

# UVM Extension Risk Management Plan for Youth and Family Events

Risk is defined as “the possibility of loss or injury; peril; the chance of loss; or the perils to a person or thing that is insured.” Risk management involves careful examination of inherent and possible risks.

Risks can be natural, human-made, or due to activities. Examples of risks include weather, food, transportation, lack of personal boundaries and more.

Keeping young people safe in the University of Vermont 4-H program is critical to achieving our mission of helping youth to thrive. Please use this document to inform your 4-H activities and development of risk management plans given the projects and activities that you support.

A template can be found at the back of this document and should be completed for club meetings and activities. Procedures should be shared with all staff and volunteers at the start of events.

## Staffing/Supervision

All UVM 4-H experiences will be organized and overseen by UVM Extension staff or trained, screened 4-H volunteers aged 19 or older. An individual wishing to become a volunteer must complete an application, submit references, and successfully pass a background check (to be completed every three years). In addition:

- Training – at a minimum, volunteers must complete 4 positive youth development modules and two child protection training modules prior to starting their volunteer service. Certain project areas, such as shooting sports, require additional training and certifications to teach the various disciplines.
- Certification – shooting sports projects require 4-H volunteers to complete certification courses prior to teaching a discipline. Level 1 and Level 2 instructors must teach or assist at least once every three years. Level 1 instructors must be re-certified a minimum of every 7 years, level 2 must be recertified after a major revision of the curriculum.
- All 4-H activities need to have at least two trained volunteers. Chaperones can be a combination of volunteers and parents, though chaperones will need to complete a background check and the youth protection training prior to service. The ratio of chaperones to 4-H youth varies with different events but should be at least 1:10 for ages 15+, 1:8 for ages 11-14, 1:6 for ages 8-10 and 1:5 for ages 5-7.
- Overnight activities vary with the age of the 4-H participants. At no time should a volunteer stay in a room alone with a child age 12+ unless that adult is related to the child, or as defined by the event (example – Eastern States Exposition). Youth ages 5-7 must have a chaperone sleep in the same space (tent, hotel room, dorm, etc.) but never the same bed unless that adult is related to the child. It is recommended that chaperones for youth ages 8-11 not share the same room or tent, except when safety may be a factor due to extenuating circumstances.
- Staff and volunteers should never drive alone with only one child in the car for 4-H purposes unless the child is their own. At least two youths must be in the car if the driver is not related to those youths.

- Use the “buddy system” which encourages participants to take responsibility for each other and helps to prevent young people wandering off on their own.
- Should a parent, volunteer or other person become belligerent, violate the code of conduct or otherwise do something that is in poor judgement, alert the event organizer and fill out the code of conduct infraction form within 24 hours and send to your County Educator.
- Harassment and discrimination are against University of Vermont policy. No one should be harassed or discriminated against because of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or gender identity or expression.

## **Insurance, Contracts and Permissions**

- Participant forms – all participants need signed release of risk forms, a completed health history form, code of conduct and other required documents for the given event.
- A 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor has the right to refuse any participant from the shooting sports activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the program.
- If transportation is being arranged by 4-H, club volunteers or anyone other than individual parents, approval for transportation forms needs to be signed. Volunteers and staff transporting 4-H participants should secure a minimum of \$100,000 each person/\$300,000 each accident in automobile liability insurance limits.
- 4-H clubs should not own animals, land, or vehicles. If privately owned items are used, they are the tax responsibility of the individual. It is also that individuals’ responsibility to ensure they carry adequate property or physical damage insurance.
- Neither staff nor volunteers may sign contracts required to secure facilities, caterers, etc. If you do, you may be held personally liable. All contracts must be signed by the UVM Purchasing Department. Please see your 4-H office for assistance.
- All clubs should take out club health insurance at the beginning of the 4-H year through American Income Life. This is a supplemental medical insurance policy.
- Special event insurance should be taken out to cover spectators and others participating in events that are greater than just a club. This policy is also supplemental medical insurance.
- Liability insurance is always in place for sanctioned 4-H activities; various venues may require a certificate of liability. This may be requested through your 4-H office. Four weeks prior to an event, please fill out and submit the form.

## **Emergencies**

Accidents and incidents happen. Protect the identity of the minor and refer all media to the 4-H office; do not give statements except to the police or UVM staff. Always tend to the injured first and/or stabilize the situation.

**Weather** can change quickly in Vermont. Always consider the forecast prior to holding events and keep safety in mind. Develop a cancellation plan and method to communicate to all participants.

4-H has adopted the VPA policy on lightning procedures for outdoor interscholastic activities.

