Risk Assessment Strategies for Unit Leaders

Joseph Trovato
Chair, Council Enterprise Risk Management Committee
BSA’s Commitment to Safety

We want you to know that the safety of our youth, volunteers, staff, and employees cannot be compromised. Health and safety must be integrated into everything we do to the point that no injuries are acceptable beyond those that are readily treatable by Scout-rendered first aid.

…
Scouting Safety Begins With Leadership

• Accidents and injuries occur during Scouting activities
• Unit leaders are responsible for the well-being of youth under their care.
Objectives—to Help Leaders:

- Understand importance of Risk & Hazard Assessments
- Evaluate hazards
- Reduce risk
- Utilize safety resources
- Apply “sandwich principle”
Why are Risk & Hazard Assessments Important?

• If we identify all serious risks and likely hazards then we can address them.
• Addressing risks and hazards means we limit incidents
• Less incidents means:
  – A safer program
  – Scouts and Scouters are not injured
  – Property and assets are protected
  – Lowering costs on claims and lawsuits (more money to program)
  – Peace of mind for parents
Do Risks & Hazards Exist?

Yes!

• There are risks and hazards in anything you do:
  – Driving
  – Walking (slips, trips & falls)

• There are risks and hazards in the BSA program:
Unsafe Acts / Unsafe Conditions

- Hazards and risks can be broken down into two major categories: unsafe acts and unsafe conditions.
- We have to guard against both
- Unsafe Conditions
  - Worn climbing rope
  - Unstable or loose railing
  - Worn tools
- Unsafe Acts
  - Not wearing a life jacket while boating
  - Driving while sleepy
  - Using gasoline to start a fire
Just say *Know* to Risks & Hazards

- Not all risks & hazards can be eliminated
- But, if we know we can:
  - Accept the risk
  - Eliminate the risk
  - Alter the risk
    - Change the likelihood of an incident
    - Change the severity of an incident
- The more we know about the risks and hazards the more we can plan and react
Why do incidents occur?

• Incidents occur when there are failures in our protective layers.

• There are four layers to help protect us from incidents:
  – Place (handrails, barricades, etc.)
  – People (trained leaders, adult supervision, etc.)
  – Programs (Safety Afloat, YPT, etc.)
  – Procedures (Guide to Safe Scouting, etc.)

• Each layer could have holes and when those line up then an incident occurs (Swiss Cheese Model).
Layers of Protection

Swiss Cheese Model

Place  People  Programs  Procedures

Incident
RISKS

• When incidents occur…

• Potential claims
  – Medical costs
  – Property damage
  – Vehicle damage

• Potential lawsuits from
  – Scouts or Volunteers
  – Property owners
  – Members of the public
Strategy

• We must break the Loss Chain early!

• The process is simple; ask yourself:
  1. What can go wrong (Identify the risks & hazards)
  2. Can we make it safer (Eliminate or change the risks & hazards)
  3. Can more be done (Constant improvement)
How do we identify hazards?

- Knowledge and experience
- Consult the experts
- All activities we do should be evaluated for hazards and risks
- BSA has three tools to help:
  - Program Hazard Analysis
  - Safety Checklists
  - PAUSE
Risk & Hazard Identification
Strategy

- **High/Medium Risk Event**
  - Program Hazard Analysis (PHA)
    - National Event, Council Event, Program Areas

- **Medium/Low Risk Event**
  - Safety Checklist
    - District Event, Unit Campout

- **Field Tool**
  - Safety PAUSE
  - Utilized after formal assessment (PHA or checklist) is done
Risk & Hazard Identification

Strategy

• Keys to good risk & hazard identification assessments:
  – Gather the experts. Best to do this in a group
  – Don’t get bogged down in whether you are using the right form or tool. Best to have the conversation on risks.
  – Address unique hazards to your activity. No form can cover all risks or all events.
  – There is no “correct” risk assessment. These are all subjective exercises and the unit must determine how to handle issues not specifically covered by BSA.
  – Questions old ways of doing things and seek continuous improvement.
Program Hazard Analysis

- Process used to systematically identify, assess, and resolve hazards
- More formal process and good to use on large events
- Available on Scouting Safely as 680-009
  - Publication
  - Matrix
  - Narrative
**PHA Example**

**Risk Assessment**

Once severity and frequency are established for a given hazard, a risk matrix can be used to decide whether to accept the risk or to implement hazard elimination or control measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of occurrence</th>
<th>Catastrophic (I)</th>
<th>Critical (II)</th>
<th>Marginal (III)</th>
<th>Negligible (IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent (A)</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>IIA</td>
<td>IIIA</td>
<td>IVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable (B)</td>
<td>IB</td>
<td>IIB</td>
<td>IIIB</td>
<td>IVB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional (C)</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>IIC</td>
<td>IIIC</td>
<td>IVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote (D)</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>IID</td>
<td>IIID</td>
<td>IVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improbable (E)</td>
<td>IE</td>
<td>IIE</td>
<td>IIIE</td>
<td>IVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- Hazard Risk Index:
  - IA, IB, IC, IIA, IIB, IIIA
  - ID, IIC, IID, IIIB, IIIC
  - IE, IIE, IIID, IIIE, IVA, IVB
  - IVC, IVD, IVE

- Acceptance Criteria:
  - Unacceptable
  - Undesirable (decision required)
  - Acceptable with review
  - Acceptable without review
# Program Hazard Analysis

## Program Hazard Analysis – New, Modified, or Recognized Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Hazard Cause / Effect</th>
<th>Corrective Actions</th>
<th>Initial Risk Rating</th>
<th>Possible Controlling Measure</th>
<th>Closing Comments</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Final Risk Rating</th>
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688-009     10/2009  12
Your council is putting on a shooting sports weekend at the council’s main camp. The activities will include a BB gun range and an archery range.

