

# Mandatory Ongoing Safety e-learning

## – A reference guide to the content

This guide can be used for support or reference before, during or after you do the Mandatory Ongoing Safety e-learning.

The Mandatory Ongoing Safety e-learning contains 5 lessons. By doing the e-learning you will:

- Understand the Safety Policy and your responsibilities for keeping young people and adults in our movement safe
- Be able to demonstrate how to assess and manage risk
- Understand the role of the leader in charge
- Know what to do in an emergency, and how to report incidents and near misses
- Know where to access safety resources, activity rules and guidance for the safe management of activities

### Lesson 1: Understand the Safety Policy and your responsibilities for keeping young people and adults in Scouts safe

Scouts delivers everyday adventure skills for life for young people aged 6–25 and volunteers, in the UK and internationally.

A sense of adventure lies at the heart of our movement and doing things safely is fundamental to everything we do. Knowing about the Safety Policy is a crucial part of keeping Scouts safe, and there are lots of tools and resources to support you with this. This training will help you to understand your responsibilities and where to get support. Over half of all incidents reported to UK headquarters are from activities in or outside the meeting place, not from adventurous activities. People being used to their surroundings can lead to them not identifying hazards and risks.

Here's a summary of the responsibilities within the Policy. You can get the full details by reading [POR chapter 2](#). Everyone involved in the Scouts must, so far as is reasonably practicable (taken from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) and to the extent of their role, ability and understanding:

#### **Risk assess every activity in Scouts**

Properly assess the risk of every activity undertaken in the Scouts. This assessment should be suitable for the activity being undertaken, it must be communicated to all those involved, and it needs to be documented.

#### **Every activity has a leader in charge**

The leader in charge makes sure that the activity's run safely. The leader in charge can change depending on the activity.

#### **Do things safely**

People are provided with clear instructions and information in relation to supervising young people, running activities and managing buildings

#### **Maintain safe conditions**

Make sure where you meet is safe and the equipment you use is stored, used and maintained properly.

#### **Review risk assessments**

Don't leave them on the shelf. Review them to make sure they're still relevant and make changes when you need to.

#### **Never be afraid to change or stop an activity if risk increases**

As an adult in our movement, you're responsible for making sure we deliver Scouts in as safe a way as possible, so never be afraid to change or stop an activity. Make sure you explain this to everyone and include the reasons why.

#### **Understand emergency procedures and be able to put them into action**

Know what to do in an emergency and make sure others are also aware, including young people.

#### **Report incidents**

You have a duty to record and report incidents. Don't worry, though – there's a step by step guide in the Purple Card to help you do this. The Purple Card provides guidance on what to do in an emergency.

There are some handy safety checklists available to help everyone fulfil their roles and responsibilities in keeping everyone safe. There are three different checklists, each to support a specific role: [leaders](#), [managers](#), and [Executive Committees](#). You'll have learned more about these roles in Essential Information (module 1).

You can download the [Purple Card](#) and safety checklists from the website, order a copy from Scouts Shop or ask your line manager.

## Lesson 2: Be able to demonstrate how to assess and manage risk

Everything we do involves an element of risk, so we have to have plans in place to manage this.

This is called a risk assessment. Don't worry; we all do risk assessments or safety checks every day, for example, when we cross the road. We choose an appropriate place to cross, look both ways and make a decision about whether it's safe to cross.

We know that children learn by doing. Activities encourage the development of young people and they can feel a huge sense of achievement in completing them. We want to provide EXCITEMENT but not DANGER; ADVENTURE but not HAZARD.

So how can we help you do a risk assessment?

There are five simple steps. If you've done risk assessments elsewhere, these should look familiar. Let's look at each of the steps now:

### Step 1

#### Look for the hazards

A hazard's anything that could cause harm. It could be cables across the floor, a slippery or uneven surface, or the weather – these are all unsafe conditions. Unsafe acts could be a hazard as well.

### Step 2

#### Who might be harmed and how?

**Young people** might not recognise a hazard, especially younger members or those with additional needs. Teenagers are also more likely to take risks, so we need to be aware of how they perceive risk in order to help keep them safe. Similarly, younger sections, like Beavers, will require more supervision.

Some people might've simply got used to a hazard being present and how they behave around it, but **visitors** might not know that the hazard's present. Think about that heavy entry door – those who come through it every week know how it closes but new visitors won't be aware. Think about how this could be kept open; use signs to make people aware or supervise the entrance.

