy water-courses (where a bear could be surprised by the tent sites).
- Campsites must be set up in areas that are permitted by land managers.

Protecting Food & Wildlife Precautions

- Cook-sites and bear-protected food are 55m, minimum, from the tent site.
- The cook-site may also be the food cache site.
- When a group has arrived at a campsite, a “first task” is to bear-protect all food at the proper distance (see above).
- Food will NEVER be left unattended and unprotected at a cook-site.

Stoves/fires

- Camp-stoves must be on the ground and stable while in operation.
- Coleman single-burner stoves, LPG stoves and Wood Gasifier Stoves must always use a grill supported by stable items to hold cooking pots/pans.
- NEVER cook ON tarps.
- NEVER operate stoves inside tents or tent vestibules.

- NEVER ignite items inside a tent.
- Fires may be used only in (a) specifically government-designated fire pits or, (b) hobo-stoves/wood-gasifier-stoves or, (c) CCH-fire-boxes. Other open fires are NOT allowed (Sac Dene excepted, using Leave No Trace practices or local recommendations).

Cook-site Arrangement

- One staff member must ALWAYS be supervising and assisting an active cook-site – leading or assisting with organizing, cooking, cleaning, doing dishes, and re-organizing food packages for the next meal.
- A cook-site must always have its borders defined, whether using a camp-stove, fire-box or open-fire. The borders must be large enough to permit easy movement within the cook-site for 3 people; the borders must be defined in a way that will be clear to see and understand but that would not create a tripping/falling hazard. A thick line of spruce cones on the ground, for instance, can create a clear boundary but not be a tripping hazard.
- The maximum members of the cook-team are three.
- Any person inside the cook-site must be wearing well-covering shoes/boots (NOT Crocs® or sandals, etc).
- Footwear must be worn WITH socks (to absorb the heat of spilled/splattered water, oil or sparks).
- In order to make the cook-site efficient and safety-oriented, another tarp shelter will be established away from the cook-site, as an area to eat the meal, to socialize, etc. Alternatively, a large tarp (12' by 18' may accommodate the entire group, allowing for proper cook-site separation with easily identifiable and avoidable borders for the cook-site
- Food is NOT served inside the cook-site or under the cook-site tarp. Food is served at least 3 paces from the cook-site perimeter – or, with a large tarp, 3 paces from the cook-site under the tarp

Stick-cooking over Fires (marshmallows, bannock, hotdogs, etc)

- Where participants/staff are cooking food over a fire (hot-dogs, bannock, marshmallows, etc, cooked on sticks, etc), the entire group may cook at the same time in the cook-site PROVIDED that the following conditions have been met:
 - A staff member is always directly supervising the cooking – i.e. they are with the participants
 - The fire-site is sufficient in space and tidiness to accommodate the number of people cooking

- The cook-site has been tidied of ALL food-bags and cooking equipment other than the sticks used for cooking (etc)
- Food and equipment necessary for that meal (knives, plates, buns, onions, cheese, and so on, for example) must be kept in an ORGANIZED fashion OUTSIDE the cook-site, so that movement around the fire is easily managed
- All camp-stoves have been properly stowed
- All hot-water pots have been put away from the cook-site
- Typically, dishes are done or are being done when “stick-cooking” occurs
- BE AWARE OF AND WARN ABOUT, when roasting marshmallows, that sometimes a person roasting their marshmallow may see it begin to burn and then may want to pull out the burning dripping sugar quickly at head height – do not let this happen, as it may burn other members of the group

Dish-washing and Cook-site Cleanliness

- Dishes must be washed with soapy water, rinsed with water, and put to dry and then organized.
- Group and personal dishes are washed by the wash team (not individually).
- There MUST be a staff member assisting or leading the dish-team; two campers assisting are recommended, plus the staff member.

Food as a Basic Right

- Food may not be used at coercion/punishment, such as (but not limited to) these examples:
 - No-one may be asked to eat spilt/spoiled/un-desired food
 - No-one may be asked to finish left-over food
 - Dessert and/or snack may not be used as a reward for any actions

I have read the *Camp Chief Hector YMCA: Campsite and Cooking Rules*. I understand them and I agree to support them in all cases. Should a Rule seem necessary to over-ride for the health and safety of the participants and/or staff, I agree to document any exceptions on a Near Miss Incident form, and to call the incident into the Camp Chief Hector YMCA Health & Safety Emergency OT telephone number as soon as is safe to do so.

