

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN CAMP

The best defense against any emergency is preparedness. Being prepared, understanding the policies and practices governing the actions of staff and campers is the adult leader's responsibility in camp. The safety and well-being of each and every camper is our primary concern, and therefore, these procedures are not optional. Your help and cooperation in such situations is required to ensure a positive outcome.



In an emergency, the first step is to notify the Camp Director. Any staff member with a 2-way radio can reach him. If he is not on the property, you should notify the Program Director, Ranger, or Health Officer. Once the emergency is established the central alarm will be sounded by the person in charge and the staff and campers assemble. If there is a chance that the alarm cannot be heard due to weather conditions, runners will be sent to each campsite to notify the leaders of the situation.

If the alarm sounds while patrol cooking is in progress, an adult may remain in the site to tend the stoves, and the SPL will report that situation when asked for a headcount. If a camper is alone in the campsite when the alarm sounds, he must turn off the stove and report to the assembly area.

The designated assembly point is the parade field (flag pole) next to the Dining Hall. In case of inclement weather, the dining hall is the designated meeting point. Units will line up in order, and the SPL will take a headcount to verify any missing campers. The following are procedures for specific emergency situations that could develop.

## GENERAL EMERGENCIES

**Lost Camper:** When a person is reported as "missing", all members of the unit should report to their campsite, and the Camp Director should be notified. Determine where he was last seen and check that area thoroughly. At the same time verify that he has not checked out of camp at the office and check the pool and lake thoroughly and check all tents in the unit's campsite. If not yet found, the Camp Director will sound the central alarm and inform everyone of the situation when assembled the camp staff will check all program areas and troops will be organized into search parties. If the camper is not located, the Camp Director will call the State Police and Scout Executive.

**Lost Bather:** There are several instances that could trigger a lost bather alarm. In this event the Camp Director will man the phone, the entire staff will report to the waterfront for further instruction, and the Program Director along with the rest of the camp will report to the parade field. Shooting Sports Directors will report to the waterfront after properly securing their program areas.

**Child Abuse:** Any incident or suspicion of abuse must be reported immediately to the Camp Director. If not available, call the Scout Executive directly. Reports will be kept confidential. See the following section on Youth Protection for additional information.

**Mass Illness:** Notify the Health Officer who will contact the Camp Director.

**Fatalities and Death:** In the unlikely event that a fatality occurs in camp, the Camp Director or Program Director must be notified immediately. They are specially trained to handle these situations in accordance with BSA and Local policies. The Scout Executive or his designee will make contact with family members and handle all inquiries by the media. Grief counseling will be provided if needed.

**Blood Borne Pathogens:** Always avoid contact with blood or other body fluids of others, and wash your hands after any direct contact with these fluids. If exposed, wash the exposed area immediately and report it to the Health Officer or Camp Director. A surface area or equipment contaminated with blood or body fluids must be washed with detergent and water as well as a 10:1 Water/Bleach solution.

**Hazardous Material Spill:** Report spills to the Camp Director who will call 911 to get the local hazardous material crew to the scene along with the local fire company and ambulance. Everyone in direct line of the spill will be evacuated to a safe site. The same applies to everyone down-wind. The surrounding area will be cleared of personnel for at least 200 yards.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

**Fire:** Report any fire to the Camp Director. If it is a serious fire such as a building, a call will be placed to the fire company (911). The central alarm will be sounded and everyone will assemble. The Camp Ranger supervises the use of camp fire-fighting equipment. At no time is a Staff Member, Scout or Scouter expected to risk life or injury by fighting a fire.

**Flood:** Campers will be directed to remain on high ground and stay away from water. The Camp Director will notify the Scout Executive.

**Earthquake:** Contact the Camp Director who will sound the central alarm. When campers are assembled they will remain there or move to a safer area away from buildings, power lines, lakes and downstream areas. The center of an open area is best. Everyone will be instructed to sit down, putting their head between their knees with their hands and arms crossed over their head.



## WEATHER-RELATED AND ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

**Severe Storms:** The Camp Director closes all activity areas. In the event of high winds, campers will be advised to get to low protected areas or shelters.

**Lightning:** The waterfront and pool will evacuate all campers from the water, and the area will remain closed until the storm has passed. The COPE area will also be closed. Stay away from open areas and avoid touching metal objects such as tent poles.

**Extreme Temperature:** When temperature reaches 90+ F activities will be slowed down and those engaged in strenuous activity will be monitored closely to deter dehydration. Campers will be expected to drink more water. Normal activities will be curtailed when temperature reaches 100+ F and the Camp Director will decide whether or not open swim programs should be conducted. Training for Weather Related Emergencies is available through the BSA's website (scouting.org).

**Emergency Phone Numbers:**

Fire, police, and ambulance: 911

Hospital: Good Samaritan Hospital 270-7500

Scout Executive (Ed Rasmuson): 394-4063 (work) 898-7936 (home)

At no time should any staff member, camper or leader contact or allow themselves to be interviewed by the media. In emergency situations, such as the ones listed above, the Camp Director or Scout Executive is the only designated spokesperson. This policy keeps unfounded rumors to a minimum, and eliminates unnecessary worry of parents and the public.