- When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, everyone must stop the activity and go inside.
- Once lightning has been recognized or thunder heard, wait at least thirty minutes (thirty minute rule) before resuming activities. Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock and another count should begin.
- When in doubt ... use good common sense -- safety is your most important responsibility.
- Stay away from tall or individual trees, lone objects, standing pools of water, and open fields. Avoid tallest object in field. Do not take shelter under a single tall tree.
- If there is no safe shelter within a reasonable distance, crouch in a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or in a dry ditch. Crouching with only your feet touching the ground and keeping your feet close together, wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head to minimize your body's surface area. DO NOT LIE FLAT.
- Pay more attention to the lightning threat than the rain. It need not be raining for lightning to strike; lightning can strike far from the rain shaft.

**Fire** – just like in a school, identify a meeting location outside the building in advance. Communicate that location to all adults. Should a fire breakout or an alarm sound, round up all participants and move quickly to that location. Call 911.

**Accident/someone gets hurt** – Care for the injured person, assess the scene, make sure everyone else is safe, call 911 (and know the address of your location). Call parent or guardian or emergency contacts. Review health form for any pertinent information to relay to first responders. Once the individual is taken care of, call your county educator/extension point of contact to fill out the accident form within 24 hours.

A car accident when driving on behalf of 4-H would be handled in the same manner though the driver should also work through their own insurance company.

**Lost child – it is a best practice to frequently count the number of youth to ensure everyone is present.** If a child is missing, remain calm and follow these steps:

- Stop the activity and ask the participants/other adults about the last time they saw the missing child and if they know where they went. If no one knows, pull the group together, have them sit on the ground or floor, tell them that you will be right back to restart the activity, and leave them with other responsible adults. Never leave the group alone.
- Call the 4-H educator/director and tell them that you are beginning a contained search in the immediate area. Provide the name, basic characteristics of the child (hair color, age, size, weight), any description you may have that would help others search (such as apparel that he or she was wearing), and how long it has been since anyone has seen the child. The UVM staff member, if not present, will arrive on the scene with other support personnel as soon as possible.
- If the group is indoors and a facility monitor or director is on site, alert that person right away. If exits can be monitored, ask the facility monitor or director to help watch those exits with his or her staff to prevent the missing camper from leaving the building.
- Search the immediate premises including halls, restrooms, and other activity areas. Call the child's name as you search.

- If the child is not found in the building, go outside and do a sweep around the perimeter of the building. If other adults are around the outside of the building, ask them if they have seen a child fitting the description.
- If you find the child, call the person in charge immediately so that the search can be called off. If you don't find the child, call 911, keep the Director or Educator informed so that they may communicate with the guardians and police.

At any point in this process, if you see a person that looks like he or she doesn't fit in this environment, alert the other institutional staff members immediately.

### **Active Shooter**

#### **RUN**

- Leave your belongings behind but take your cell phone if you're able.
- Evacuate whether others agree to follow.
- Help others escape, if possible – Do not assume others are aware of the threat.
- Do not attempt to move the wounded – Help is on the way.
- Prevent others from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Call 911 when you are safe.

#### **HIDE**

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view and avoid windows.
- Lock door or block entry to your hiding place.
- Draw blinds or cover windows.
- Silence your cell phone and remain quiet.
- Call 911 if you're able or text 911 if you cannot talk.

#### **FIGHT**

- Fight as a last resort only when running or hiding are not viable options.
- Attempt to disarm or incapacitate the shooter – If you disarm them, do not hold onto the weapon as police could interpret you as the threat.
- Act with intense physical aggression.
- Improvise weapons or throw items to distract the shooter.
- If with others, create a plan to surround and overwhelm the shooter. Most active shooters act alone.
- Commit to your actions ... your life depends on it.
- Call 911 once the shooter is incapacitated if you feel safe doing so.

## **Equipment**

4-H clubs, committees and foundations that are not independent 501c3 organizations, may not own animals, buildings, vehicles or other large equipment.

Protected safety equipment should be worn when recommended or advised. See project guidelines for specifics. All machines or equipment used with 4-H projects will be in good repair with all safety features in place and functional. An adult volunteer will check equipment prior to use.

Clubs, committees and/or foundations may own or store project supplies, including firearms and other shooting sports equipment such as archery targets, bows and arrows.

