

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY
47 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150-1200

June 8, 2020

To: General Authorities, General Officers, and the following leaders in the United States and Canada: Area Seventies; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops and Branch Presidents; Stake and Ward Councils; Stake and Ward Young Women and Primary Presidencies; Stake Young Men Presidencies

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Safety in Church Activities

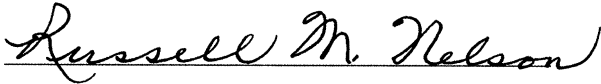
Stake presidencies, bishoprics, and organization leaders are responsible to oversee the planning of Church-sponsored activities. When considering activities, leaders should use good judgment and approve activities that are planned effectively and follow established safety precautions.

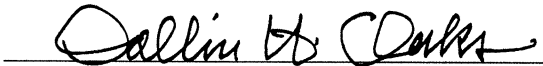
Stake, ward, and youth council meetings provide opportunities to prayerfully plan activities and to discuss safety guidelines and practices to ensure the safety of participants and protect the Church and its volunteers.

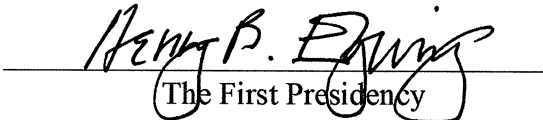
Safety guidelines are included with this letter and at safety.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Please ensure that all leaders review and follow these guidelines as they plan and carry out activities in your stakes and wards.

Sincerely yours,







The First Presidency

Reaffirming Safety Guidelines for Activities (United States and Canada)

June 8, 2020

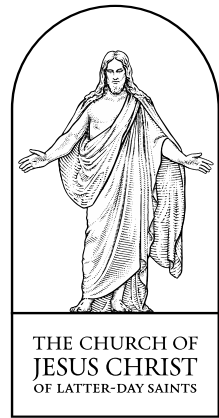
Following are general guidelines for planning Church activities, especially those that include children, youth, and young single adults. The core principles, guidelines, policies, and training resources are provided in these places:

- “[Activities](#),” chapter 20 in *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*
- The Church Safety and Health website (safety.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

Adults participating in activities for children and youth are to complete [children and youth protection training](#) and to renew training every three years (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.2).

General Guidelines

1. Care should be taken to promote the spiritual, moral, emotional, and physical safety of those who participate. Leaders should be careful with the safety of participants. All conduct and interactions should be consistent with Church standards and exemplify Christlike behavior.
2. Leaders, parents, youth, and children should understand that participation in an activity is a privilege, not a right, and can be revoked if participants behave inappropriately or if they pose a risk to themselves or others. Leaders should communicate these expectations to parents and participants. Leaders should also counsel about how to address concerns that may arise.
3. At least two adults must be present at all Church-sponsored activities attended by youth or children. To protect youth and children, leaders should avoid one-on-one situations—including contact through phone, texts, social media, and so on—with a youth or a child unless the leader and young person are clearly visible to nearby adult leaders (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.2).
4. Adult leaders are encouraged to be alert to any signs of abuse and neglect. If leaders become aware of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect, they should report it to appropriate legal authorities and contact the bishop immediately. For more information, see “[Preventing and Responding to Abuse](#)” (2018).
5. Activity leaders should be conservative in the risks they choose to undertake. Leaders and youth should have fitness levels appropriate for the activity. Individual medical risk factors and allergies should be carefully considered.
6. Leaders should prayerfully plan safe activities. Good safety planning not only



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protects participants, but it also protects the Church and its volunteers. When activities require specific physical skills or experience, additional planning, organization, and preparation are required. It may be necessary to obtain specialized training or to use professional guides. Leaders instruct all participants in safety practices unique to the activity. Activities should be appropriate for the participants' ages, abilities, and maturity.

7. All ward activities are planned under the direction of the bishopric, with ward and youth councils. The stake presidency and stake council oversee the planning of stake activities, which are approved by the stake presidency (see *General Handbook*, 20.2.1, 20.3.1). Activity leaders identify applicable requirements, plan carefully, and verify that appropriate safety measures are in place before presenting a plan to priesthood leaders for approval. The [Event and Activity Plan](#) form should be used when planning an event or activity that includes an overnight stay (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.12), an activity requiring travel outside the local area (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.24), or an activity that is out of the ordinary or warrants special considerations. Use the form to create, outline, and present activities for review and approval according to these guidelines.
8. Prepare for emergencies that may occur. Know in advance how to contact parents, Church leaders, law enforcement, and emergency services. In areas where there is limited communication, determine the best way to contact emergency services.
9. Leaders, participants, and parents should be aware of potential risks associated with an activity and willing to take appropriate steps to reduce anticipated risks. Provide parents with adequate information about outings or activities so they can make an informed decision about their child's participation. Use the [Permission and Medical Release Form](#) for each event or activity involving an overnight stay, an activity requiring travel outside the local area, or an activity that is out of the ordinary or warrants special considerations.
10. Leaders should be familiar with and follow vehicle- and travel-related guidelines (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.24). Drivers should not use mobile phones or engage in other distracting behaviors while driving.
11. Notify the bishop and stake president if an accident, serious illness, or injury occurs on Church property or during a Church-sponsored activity. The bishop, the stake president, or a designated member with knowledge of the incident should promptly report accidents or incidents online using the Global Incident Reporting system (GIR) at incidents.ChurchofJesusChrist.org. If the accident involves a fatality or overnight hospital stay, immediately notify the Risk Management Division at

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Church headquarters (1-801-240-4049 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-4049) and the Area Presidency.

12. Stake and ward leaders who plan, conduct, and supervise activities should be knowledgeable about Church Activity Medical Assistance (CAMA) and personal liability insurance guidelines. CAMA provides secondary medical bill assistance to those injured in Church-sponsored activities. This is designed to supplement, not replace, a person's own health insurance (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.9.3, or visit dmba.com/churchactivity). When injuries during Church activities are reported using GIR, the bishop will be notified and provided with a link to help members apply for CAMA.
13. Church activities “should involve minimal risk of injury or illness to participants” (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.20.1). Those who oversee activities should protect themselves by carrying reasonable amounts of liability insurance (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.9.4). In the event of an accident, the Church will look to all available sources of protection for its volunteers and the Church. Such sources may include personal insurance coverage (auto, homeowner's, excess, umbrella, and so forth). For more information, visit the [FAQs—What Should I Do](#) page (found on safety.ChurchofJesusChrist.org under “Resources and Forms”).