**Adults** are often very good at identifying hazards which might hurt young people but can sometimes forget to look after themselves. We also find that adults sometimes do things which they're not used to, which can result in injury (perhaps we're not as flexible or strong as we think we are!).

You also need to think about **how** someone may be harmed. Someone falling from a wall will be injured differently depending on how high the wall is or what surface they land on – this is the **how**.

Knowing who may be harmed and how they may be harmed means you can now think about what the risk is. Risk is the chance of someone being harmed by the hazard. For example, walking along a wall a foot from the ground has little risk, but walking along a six foot wall with no railings has a high risk of harm.

### Step 3

#### How are the risks controlled?

The next step is working out how to control the risk: this is how we reduce it. When deciding how risks are going to be controlled, it's useful to work through the following questions, in this order:

1. Can the hazard be removed entirely?
2. Is there a less risky option?
3. What can be done to reduce the risk of people being in contact with the hazard?
4. What instructions and supervision are needed?
5. Is protective or safety equipment available to reduce risk?

When considering these questions, you should also consider what's reasonably practicable. Don't just simply go for the quickest or cheapest option but think about what would be deemed reasonable for you to put in place as a control.

### Step 4

#### Record and communicate

Just thinking about a risk assessment isn't enough. It needs to be documented and shared with the other adults and young people involved. Documenting it helps you think it through and is easier to review when you next do a similar activity. It also makes sure that what you've decided to do is clear and well communicated.

There are lots of options for this:

Executive Committees must make sure that risk assessments are documented for all premises which they own or operate. Leaders need to make sure that they have access to these premises' risk assessments, whether that's your weekly meeting place or the activity centre you're staying at for the weekend, because they'll include things which will help with the development of your activity risk assessments.

You'll have plenty of activities in your programme that you do all the time: it could be the arrival, start, end and departure of your meeting or the standard way you run cooking or crafts activities with your section. These activities can be risk assessed and then documented. This document should be reviewed each time you do the activity so that you can check if it applies that day or whether anything needs to be changed.

There will also be bigger activities or those you do less often. You'll need to make sure a risk assessment is done before the activity takes place and that it's documented.

**Don't just keep this information to yourself; it's important to tell others about what you've done and what measures are in place to keep activities safe.**

We've talked about sharing risk assessments with young people.

Involving young people in keeping activities safe is really important. We know young people learn by doing activities that teach them #SkillsForLife. Regardless of who's involved, everyone should feel that they can stop an activity if they feel it's unsafe. For example, an adult could raise their concerns with another adult, or the young people in an archery session could be taught to shout 'Stop!' if they see anyone breaking the rules.

Briefing young people about the risks will help them to stay safe and to learn. With younger members, it can be as simple as explaining not to run with scissors and why, and how to hold them correctly and safely.

There are lots of ways of recording your risk assessments: we have an online template at [scouts.org.uk/riskassessments](https://scouts.org.uk/riskassessments) but you could also try annotating your activity instructions sheet, making notes on a phone, using an online risk assessment tool, or an audio recording would be acceptable if you're not able to record your risk assessment in writing. It's all about finding something that works for you. Just be sure that you can show you've been through the five steps and have communicated it with others.

## Step 5

### Review and revise plans where needed

Documenting your risk assessments isn't the end of the process; you need to make sure they're regularly reviewed. During an activity, things may change – you need to be able to respond and change the activity if needed. This is called a dynamic risk assessment. For example, you've risk assessed for a walk and it starts to rain. You need to decide if you continue the walk or you take shelter. This is what we mean by dynamic risk assessment, responding to the changing situation. This is a vital step in the process, as failure to notice or respond to changes will create or increase risk.

### NEVER BE AFRAID TO STOP AN ACTIVITY

Don't forget that, as part of your programme planning, you should have alternative activities in reserve just in case you can't do what was planned or you need to stop half way through. Make sure this is shared with those involved, so everyone knows how to respond.

All risk assessments must be reviewed if there's been a change of circumstances or equipment, or if there's been an accident or near miss. A near miss is something which could've resulted in injury or damage but didn't. This is something we should learn from to make sure that, in the future, we avoid these near misses.

Risk assessments should also be reviewed every 12 months as a minimum to see if anything's changed and updated as needed, again making sure any changes are clearly explained to those involved.

So that's risk assessment – those five simple steps are all there is to it. If you'd like more help with it, support's available from your line manager.

1. Look for the hazards
2. Who might be harmed and how?
3. How are the risks controlled?
4. Record and communicate
5. Review and revise plans where needed



## Lesson 3: Understand the role of the leader in charge

All meetings, events or activities must have a leader in charge who oversees the activity, adults and young people. Their responsibilities include keeping registers and making headcounts, allocating roles to specific adults and checking they're aware of their specific responsibilities.