Camp Staff Member (print your name legibly) & Date (dd/mm/yyyy):

Hiking Backpacking Rules

Written policies and procedures are not intended to replace judgment. Instead, well-written rules can help identify and communicate an organization's risk tolerance. Lessons Learned II (Ajango, 2005)

Terrain Rules

Hiking/Backpacking lead by Camp Chief Hector YMCA stays within Class 2 terrain, whether with participants or staff members, whether during the summer season or during staff training. These rules state the maximum terrain boundaries. However, the correct terrain is the terrain that is right for each member of each group in their circumstances at the time. It may be quite less than the maximum.

Class 1 & 2 Terrain (acceptable):

- Hiking on trail or bike-path; walking along a clear, well established trail
- May require route finding skills
- May involve thick brush, climbing over and around fallen trees
- May involve crossing scree or talus
- The trail is either non-existent or very uneven or intermittent
- May need to put your hand down once in a while for balance, but not to assist with a slip or fall that could cause serious injury (NOT scrambling)

Class 3 Terrain (Class 3 Terrain is described here to make clear terrain that is **NEVER** acceptable for Camp Chief Hector YMCA participants or staff members):

- There is exposure to a fall where a slip or fall to that exposure may result in serious injury or death (regardless of how short the passage is past the exposure)
- Requires use of hands for climbing (scrambling, etc.) to assist in avoiding a slip or fall that may result in serious injury or death
- Bouldering is NEVER acceptable, apart from at Camp Chief Hector YMCA High Ropes and Challenge Course facilities
- No roped fall protection may be used (apart from Camp Chief Hector YMCA High Ropes facilities). Instead, avoiding exposure is the management strategy used

- Recall, as well: when approaching cliff edges, and when crossing creeks/streams, specific Rules & Guidelines must be clearly supported

NEVER acceptable, as well, are the following terrain conditions:

- Permanent ice, regardless of whether it is steep/shallow
- Snow, where an uncontrolled slide would possibly result in injury either on the snow itself or on bordering/embedded rocks/plants – this can be difficult to assess, therefore, if a staff member is in doubt at all, the snow must be avoided
- Traveling through areas of spring/summer avalanche hazard
- It is not permitted to be in areas of possible rock fall for sustained periods of time; areas of possible rock fall must be passed efficiently, with a maximum exposure time recommended to be no more than five minutes; if avoiding such areas is possible/reasonable, this option must be taken; in areas of possible rock fall activities that are NOT permitted include the following: sustained travel on such a route, play in such an area, stopping for a break in such an area, other activities that prolong/increase exposure to rock fall

Lead & Sweep

- Staff members take lead AND sweep;
 - HOWEVER - a camper navigation team (1 or 2 campers) may be up to approximately 10 meters in front of the lead staff, ONLY if there is very little risk of exposure to scree, talus, heights, bear/cougar encounters, rock-fall, river-crossings, snow, ice, thick off-trail travel or other significant hazards;
 - If the possibility of these hazards is moderate-to-high, the staff member will take the Lead position.
 - Like-wise, a camper sweep team (1 or 2 campers) may be up to approximately 10 meters behind the sweep staff member.
 - In both of these camper Lead/Sweep situations, the campers must have already demonstrated the capability to understand the “apprentice” Lead/Sweep position, as well as the capability to carry out the “apprentice” position
 - The “apprentice” Lead and Sweep campers must take on the positions willingly and by their own choice; campers will not be coerced/pressured into taking these positions

- On-site hiking may use any number of modified supervision strategies in order to empower campers while maintaining effective supervision

Stay Together – Travel Together – Lost

- No group may split up, whether for separate travel or for separate exploration/games/objectives
- There is NEVER independent participant (camper) travel – EXCEPT with adults/parent-accompanied-families (on-site at Family Camp, with permission from the appropriate full-time program director/manager).
- If staff leaders are unsure of their location, the group must be certain to STILL STAY TOGETHER
- If a group is LOST for longer than 30 minutes, the Trip Leader must call the Outtripping Assistance number: 1-403-609-9805
- Campers must be supervised at all times, except for ‘washroom’ breaks, at which time campers will indicate their general direction (or staff may take note of the general direction). NOTE: With effective supervision, time alone (reflections, down-time) is possible, with campers and staff spread out appropriate to the terrain and wildlife, within sight and easy-sound and within a supervise-able perimeter.
- Sac Dene leaders, Pioneers and Leadership I leaders carry and abide by “Stay Together” rules unique to their qualifications, camper-ages, and locations

Approaching Areas of Exposure & Steep Areas

- BEFORE arriving at the tops of cliff edges and other areas of exposure, staff must have done the following:
 - Discussed hazards: exposure to dangerous/fatal falls, loose gravel at edges, unstable overhangs, people below at risk to rock fall, dangerous “gotcha” jokes/games, dangerous running/playing near edges
 - Received a commitment from all to remain one and one-half body lengths from the edge (or more, if advisable).
- Staff members will arrive first at the boundary to the area of exposure or the steep area
- Staff may physically mark off (with a hiking stick, for example) the off-limits line at areas of exposure.