What risks and hazards are out there?
PHA Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 2/25/2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program: (EXAMPLE) Cub Scouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: (EXAMPLE) Addition of Pellet Gun / Air Rifle Shooting to Cub Scout Resident Camp Programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard Description</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Initial Risk Rating</th>
<th>Possible Controlling Measure</th>
<th>Closing Comments</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Final Risk Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High velocity pellets strike participants and onlookers.</td>
<td>Use of BB gun range or backstop.</td>
<td>Pellets leave safe range area.</td>
<td>ID*</td>
<td>Conduct the events only at appropriate range or with backstop and pellet trap designed for air rifles.</td>
<td>Accept NRA recommendations</td>
<td>IID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>High velocity and hunting rifles used.</td>
<td>Pellets leave safe range area.</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Limit air rifle velocity (500-540 fps) and energy levels (7.5 joules)</td>
<td>Accept NRA recommendations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Financial pressures or donated air rifles used that don’t meet standard</td>
<td>Pellets leave safe range area.</td>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Clearly define pellet gun as single shot designed for target shooting, trigger pull requirements and accept no substitutes (current examples Daisy 853, 888 (ODCMP) Crossman 2000) Limit air rifle velocity (500-540 fps) and energy levels (7.5 joules)</td>
<td>Consistent with Boy Scout rifle shooting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Example Worst Case – loss of sight – Happening once a year in the organization.
Safety Checklist

• Simple tool that lists hazards and risks that you are likely to encounter.
• Can be edited to address new hazards and risks
• Appendix of The Guide to Safe Scouting.
  – Campout Checklist
  – Event Checklist
  – Annual Motor Vehicle Checklist
  – Meeting Place Inspection Checklist
Safety Checklist Practical

• Now you try!
• Your district is putting on a Webelos badge university. The event will have 5 different badges offered (Readyman, Engineering, Handyman, Geologist, and Athlete). Event will be all-day and lunch will be provided.
• What risks and hazards are out there?
• Work in teams to complete an Event Safety Checklist
• Tool to use in the field
• Not a stand alone tool. A PHA or a checklist should be utilized first to assess hazards
• This is a last minute mental check in the field before you execute your program or activity.
Discipline

• We’ve identified hazards and come up with ways to address the hazards…now what?

• Implement your plan

• Easy, right?
The Guide to Safe Scouting

• Read it
• Follow it
• Make it a way of life
Youth Protection Training

BSA Policy is:

- Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers.
- Youth Protection training must be taken every two years. If a volunteer does not meet the BSA’s Youth Protection training requirement at the time of recharter, the volunteer will not be reregistered.
Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

1. Qualified supervision
2. Physical fitness
3. Buddy system
4. Safe area or course
5. Equipment selection and maintenance
6. Personal safety equip.
7. Safety procedures and policies
8. Skill-level limits
9. Weather checks
10. Planning
11. Communications
12. Permits and notices
13. First-aid resources
14. Applicable laws
15. CPR resources
16. Discipline
Sweet 16 of BSA Safety
Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

Qualified Supervision

Discipline
BSA Risk Resources

- Scouter Code of Conduct
- Policy on the Storage, Handling, and Use of Chemical Fuels and Equipment
- Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities
- BSA Bike Safety Guidelines
- The Driver’s Pledge
BSA Risk Resources

• Exercise, Hydration, and Sports Drink Use in Scouting
• Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies
• Medication Use in Scouting, No. 680-036
• Service Project Planning Guidelines, No. 680-027
• Meeting Place Inspection Checklist

http://www.scouting.org/Home/HealthandSafety/Forms.aspx
Risk Management Resources

- Information on Risk
- Managing Risk
- Health & Safety Training
- Tour and Activity Plan FAQs
- Camping Checklist
- Event Checklist
- Incident Information Report_680-016_fillable
- Near Miss Incident Info Report_680-017_fillable

http://www.wpcbsa.org/scoutingsafely
What are we up against?

The Seven Deadly Sins Against Safety

- **Indifference** – Differing opinions are valuable. When someone just doesn’t care…that’s dangerous.

- **Procrastination** – “We’ll worry about life vests when we get to the river.”

- **Lack of Knowledge** – If we aren’t sure…we should stop

- **Denial** – “It won’t happen to this Troop”, or “It’s really not that risky”

- **Lack of Focus** – Distraction management (family, finances, emotions, work load, heat, etc…)

- **Non-Conformist** – I don’t care what the Guide to Safe Scouting says.

  **The Deadliest Sin…**

- **Complacency** – We’ve done this campout like this for years and nothing bad has ever happened. We are all vulnerable to this…
Questions?