

Risk assessment updates: pre-launch check

Background

Keeping young people safe is our primary aim at the Scouts. Having fun and trying new things comes a close second. At all levels and in all activities, we're very good at assessing risk: looking for things that might go wrong or could cause injury, and adapting what we do. Sometimes, we even have to call it out and help others see there's a better and safer way to do something. What we're less good at doing – collectively – is writing that down. We know from years and years of solid incident statistics that most accidents happen in our meeting places, yet it's there that most risk assessments are kept in one volunteer's head. Some sections only go camping once a year, yet they rightly have a very detailed written pack of risk assessments. We need to make sure that we write down, share and inform our young people of what the risks are on every activity, and have them documented somewhere so that we can reassure parents, carers and others in our communities that we've prepared for and mitigated these risks. We also need to do this in a way that's not overly burdensome on our dedicated leadership teams. In fact, it should be as simple as adding it into our programme planning sessions and for many of our repeated weekly activities, simply tweaking template documents.

The Safety Committee has agreed guidance updates to support effective risk assessment across all Scouts activities. These updates also remove unnecessary barriers, making sure Scouts remain safe, while making rules and processes easy for volunteers to follow.

Following this pre-launch check, the intention is to publish this guidance and go live in September 2020. Until the updates are published, the current guidance (February 2019) continue to apply.

Providing feedback

If you have any comments or concerns about these changes – how might be understood or put into practice, or anything that doesn't make sense or isn't workable – please let us know via the [online survey](#). You can submit your comments until **midnight on 26 July 2020**.

Note: Please read the proposals carefully and only provide feedback on the areas which you feel will cause issues in the safe delivery of Scouts locally.

When to risk assess

The Safety Policy, along with POR rule 9.1, state that all Scouts activities must be risk assessed and undertaken as safely as possible. This hasn't changed but it's become apparent that this isn't being applied to day to day activities, including weekly section programmes. Reaffirming the importance of risk assessment in order to keep members safe is our current focus.

The risk assessment process will stay the same, continuing with a five step approach, but work's been carried out to explain these steps in a simple manner to help everyone put them into practice locally.

Documenting and communicating

The main change proposed is that **all** risk assessments are documented. We've provided examples of a wide variety of methods you can use to do this: some examples can be found in Appendix 1. This doesn't mean that every section's expected to produce a huge folder of completed risk assessment forms. As a section leadership team plan their programme and prepare their activities, they would consider the five steps to risk assessment and document these in a way which works for them, with some options being provided in the guidance. This change would apply at all levels, including Districts, Counties/Areas/Regions (Scotland) and Countries, so any activities taking place at any level must be risk assessed and the risk assessment documented.

There'll be some initial work to make sure that those with responsibility for premises have their risk assessments clearly documented and available to users of the building, campsite or activity centre. Sections need to document risk assessments for the standard parts of their meeting (the arrival, opening, closing and departure, for example) and activities they do on a regular basis (for example, crafts, cooking, and specific games played regularly). Each of these, once done, will simply need to be reviewed dynamically each time the activity takes place or reviewed and updated when changes occur.

Support

In some areas, this will result in little or no change, while in others, this will be a bigger change. The guidance for risk assessment FS120000 is being updated to support these changes. We'll provide examples of risk assessments using a range of methods, which may include template documents, notes on your phone, and annotating activity instructions or online tools eg Online Scout Manager (OSM).

The ongoing safety training's also being updated to reflect these changes and will be available to help members with their understanding of risk assessment and the process.

Although we're sharing this in a time when no face-to-face meetings are taking place, we hope this also provides an opportunity to prepare for the new Scouts term. Making written risk assessments part of the culture while planning your section programmes will soon become a positive habit.

Line managers have been briefed on these changes and are on hand to help with any questions you might have. You might also have specialists in your area who can help you with the practicalities of doing your risk assessments – look out for Safety Coordinators, Safety Trainers, and those who work in health and safety.

Most importantly, please don't be scared or put off by this and remember that we all do risk assessments every day. We decide where and if it's safe to cross roads, how to take things out of ovens, how to reach up and open windows, etc – we just need to be better at writing things down.