## **LIGHTNING SAFETY**

It is a fact that each camping season, Camp Bashore is hit with several thunderstorms – many containing lightning strikes that make contact somewhere in camp. We always consider the safety of our campers and staff as we carefully monitor conditions and reports of storms in the area. We have several methods of storm tracking, including a lightning strike detector (worn by the Aquatics Director and COPE Director), two weather alert radios, and internet-based warnings from the local weather station so we can track the direction or development of any severe storms. We have a central siren to alert campers of emergencies, and each program area has a 2-way radio with the weather alert station programmed on it. Even with all the sophisticated equipment that is available to us, common sense and education are probably the best tools to avoid danger.

Lightning is a force of nature that must always be treated with caution, and to that end, we have included the following information to keep you better informed of the danger.

**Watch for Developing Thunderstorms:** Thunderstorms are most likely to develop on warm summer days and go through various stages of growth, development and dissipation. On a sunny day, as the sun heats the air, pockets of warmer air start to rise in the atmosphere. When this air reaches a certain level in the atmosphere, cumulus clouds start to form. Continued heating can cause these clouds to grow vertically upward in the atmosphere into "towering cumulus" clouds. These towering cumulus may be one of the first indications of a developing thunderstorm.

**An Approaching Thunderstorm – When to Seek Safe Shelter:** Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the rain area in a thunderstorm. That's about the distance you can hear thunder. When a storm is 10 miles away, it may even be difficult to tell a storm is coming. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek safe shelter immediately! The first stroke of lightning is just as deadly as the last. If the sky looks threatening, take shelter before hearing thunder.

**Minimize the Risk of Being Struck:** People involved in activities such as boating, swimming, fishing, bicycling, golfing, jogging, walking, hiking, camping, or working out of doors all need to take the appropriate actions in a timely manner when thunderstorms approach. During outdoor Scouting activities, adult leaders and camp staff must protect the safety of the participants by stopping the activities sooner, so that the participants and spectators can get to a safe place before the lightning threat becomes significant. To reduce the threat of death or injury, those in charge of organized outdoor activities should develop and follow a plan to keep participants and spectators safe from lightning.

**The 30-30 Rule:** Use the 30-30 rule where visibility is good and there is nothing obstructing your view of the thunderstorm. When you see lightning, count the time until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles of you and is dangerous. Seek shelter immediately. The threat of lightning continues for much longer period than most people realize. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. Don't be fooled by sunshine or blue sky! If it is cloudy or objects are obscuring your vision, get inside immediately. It is always safer to take precautions than to wait.

**The Lightning Discharge:** During a thunderstorm, each flash of cloud-to-ground lightning is a potential killer. The determining factor on whether a particular flash could be deadly depends on



whether a person is in the path of the lightning discharge. In addition to the visible flash that travels through the air, the current associated with the lightning discharge travels along the ground. Although some victims are struck directly by the main lightning stroke, many victims are struck as the current moves in and along the ground. While virtually all people take some protective actions during the most dangerous part of thunderstorms, many leave themselves vulnerable to being struck by lightning as thunderstorms approach, depart, or are nearby.

**Take Precautions:** When thunderstorms approach there are some steps you should take to lower your chance of becoming a lightning strike statistic. These safety procedures are suggested:

- When a thunderstorm threatens, get inside a large building, or inside an all-metal (not convertible) vehicle.
- Inside a building, avoid using the telephone, except for emergencies. Stay away from doors and windows, avoid contact with anything that conducts electricity.
- If outside, with no time to reach a safe building or an automobile, follow these rules:
  - Do not stand underneath a natural lightning rod such as a tall, isolated tree.
  - Avoid projecting above the surrounding landscape as you would do if you were standing on a hilltop, in an open field, on the beach, or fishing from a small boat.
  - Get out of and away from open water.
  - Get away from tractors and other metal farm equipment.
  - Get off of and away from motorcycles, scooters, golf carts and bicycles. Put down golf clubs, metal tent poles, or any conductive materials.
  - Stay away from wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, rails and other metallic paths, which could carry lightning to you from some distance away.
  - Avoid standing in small isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
  - In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or a valley. Be alert for flash floods.
  - If you're hopelessly isolated in an open field and you feel your hair stand on end - indicating that lightning is about to strike – squat down keep your feet together and bend forward putting your arms around your knees. Do not lie flat on the ground.
  - If backpacking, put your pack on the ground and squat down keep your feet together and bend forward putting your arms around your knees on top of the pack. This should insulate you from the ground.