- Ammunition and firearms may not be stored at UVM offices.
- Only manufactured ammunition will be used.
- The use of small bore pistols (.22 caliber) is restricted to youth 14 years of age (as of Jan. 1 of the current year) or older, with written permission from a parent or guardian, and with the recommendation from a certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor.
- All equipment used should be in good repair with all safety features in place. It is the responsibility of the certified 4-H shooting sports instructors to check all equipment prior to use. If there is any question about the condition of any equipment, then it should not be used. All equipment will be appropriate for the age, size and ability of the participants.
- All firearms must be transported with trigger or mechanism locks properly installed, cased, and out of sight. Ammunition must be stored separately when being transported. These items may only be transported to and from 4-H events by adults.
- Shooting sports leaders and volunteers must be familiar and comply with local and state laws and regulations concerning the transport of firearms.
- Equipment should be transported in such a way that the equipment cannot be seen from outside the vehicle. Some examples of concealment include transporting in the vehicle's trunk, in a locked trailer, beneath a pick-up truck bed topper, etc. The vehicle should not be left unattended when equipment is being transported.
- To minimize lead exposure, Individuals involved in firearm activities are to wash their hands before eating or drinking. If water is not available, ant-bacterial wipes, waterless soap or similar products will be provided for cleaning.
- Reactive targets which make use of or are composed of live ammunition, explosives, chemicals, flammable substances or pressurized containers are never to be used at any 4-H event or activity.
- Ear and Eye protection is required for all 4-H shooting sports participants. Sandals, flipflops and Crocs are not permitted on the range.
- AR or Modern Sporting type firearms are NOT allowed. Any rifle, pistol or shotgun that is primarily tactical in design and strongly resembles an AR, modular or modern sporting firearm type platform rifle is not permitted.
- Suppressors are not permitted on 4-H firearms.

## Animals/Livestock

4-H Livestock projects can provide a positive learning experience for 4-H members with the help of the volunteers. When a member is considering a livestock project, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Age and capabilities of the youth
2. The appropriate type and size of animal
3. Location of housing and care for the animal
4. What type of insurances are needed for the different activities the member participates in
5. Project expectations
  - Safety is a high priority and must be considered in every aspect of show/event planning. Thorough planning with careful consideration of safety will help minimize the risks of injury to participants, staff, volunteers and animals(NH 4-H).
  - 📄 Check with your Extension Educator for fact sheets, manuals and regulations that will help you learn more about your project and the expectations that go with it. Learn how to work safely with your animal and follow safety guidelines both at home and at events.
  - 📄 When visiting farms or participating in Fairs & Filed days, other shows, or clinics remember there may be additional Biosecurity procedures to follow. Please check with the event organizer for the rules or guidelines.

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**4-H Event Risk Management Plan Template**

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Person in charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest hospital to event location: \_\_\_\_\_

Event description to include audience, anticipated numbers, activities planned; is there enough supervision of youth to adults: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe facilities; include how/where signage will be placed, animals or equipment will be housed/situated, biosecurity measures will be in place: if an overnight, what is the plan for safety of youth with chaperones,, where is equipment being stored during overnights? \_\_\_\_\_

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If food is to be provided, what are the plans for ensuring food safety \_\_\_\_\_

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Who is in charge of medical/health forms? Is a first aid kit on site? Do cell phones work at location to call 911 if necessary? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is plan b in case weather forces you indoors? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact numbers (4-H staff, emergency services, local law enforcement) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please review emergency procedures with all volunteers and staff ahead of event start. One person should be designated as the lead in cases of emergencies.

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### Reducing Risk at 4-H Special Events Checklist

Date Completed	Person in Charge	Description
_____	_____	Special events insurance is purchased
_____	_____	Request submitted for Certificate of Liability coverage to County 4-H Educator at least 4 weeks before event. Educator will submit via email to Risk Management.
_____	_____	Complete all necessary paperwork with site manager - contracts must be signed by UVM. Submit contracts to 4-H Educator
_____	_____	First aid kit, cell phone, and list of emergency numbers are available at event.
_____	_____	Adequate number of chaperones are secured (see ratios above or in policy guide)
_____	_____	Grounds are free of rusty objects, or they are clearly marked off limits
_____	_____	Holes are covered, filled, or clearly marked off limits
_____	_____	Equipment is secured
_____	_____	Buildings not intended for use are locked
_____	_____	All exits are open and accessible
_____	_____	Reasonable accommodations are available upon request.
_____	_____	Facilities to meet animal needs are arranged in advance
_____	_____	Train/provide orientation to staff, chaperones and coordinators, so they understand job duties.
_____	_____	Incident report forms are on hand at activity
_____	_____	Participants' Parental Permission Form and/or health forms are in a designated, accessible location

Questions on any of these items? Please contact your county 4-H Educator

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