Putting this into practice

This update will be launched in the summer of 2020. However, we're aware of the task that lies ahead for many of you and so, although we're asking you to focus on getting your risk assessments in place as soon as you can, we've built in a transition period until 31 December 2020 for this to be fully put into practice.

Let's remember that doing a risk assessment has always been a key part of the safety policy and activity rules; what we need to do now is make sure that this is documented and communicated clearly throughout all Scouts teams.

Appendix 1 – Risk assessment recording examples



TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Grill - when you run this don't forget →

- Read then rules
 - Red = Stop
 - Amber = Walk
 - Green = Go-Go-Go (probably running).
- Don't walk / run into each other.
- Remind them about sudden stopping
 - watch out for others right near you!
- Leaders need to check the hall is clear (as it can be) of things to trip on, move any chairs or tables to one end of the way.

Risk Assessment

| Name of activity/ event/ location | Game - Bulldog | Date of risk assessment | March 2019 | Name of who undertook this risk assessment | Phil Ward |
|--|----------------------------------|---|------------|---|-----------|
| Hazard Identified/ Risks from it? | Who is at risk? | How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? | | What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled? | |
| Hazard - something that may cause harm or damage Risk - the chance of it happening | Young people, Leaders, Visitors? | Controls - Ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example - you might use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way the activity is carried out. | | Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change it, or even stop it! This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review. | |
| Walls Injuries to body / limbs from running into the walls | Players | Mark a line on the floor about 2 metres before wall at each end to show the SAFE zone. | | Explain the safe zone to players | |
| Chairs & Tables Trip or collision hazards | Players | Move chairs and tables out of playing area and store in committee room. | | Work with PLs to organise moving at beginning | |
| Over excitement leading to accidents | Players | Explain rules clearly at the start and leaders to monitor the mood level throughout the game. | | Minimum 2 leaders - one to control the game, one to monitor the room generally. | |
| Review due: February 2020 or following any incidents. A risk assessment needs reviewing if circumstances change but also schedule regular reviews to ensure they are current, perhaps every 12 months? The review must include a detailed look at each element of the risk assessment in order to establish if any change is required. | | | | | |

OSM Summer 2020 Scouts - Friday

Programme

Meetings Badges & Tags Risk Assessment

Indoors

Fire

Who is at risk? All

Controls
Ensure everyone is aware of the evacuation plan - meeting on the green opposite.
Ensure naked flames are supervised.
Leaders aware of fire extinguisher locations, and the bell.
Use appropriate mechanism to extinguish any fires (e.g. no water on oil/wax fires).
Ensure no open fires within 5m of buildings.
Review
Ensure fire extinguishers are present and serviced correctly. (Exec)

Tripping/Slipping

Who is at risk? All

Controls
Keep building free of trip hazards in areas that people are moving
Supervise running around games to ensure members don't run into/fall on the benches, especially at the corners. If the risks increase, place a leader on the bench corners.
Ensure carpet, rugs and cables are secure.
Mop up any liquid spillages to avoid slipping.
Review
Review each session based on the weather.

Chemicals

Who is at risk? All

Controls
Keep all cleaning products etc locked away.
Review
When products/suppliers change.

Night Hike

| | | | | | | |
|------|--|------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | Sheep ticks - lymes disease | Young people/ workers | L | Advise group to wear long trousers / socks / avoid contact with sheep | L | Monitoring of group / training |
| | Burns/blisters/sprains/ insect bites | Young people / workers | M | First aid kit(s) to be carried / training | L | Ongoing training / Monitoring by staff |
| | Injury from wild animal | Young people / workers | L | Inform groups to stay away from animals | L | Ongoing training |
| | Injury from Unsafe structures | Young people / workers | L | Advise group to avoid derelict structures, ensure aware of risks of buildings collapsing | L | Staff awareness of area |
| | Injury from Road Traffic Accident | Young people/ worker | M | Participants reminded of road safety - care when crossing / walking on the right hand side / outside bend / use of torches etc | M | Continued training / monitoring of staff on specific roads as required |
| * 1) | Some groups were getting behind - closer work with them next time about pace and the setting of the route. | | | | | |
| * 2) | Mobile phone - One group ran the battery flat on their emergency phone. We were able to link them with another group once realized, and noted that groups Number. - next time leader team need to ensure phones are fully charged and stress the importance at the pre-hike meeting. | | | | | |

PTD