Sources: NOAA, BSA Scout Handbook, BSA Scout Fieldbook

## CONTACT WITH WILDLIFE



The Bashore Scout Reservation is the natural habitat for many species of animal. Some are very commonly seen- deer, rabbits, squirrels, groundhogs, skunks, raccoons, turtles, snakes, and bullfrogs. Wild turkey, pheasant, Canadian geese, Mallard ducks, Grouse, several kinds of owls, and many species of birds can be seen or heard.

Please keep in mind that these animals make their residence on a year-round basis. If you encounter wild animals while on a hike or in your campsite, do not disturb or injure or attempt to chase it away. Do not disturb or destroy any dens or nests. Also please remember that these animals are wild and very unpredictable when they feel threatened

All campers are expected to respect wildlife and subscribe to the Outdoor Code while in camp. The wildlife inhabiting Camp

Bashore are protected by the PA State Game Laws. Any camper or visitor who intentionally injures, harasses, or kills any of the wildlife in camp will be held legally and financially responsible. Please report any such cases to the Camp Director.

There have been sightings and signs of bobcat, coyote, fox, and bear in the camp and surrounding areas. Most likely these animals will stay away from camp during the summer season due to all of the activity. Please be aware that they live in the area and could become a danger or nuisance to our campers if we do not exercise proper precautions.

Typically we have the most trouble with the Raccoons, Squirrels, Chipmunks and Mice. They love to break into food storage areas and have even been known to chew through an entire cooler chest to get at food. Bears are especially attracted to food smells and garbage. Raccoons like to dump trashcans. For that reason, we offer daily trash pick-up for units preparing food in their sites. All campers are advised to keep food in airtight containers, away from tents and sleeping areas or they may have an unwanted visitor rummaging (or chewing) his way into a backpack, footlocker, or even sleeping bag! Leftover food should NEVER be thrown into the woods. This is not only unsanitary, but it also invites unwanted pests into the site.

**Strange Behavior:** If you come in contact with an animal that is behaving strangely, (staggering, lying still -not trying to flee, seems sickly, foaming at the mouth, etc.) IMMEDIATELY REPORT IT TO THE CAMP DIRECTOR. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP OR TOUCH THE ANIMAL. Certain animals that are nocturnal (seen only at night) may be seen during daylight hours, a possible indication of illness.

**Bites & Scratches:** If you are bitten or scratched by any wildlife immediately report it to the Health Officer. Animals can carry serious diseases such as Rabies that must be treated as soon as possible. Never pick up or touch an animal that is injured or dead. You put yourself at great risk in doing so. Instead, report the incident to the Camp Director.

**Ticks:** Each year we hear more and more about the ever increasing tick population. Lyme disease is at an all-time high in the state of PA. However, with early recognition and treatment of

the symptoms, it can be cured, with no long-term health problems. Lyme disease has been identified in several types of ticks.

Insect and tick repellent (with high content of DEET) are highly recommended, however they are not totally foolproof. Wearing long pants, long sleeved shirts and hats while in tick infested areas cuts down on the risk of bites. Educate your campers about ticks, and have them check themselves on a regular basis- especially after walking through tick habitats.

If a tick is found, report to the Health Officer who will remove it and preserve it in case a Lyme disease rash develops in which case the tick will need to be tested. A tick needs only to bite its victim in order to transmit the disease, and does not have to burrow under the skin. Also educate your campers to report any strange rashes that may develop for no apparent reason.

**Mosquitoes & West Nile Virus:** The occurrence of West Nile Virus in the Eastern United States has steadily been on the rise over the past few years. The best defense against contracting this disease is to take proper precautions when in areas that may have large populations of mosquitoes.

Wearing a good insect repellent (with high content of DEET) and loose-fitting clothing that provides maximum coverage over exposed skin is a good start. Mosquitoes like to breed in puddles, fire buckets, and even tarps that collect water after a rainstorm. They also like areas along streams where small dams or diversions trap water. Elimination of stagnant pools of water, or avoiding these areas is the next best form of protection. Therefore, we recommend that fire buckets only be filled when a campfire is lit, and that any container or tarp that can collect or trap water should be emptied on a regular basis.



Mosquitoes are also attracted to warmth given off by humans and animals, as well as light sources like lanterns and candles. This should be considered when placing lanterns in the campsite. Citronella candles emit an odor that repels insects. Neither lanterns nor candles should be placed inside tents or lean-tos.

**Bats:** Many people fear bats and associate them with spreading of diseases such as rabies. While there are some health risks, they are also an important part of our ecosystem, and thrive in

and around our camp. Bats are a natural predator of mosquitoes and are known to eat their body weight in insects every night, and rarely interact with humans. There are several locations throughout the camp where bat houses and roosts can be found. Please be sure not to disturb them- they are resting up after working hard all night on “pest control” duty.

Sometimes bats will take up residence in unoccupied tents or lean-tos. They have especially been found between tent flaps and tent flies. Special care should be taken to avoid coming in contact with them. Anyone coming into contact with a bat – whether bitten or by touch (you should never intentionally touch or handle a bat – no matter if it is dead or alive) must report it to the Health Officer.