- For effective group management, groups will not have extended activities (meals, overnights, etc.) near areas of exposure: be at least 20 meters away from areas of exposure during these activities.

Peak/Ridge Objectives & Early-Starts

- ALL peak ascents or ridge-walks (or similarly committing goals) and early-starts must be discussed with and approved by a Section Director. Approval for an attempt to visit a peak or ridge or to have an early-start will include discussion of the following:
 - Appropriateness for participants, including specific and documented goal-setting, preparation and progression
 - Group goals are free of staff members' personal goals
 - Terrain Rules apply to all objectives
 - The base camp is secured as outlined in the Outtripping Handbook (see – Day Hikes)
 - The time of the early-start
 - Return to base camp must be at a reasonable time, 4 – 7 PM
 - Mid-day thunder storm patterns must be taken into account – unless an earlier turn-around time is appropriate, a mid-afternoon (2PM) turn-around time is advised
 - Retreat from weather must be taken into account, and travel outside of Terrain Rules is not an acceptable option as a retreat from difficult weather

River Crossings, Creek Crossings & Wading in Lakes

- Only LDI and/or LDII Hike may cross or enter the Kananaskis River, Upper Red Deer River, Panther River or Clearwater River – and then only in conditions describe in the *Outtripping Handbook*.
- During river/creek crossings, participants and staff may wear strap-on-style sandals. The footwear must be solidly bound to the feet, and it may NOT be used for general hiking travel, even when a creek has several crossings during the course of the day. For general travel, suitable closed-toed footwear designed for backpacking must be worn.
- Other potential significant creek crossings will be discussed with a Section Director before departing on a hike/backpack. Such crossings may only proceed with the conditions described in the *Outtripping Handbook*.

- In lakes that have easily-accessed waist-deep areas and in shallow and slow-moving creeks (knee high or less) campers and staff may wade/play in the water.
- A staff must verify (by going in the water and walking the proposed perimeter) that the wading site meets the above criteria.
- One staff must actively and directly supervise the entire time. A maximum of 4 campers may play in the water at a time.
- The area must be defined by a staff member and understood by the campers
- The area must be shallow and close-by (15 meters)
- All waders must enter/exit from an area approved by staff members
- There is no diving, including diving from shore or diving from within the water

First Aid Assessment & Treatment

- First Aid assessment & treatment must comply with the out-tripping First Aid Text provided by Camp Chief Hector YMCA.
- A camper’s request for evacuation to medical aid must be followed up with a call to Camp Chief Hector YMCA on the Health & Safety Emergency OT telephone number – follow the directions from the Communication Guide.

Resource for advice and recommendations

- The *Camp Chief Hector YMCA Outtripping Handbook* will serve as the resource for advice and recommendations

I have read the *Camp Chief Hector YMCA: Hiking/Backpacking Rules*. I understand them and I agree to support them in all cases. Should a Rule seem necessary to over-ride for the health and safety of the participants and/or staff, I agree to document any exceptions on a Near Miss Incident form, and to call the incident into the Camp Chief Hector YMCA Health & Safety Emergency OT telephone number as soon as is safe to do so.

Camp Staff Member (print your name legibly) & Date (dd/mm/yyyy):

Canoe OT Rules

Written policies and procedures are not intended to replace judgment. Instead, well-written rules can help identify and communicate an organization's risk tolerance. Lessons Learned II (Ajango, 2005)

River Technical Difficulty Rules

Kananaskins: Class I

Pioneers & Leadership: Class I – Class III-

When paddling moving water while the canoes are loaded, groups take a "conservative" "dry" line.

These rules state maximum river class boundaries. However, the correct class of water is that which is right for each member of each group in their circumstances at that time, which may be considerably less than the maximum.

Class I (easy): Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. The river has few obstructions which are all obvious and easily missed with little training. The risk to swimmers is slight and self-rescue is easy.

Class II (novice): Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional manoeuvring may be required, but rocks and medium sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. A swimmer is seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed. Rapids that are at the upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class II+."

Class III (intermediate): Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex manoeuvres in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required. Large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on larger volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare and self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class III-" or "Class III+" respectively.

North Saskatchewan Rapids Rules

- At Brierly's Rapids, canoeists will take the middle channel or river left channel, if conditions permit – NO canoeist may take the river right channel.