This isn't always the same person, so make sure everyone's clear on who it is for each activity or event. It shouldn't be a chore but simply an important part of keeping everyone safe and having fun.

The leader in charge must make sure that a risk assessment's in place for the activity they're responsible for, but they don't always have to do the risk assessment themselves. A risk assessment could be done by anyone with a reasonable ability to recognise some of the risks of the activity. It may be a volunteer or parent with relevant experience in the activity or just a friend of the Group with some time to give. In older sections, it could be the young people themselves (for example, Explorers planning an expedition should do their own risk assessment, although the leader in charge would need to check it – don't forget, as the leader in charge, you're still responsible for the activity). Involving more than one person in assessing risk is a good practice. It spreads the workload and helps to spot things that one person might miss.

## Lesson 4: Know what to do in an emergency, how to report incidents and near misses

We've talked a lot about risk assessing to reduce risk but from time to time, incidents will occur. Knowing what to do when that happens is really important.

The [Purple Card](#) tells you what to do in an emergency and should be kept with you. You should familiarise yourself with what it says.

In the event of an incident, there are procedures which must be followed. In all situations, deal with the immediate emergency and then consider the following:

- Who's involved?
- Who do I need to tell?
- What information do I need to record?
- What about the rest of the group?
- What support do we need?

The [Purple Card](#) walks you through this, so make sure you have it handy just in case.

- Deal with the immediate situation and alert the appropriate emergency services
- Alert your Commissioner (line manager)
- Alert the emergency contact/s of the individual/s involved
- If you're abroad, alert any agencies required by the insurers
- For incidents involving air activities or water activities in coastal or deep sea waters, alert the appropriate government agency

### When must an incident be reported to UK headquarters?

Let UK headquarters know via the [Information Centre](#) or the [online Incident Report](#) form if:

- Someone suffers a personal injury or illness requiring a doctor, nurse, paramedic, dentist or hospital
- Someone requires an emergency service rescue
- Third party property's damaged

You'll need to provide basic information about the incident, including information about the injured party, what happened, where it happened and who's reporting the incident.

If it's a really serious incident then you'll be linked up with the Critical Incident Manager, who'll support you through the next steps.

Although this may seem daunting, remember that you're not on your own. Work with your leadership team and line manager, and if in doubt, call UK headquarters for support.

And don't forget to keep a copy of the purple card handy with you when on Scouting activities!

There's also a simple online form for basic information on near misses to be passed to UK headquarters:

[scouts.org.uk/nearmiss](https://scouts.org.uk/nearmiss)

### Learning from incidents

It's also important to learn from incidents when they do happen. Using the 'Five whys' is a really useful strategy.

Asking 'Why?' five times about the incident helps us to get to the root of what's happened.

Let's look at an example of using the 'Five whys':

1. Why did Alek get injured during the game in the Scouts meeting place?

- Because he was pushed over by the older Scouts

2. Why did he get pushed over?

Because the Scouts were very boisterous and rough in the game

3. Why were the Scouts so boisterous?

Because no volunteers were supervising them

4. Why was there no supervision?

Because we only ever have two volunteers; one was making coffee and the other was getting the next activity ready

5. Why was one making coffee?

Because he hadn't had any training and no one told him he had to supervise activities

The root causes here are lack of training and understanding of leadership roles, and insufficient adult support.

Using the 'Five whys' is a really useful tool to help us learn from accidents and stop them happening in the future.

## Lesson 5: Know where to access safety resources, activity rules and guidance for the safe management of activities

We don't expect everyone to be an expert on everything, so we have lots of reference information for you to use – as and when you need it. For example:

For guidance on bringing safety into your programme, running safe activities and events, and links to the risk assessment template and online Incident Report form, visit [www.scouts.org.uk/safety](https://www.scouts.org.uk/safety).

We have a responsibility to keep Scouts safe for all members.

Potential or perceived risk should never be used as a reason to treat anyone differently. There's lots of information and support available to help you understand the needs of our members and support their involvement in Scouts.

Activities are an integral part of Scouts and are what makes it so exciting for the young people involved. All activities must be carried out in line with the Safety Policy and follow the relevant general and specific activity rules set out in [Chapter 9 of POR](#). The [A-Z of activities](#) is designed to link you to all the information you need to run any particular activity.

If you're using programme activities from the online programme planning tool, we've included some handy safety alerts to help inform your planning and risk assessments.