



RISK MANAGEMENT FOR 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

Crisis Management and Emergency Procedures

This is one publication in the series *Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work*. This series is intended to prepare UF/IFAS Extension county faculty, staff, volunteers, and youth to satisfactorily complete the important task of providing best practices in risk management strategies.

Our goal is to conduct educational events and activities that coincide with the 4-H mission and mandates while protecting the safety of participants, sponsors, property, finances, and the goodwill/reputation of the 4-H name. The inherent risk of events and activities can be mitigated through planning and preparation. This risk management guide has been created to outline ways to prepare for and deal with the specific risks associated with your program.

Early planning is key to conducting successful events and activities. A helpful tool in this process is the *Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work: Pre-Event Planning Guide and Matrix* which is found within the Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work Series: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_risk_management_for_4-h_youth_development_work. As you work through this matrix, questions may arise that are unique to a specific situation and may not be completely answered by the series. Extension faculty and staff should refer these questions to appropriate personnel. Questions that require time for research punctuate the need for early planning.

This publication will focus on basic overall precautions to be taken by everyone involved with 4-H. Another tool is the [Risk Management Checklist](#), which can be used as a guide when planning an activity or event.

Crisis Management

For any 4-H activity, do you have a complete health form for each member? Do volunteers review these annually and have forms printed and accessible at 4-H events?

Do volunteers have emergency information, including contact numbers, for each member?

Do volunteers have access to basic first aid supplies?

Do volunteers follow-up with parents on all injury/health concerns? Do volunteers complete incident reports?

Do you have a communication plan in place for an emergency?

Even with the best preparation and planning, unforeseen circumstances can occur. Therefore, it is important to develop a crisis management plan and have emergency plans in place should a crisis occur. These procedures can be extremely useful in times of crisis when our ability to think and respond can easily be hindered. If you have thought ahead of time about what the best course of action is for a given situation, written out your processes and procedures, and communicated the procedure to staff as part of their training, you can take much of the confusion and stress out of a potentially overwhelming situation.

Emergency Procedures

Even with risk management plans in place, emergencies still happen. Planning for emergencies is a part of the risk management plan. Some emergencies include:

- Truancy (e.g., youth leaving premises of activity/event location in which adults are custodians)
- Accidents or injuries
- Weather-related changes

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- Medical conditions (preconditions or those brought on by something at the event)

In the Case of an Emergency

1. Your first priority is to provide appropriate medical attention to the injured participant. Call 911, police, or an ambulance as appropriate. Note: if it is necessary to leave the accident scene to secure emergency care, a responsible program representative should stay at the scene.
2. Contact the parent or guardian as soon as possible.
3. Contact the County Extension Director.
4. Contact UF/IFAS Extension (the CED will help facilitate this process). Start with the district director and then the state 4-H program office. If the incident occurs after hours or on weekends, do not hesitate to contact the program leader or district director at home. The individual you contact will be responsible for making additional UF/IFAS Extension contacts on your behalf.
5. The county, district, and state personnel will want to coordinate media responses with local staff and, in some cases, may prefer to be the source of information for media regarding the incident. The program leader or district director's office can help facilitate your access to immediate support from UF staff. UF/IFAS Extension has support available (ICS) to assist in the situation as appropriate. It is important to have one spokesperson for the media and a backup person if that person is not available.
6. After the situation is stabilized and the appropriate parties have been contacted, complete a detailed [accident/incident report](#). Contact your county insurance/risk manager to determine if your county requires the information in a specific format. If the situation involves a staff member or volunteer, follow UF/IFAS HR [workers' compensation procedure](#).

It is important that paid and volunteer staff involved in a program or event know the emergency plan. Do not attempt to work through handling the emergency alone. There is strong support available through UF/IFAS Extension. Use it.



Figure 1. Emergency plan flowchart.

Emergency Plan

As a volunteer leader, it is beneficial for you to have some basic medical and emergency contact information for youth whose parents might not be present. You should review these forms and flag any relevant information before a club outing or trip. Any information collected for health care reasons within a 4-H setting shall be protected and not shared. In case of an emergency, always call 911 first!

Health Information

A health information/consent for medical treatment form can be generated from 4-H Online. It is mandatory for all participants in overnight programs, including adults. Be sure the information is entered and current before you leave. For more information refer to Florida 4-H Policies [Membership and Participation](#).

Treat all health information confidentially, although 4-H activities are not subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) Privacy Rule. More HIPPA information can be found [here](#).

Any information collected for health care reasons within a 4-H setting shall be protected and not shared. In case of an emergency, always call 911 first!

For More Information

For the policy information, please refer to [Florida 4-H Policies](#)

For forms and other resources, please refer to the [Club Leader Notebook](#)

References

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) [Privacy Rule](#)