- Scouting will occur at all rapids where this is deemed advisable by the trip leader, notably Upper Fisher Rapids.

Equipment:

- A staffed canoe will carry the emergency equipment – 1st Aid Kit, communication tool, document organizer, rescue wet suit.
- Staff PFD's require a whistle and a secured river knife – river knives are not to be used for food preparation.
- There is one throw bag per camper canoe; two throw bags per staffed canoe. (The second throw bag is secured with a "thief knot" to the thwart in front of the stern seat, and is equipped with a carabineer.)
- On Red Deer River trips, only Trip Leaders need carry a river knife on her/his PFD; each canoe needs only one throw bag, including staffed canoes.
- Canoes are outfitted, minimally, as follows:
 - Equipment tie-ins: large backpacks, barrels, and essential gear must be secured to the canoe when travelling; Red Deer, Wilderness and Sac Dene may secure their bulk gear in such a way that a canoe-over-canoe rescue proceeds easily.
 - Proper throw-bag attachment on stern deck
 - Suitable knee pads, bow and stern; knee pads for middle paddler on Kananaskin Day Trip
 - Flotation in bow and stern (not necessary on Kananaskin Day Trip, Red Deer, Wilderness, Sac Dene)
 - Item suitable for bailing

Practice Moving Water Canoeing Areas, Practice Rescue Swimming Areas

- Practice spot put-ins and take-outs must be clearly indicated and understood.
- The Practice spot must be appropriate, and must be first run by a staffed canoe.
- At practice spot put-ins, staff members ensure that boats/paddlers/self-rescue-swimmers enter correctly.
- At practice spot take-outs, staff members must ensure there is a floating and ready rescue canoe.
- When practicing at NAMED RAPIDS, trip leaders must ensure canoes are unloaded and prepared as described in the *Outtripping Handbook*.
- When practicing at NAMED RAPIDS, there will always be a floating and ready staffed rescue canoe at the end of the set.

- Permitted named rapids for practice on the North Saskatchewan River are limited to Devil’s Elbow and the downstream rapid at “Upper Fisher’s”, if group/river conditions are appropriate.
- Practising self-rescue swimming may be done in areas that are clear of hazards such as under-cut ledges, sweepers/strainers/foot-entrapment-hazards – this risk assessment (and risk management such as safety swimming position and the hazards of standing up in moving water) will be explicitly discussed with the campers. Class II moving water is the MAXIMUM class of water for practising self-rescue swimming.

Personal Flotation Devices & Swimming

- Boating/swimming activities require participants and staff to wear a PFD
- Swimming from canoes is permitted from canoes (if both staff members judge it is appropriate) on the Bow River, Lower Red Deer River, Sac Dene and Leadership I Canoe. Swimming from canoes directly is not permitted on the North Saskatchewan River. Maximum 4 campers at a time may swim from canoes, with always one “dry” paddler per canoe in each canoe; canoes must be “rafted-up”: one to four canoe lengths apart maximum.
- Swimming from shore will be directed as described in the *Outtripping Handbook*.
- All water activities must be supervised by TWO staff members – paddling, wading, swimming, etc. Campers must always be in reasonable rescue reach. This necessitates that the entire group is within close supervision at the water activity site to ensure supervision of all campers.

Footwear

- In swiftly moving water and in other situations where exiting the canoe due to navigation/landing/correction/up-set is a distinct possibility, closed-toed and heel-affixed footwear must be worn.

Lead and Sweep

- All trips, at all times, will have STAFFED Lead and Sweep canoes.
- In Lead/Sweep canoes, staff members may be in the bow, if the stern camper is deemed to have the appropriate skill level.
- Changes in Lead and Sweep must be clear and well-organized so as not to leave campers canoes in the lead or in the sweep positions.

- Following appropriate instruction and assessment of campers by staff members, Sac Dene and Churchill trips may have camper canoe Lead and Sweep canoes, with the staffed canoe(s) within a distance of approximately 5 canoe lengths. The camper Lead and Sweep canoes will understand and have demonstrated sufficient capability to carry out the responsibilities for (a) keeping the group together, (b) identifying and responding to hazards, and (c) maintaining communication; the camper Lead/Sweep canoes must volunteer gladly for these positions – they cannot be delegated against their will.

Spacing

- Including the staffed lead and sweep canoes, the entire spacing will be no more than 25 canoe-lengths.
- With the foregoing spacing, the Trip Leader will judge on an on-going and re-assessing basis what the appropriate spacing will be.
- Spacing may be much closer, generally, and particularly in difficult weather/water.
- Spacing will be somewhat evenly distributed, so that, for instance, the sweep canoe is not 20 canoe lengths behind the next closest canoe on the trip.

