

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

May 10, 2021

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

Safety in Church Activities

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Church activities bring Church members together as “fellowcitizens with the saints” (Ephesians 2:19). In addition to providing fun and entertainment, activities should build testimonies, strengthen families, and foster unity and personal growth. They can also help members take part in the work of salvation and exaltation.

Stake presidencies, bishoprics, and organization leaders oversee the planning of Church activities. Leaders should use good judgment in approving activities. Activities should be well planned and follow the safety guidelines included with this letter and at [safety.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

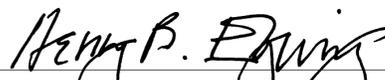
Stake, ward, and youth council meetings provide opportunities to discuss practices that keep all participants safe and protect the Church and its volunteers.

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

Sincerely yours,



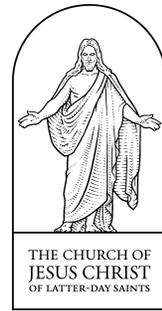




The First Presidency

Reaffirming Safety Guidelines for Activities

May 10, 2021



Activities are an important part of the Children and Youth program. They provide opportunities to gather, learn new skills, accomplish difficult tasks, and build gospel-centered relationships with peers and leaders. These opportunities are often most effective in outdoor settings. They can help children and youth serve others and grow spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually.

Fun, meaningful, and safe activities begin with careful planning. The following are general guidelines for planning Church activities, especially those that include children, youth, and young single adults. Additional principles, guidelines, policies, and training resources are provided in “[Activities](#),” chapter 20 of the *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, and on the Church [Safety and Health website](#).

Adults participating in activities for children and youth should complete the [Protecting Children and Youth training](#) and renew their training every three years (see *General Handbook*, 20.6.2).

General Guidelines

1. For all activities, follow all local or national guidance from government officials, health care professionals, and local Area Presidencies regarding COVID-19 protocols. Activities requiring travel or overnight accommodations will require additional precautions.
2. Take care to promote the spiritual, moral, emotional, and physical safety of those who participate. All conduct and interactions should be consistent with Church standards and exemplify Christlike behavior.
3. Leaders, parents, youth, and children should understand that participation in an activity is a privilege, not a right. This privilege can be revoked if participants behave inappropriately or 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.
4. At least two adults must be present at all Church-sponsored activities attended by youth or children, either in person or virtually. Leaders should avoid one-on-one situations—including contact through phone,

texts, social media, videoconferencing, 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](#)).

5. Adult leaders should be alert to any signs of abuse or neglect. If they become aware of any kind of abuse or neglect, they should report it to appropriate legal authorities and contact the bishop immediately. Leaders should be sensitive and supportive of the youth without engaging in judgment or exploration of the details of what is shared. For more information, see “[Preventing and Responding to Abuse](#)” (2018).
6. If a bishop or stake president learns of any kind of abuse, he should call the Church’s 24-hour abuse help line in countries where it is available (see *General Handbook*, [38.6.2.1](#) for phone numbers). In countries where an abuse help line does not exist, bishops should contact their stake presidents, who should seek guidance from the area legal counsel. The stake president is also encouraged to consult with the Family Services staff or welfare and self-reliance manager (see *General Handbook*, [38.6.2.1](#)). Bishops should refer to *General Handbook*, [38.6.18.2](#) before engaging in counseling with a victim of abuse. See further direction in “[Abuse \(Help for the Victim\)](#),” “[Abuse: Help, Healing, and Protection](#),” and “[Preventing and Responding to Abuse](#).”
7. Activity leaders should be cautious about taking risks. The activity should be appropriate for the fitness levels of leaders and youth. Carefully consider individual medical risk factors and allergies.
8. Leaders should prayerfully plan safe activities. Good safety planning not only protects participants but 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.
9. 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. Use the [Event and Activity Plan](#) form when planning an event or activity involving 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

that warrants special considerations. Use the form to create, outline, and present activities for review and approval according to these guidelines.

10. 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.
11. Leaders, participants, and parents should be aware of potential risks associated with an activity. They should be 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 an 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 that warrants special considerations.
12. 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.
13. 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 Church headquarters (1-801-240-4049 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-4049) and the Area Presidency.
14. 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 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.
15. Church activities "should involve minimal risk of injury or illness to participants" (*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”).