Paddle Signals

- Paddle held above the head at 45° river-left = get to river left position
- Paddle at 45° right river-right = get to river right position
- Paddle held straight up (vertical) = get to center river position
- Paddle waving in circular motion over head = I need help ASAP
- Hand patting top of head = I am okay; paddle held horizontally = stop (NOTE: get to shore on the shore that is safest)

Whistle Signals

- Three clear blasts = pay attention, important information coming (whistle is used infrequently, NOT casually – it is used only when common forms of communication are having little or no effect)

Capsizes and Swamping

- When a canoe capsizes or swamps, the trip stops its travel to rescue the canoeists, the canoe, and gear; in the case of a safe canoe-over-canoe rescue, the canoes may continue travel closely together, if safe to do so.
- If, during a rescue, the rescuers/capsized and the rest of the group are separated, the staff member remaining with the rest of the group will stay put with the rest of the group for at least 5 minutes. If, after that time, there is no communication from the rescue party, the staff member with the group awaiting news on shore may (in the Lead position) cautiously lead the rest of the group in canoes down-stream (if appropriate). Or, they may secure their canoes on shore (tied to shore), and walk down shore together to see if they can communicate with the rescue party. This “non-rescue” staff does not separate from the rest of the group in any of the options.

Floating Lunches

- Floating lunches are NOT taken on the North Saskatchewan River.
- Generally, floating lunches are NOT recommended on other outings: Floating lunches entail extra management tasks (difficulty of managing a meal – passing food from one canoe to other canoes, possibly difficult navigation, loss of opportunity of a break on land to use the washroom, long waits for food to come around to one’s canoe, not able to stretch one’s legs, etc.). Therefore the choice to enjoy a floating lunch must be a well-thought-out and a shared decision and the group’s position/situation on the water must be supervised at all times by one of the staff members.

Hazard Summary

- Each morning and whenever deemed advisable, Trip Leaders will ensure that significant hazards are identified, responses described, and that standard river/lake signals/whistles are reviewed and/or practiced prior to launching.
- This activity may be brief, but must be sincere and must engage campers. (It may be lead by campers.)

General Conduct

- All canoeists take a conservative approach to stability in canoes. For example, when conditions and consequences (wind speed, water/air temperature, rough water, river hazards, group dynamic, etc.) call for increased stability, canoeists will kneel in the canoe to lower their center of gravity.

- Practice in moving water demonstrates authoritative and responsible skills-building. Paddlers are NOT to behave in “showy” acts such as throwing paddles, head-stands, gunwale standing/bobbing, and other similar acts.
- All unattended canoes must be secured/anchored to shoreline vegetation/land in order to prevent them from being lost (wind, current, waves) while unattended. Canoes will be carried up the river bank and secured over-night – the recommendation is to tie the canoes to sturdy vegetation or sturdy bed-rock.
- At the end of each trip day, paddles will be carefully stowed under canoes, and all PFD’s zipped onto seats or thwarts of the canoes.
- Care should be taken to avoid pulling or grounding canoes on rocks that would damage/misshape the canoe.

First Aid Assessment & Treatment

- First Aid assessment & treatment must comply with the out-tripping First Aid Text provided by Camp Chief Hector YMCA.
- A camper’s request for evacuation to medical aid must be followed up with a call to Camp Chief Hector YMCA on the Health & Safety Emergency OT telephone number – follow the directions from the Communication Guide.

I have read the *Camp Chief Hector YMCA: Outtrip Canoe Rules*. I understand them and I agree to support them in all cases. Should a Rule seem necessary to over-ride for the health and safety of the participants and/or staff, I agree to document any exceptions on a Near Miss Incident form.

The trip leader, counsellor and appropriate supervisor have reviewed the trip itinerary, reviewed essential group dynamics within their group (staff members and campers) and reviewed essential trail/river notes from previous trips and reviewed current trail/river notices, making any essential writing recommendations/changes on this sheet below (and attached sheets as necessary).

Camp Staff Member (print your name legibly) & Date (dd/mm/yyyy):

Remember, take it easy and take it slow. Make sure your children are comfortable and content. Tell interesting and happy stories around the campfire; play games; become a child again yourself in your curiosity and joy. Never downgrade children for a perceived lack of ability or stamina, for this will only give them a defeatist attitude. Watch for tediousness and dispel it by devising some exciting game or adventure. The more fun your children have the more they will beg to return, time and time again. Make children of all ages aware of the hazards of the woods, and instruct them how to live safely in the wilderness. Teach that wilderness is a friend and a home.

Nature and Survival for Children, Tom Brown Jr.