Considerations for Event/Program Risk Management

Event: ____________________________________________________________

Event date: _______________________________________________________

Location: _________________________________________________________

Texas AgriLife Extension Service considers the safety and well-being of participants to be the highest priority of all agency educational programs. Extension employees must consider the full impact of all activities conducted during a program and must appreciate the responsibilities of the event coordinator in taking appropriate measures to reduce or eliminate the potential for exposure of participants to reasonably foreseeable hazards.

This information is designed to alert Extension employees and volunteers to potential risks and to help them assess the risks associated with various program activities. Extension employees and volunteers are encouraged to obtain assistance from their county Extension office, District Extension Administrator, Extension Unit and Department leaders, and Extension Administration as necessary to address questions regarding the design of safe program activities and to identify potential hazards or heightened risks before an accident or injury occurs.

The following list of issues is not designed to be an exhaustive list of issues that must be considered for every program—some programs will not require such an extensive review; other programs might require a more extensive review. The purpose of the list is to provide general guidelines about issues that frequently must be considered when planning an event. Program planners should always exercise reasonable care to prevent foreseeable harm from occurring at their event. Specific planning questions related to a particular event should be directed to the individuals holding the above-referenced positions.

Facilities

- Have all the necessary communications/payments/paperwork with the site manager been completed?
- Have arrangements for liability and medical/accident insurance (such as rental or private property forms) been confirmed?
- Has the site/facility been inspected and facility leadership and insurance company been informed of potential hazards beyond the control of the event?
- Do all facilities meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines?
- Are you aware of other groups using site (if applicable)?
- If an emergency arises, do you know the procedures and equipment used at the site?
- Have staff, volunteers, and chaperones all been oriented and trained in their roles in working with youth and/or other audiences?
- Have you trained all participants on the safe and proper use of all equipment?
Facilities, continued.

- Do you have a system for keeping track of the participants present, their release, their location, and emergency telephone numbers?
- Is your event organized to prevent injury, fatigue, or undue stress to participants?
- Have you provided the participants and parents/guardians with the activity itinerary and emergency contact information?
- Have all the necessary permits been acquired for event (such as food booth, vendor)?

General Safety Measures—Youth Programs

- Do you have a signed enrollment form for each 4-H youth and medical releases for everyone?
- Is the entire program time scheduled (allowing minimal or no free, unsupervised time)?
- If a participant is missing, do you have a process for notifying families and authorities in a timely manner?
- In situations in which groups of youths bring their own adult chaperones (example: a multi-county day/overnight camp), have these individuals been briefed on safety, program established expectations, program rules, or other provisions?
- Will the participants be briefed on expectations for conduct (such as horseplay, pranks)?
- Will the participants be provided information on whom to see or contact if they have an emergency?
- Has the program coordinator designed or redesigned any elements of the program or program to minimize the acceleration of competition into conflict and/or fighting?
- Are you providing child care for this program?
- Are background checks conducted on employees or volunteers who will work directly with youths at program when any of the participants are under age 18?
- Is your ratio of adults to youths adequate for this event?
- If your camp or program includes counselors, staff, volunteers, or other personnel from a school district or other agency that may have previously performed a background check on those individuals, has the program sponsor either obtained documentation that the background checks were conducted or performed the background checks on those adults?
- Do the participants know the level of physical activity (such as running, jumping, swimming, climbing higher than 6 feet, lifting weights, contact or field competition sports, use of recreation center facilities) involved in this program?

Use of tools or equipment

- Does this program involve tools?
- If so, has a safety orientation been incorporated into the program?
- Is all the equipment in working condition?
- Have you provided necessary safety equipment?

Use of firearms or weapons

- Are permit firearms and weapons permitted to be brought into the facilities?
- Will any activity of this program involve participant use of or access to firearms, bows and arrows, or pressurized projectiles?
- Has the equipment been inspected to ensure that it is in proper working condition?
- Are safety features involved and if so, are all safety features in proper working order?
- Will instruction on safe use be provided to supervisors and participants, and will it be demonstrated?
Use of firearms or weapons, continued.

- Has the program sponsor arranged for adequate adult supervision during the use or handling of this equipment?
- Have measures been taken to restrict access to this equipment when it is not in use?

Use of chemicals or gases

- Will any activity involve the use of chemicals or ignitable or noxious gases?
- If so, will the participants be trained specifically on the safe use of these materials?

Swimming and water sports

- Will any activity involve water sports (diving, swimming, scuba, wading)?
- Will a certified lifeguard be on duty at the immediate location of the activity?
- Will there be adequate adult supervision in and around the water?
- Have the participants’ swimming skills been assessed in relation to the activity?
- Is the person assessing swimming skill proficiency qualified to make proficiency determinations?
- Is the location selected for the water sport activities one that is void of known hazards such as undertow, rip tides, or a location that is not historically frequented by sea predators (such as sharks) or other dangerous sea creatures (such as Portuguese man-of-war, jellyfish, stingrays)?
- Will a “buddy system” be used to ensure that participants do not enter the water alone?
- Has consideration been given to the time of day and the availability of daylight for these water activities?
- Will participants be informed of safety considerations appropriate for the water activity?
- Are alternative activities (instead of swimming) planned in the event of bad weather?

Housing, if provided

- Has appropriate consideration been given to the restriction of access to the participant housing area?
- Will the participants be provided instruction on security, loss prevention, and other housing-related safety and security issues?
- Will the participants be oriented on exit locations to use during an emergency?
- Will the participants be instructed on emergency exit procedures, common meeting sites, or reporting areas in the event of a building evacuation?
- Has consideration been given to determining an appropriate number of participants assigned to an established sleeping area/space?
- Has consideration been given to the provision of adequate and proper housing supervision?
- Have youth and adults safety and risk management issues been considered when determining housing arrangements?
- Will a curfew be established and communicated to participants?
- Is there a process to determine whether all participants have been accounted for at curfew, lights out, or other determined points in the day or evening to ensure that the participants are present or accounted for?
- Have procedures been established for managing the situation if a participant is absent and unaccounted for at the housing area (whom should be informed, at what point security or police authorities should be advised, when parents should be advised)?
- Will participants be provided information on whom to see or contact if they have an emergency while at the housing area?
Transportation

• Does Texas AgriLife Extension Service have any involvement in the arrangements or payment for the transportation of participants or participate in any role in transporting participants either to and from the program or during the program?
• Will any participants be transported to and/or from the program location at the beginning and end of the program by employees or volunteers of the program?
• Will any participants be transported to and from the program by themselves, parents, guardians, high school representatives, or other individuals who are not directly affiliated with the camp or program?
• Will any participants be shuttled between varied locations during the program by means secured by the program other than public transportation?
• Will any participants be transported by the program in vehicles other than System-owned vehicles?
  • Has the program sponsor determined that the vehicles are reasonably sound and reasonably capable of safely completing the trip?
  • Has the program sponsor obtained evidence of insurance on the vehicle(s)?
  • Has the program sponsor considered the insurance coverage amounts in relation to the participants transported by the vehicle?
• Although Extension program participants are not considered to be “university students,” the TAMU Rule and Standard Administrative Procedure on Student Travel are good references for planning program field trips. Has the agent/volunteer reviewed University Rule 13.04.99.M1: Student Travel and Standard Administrative Procedure 13.04.99.M1.01: Student Travel Procedures? (http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/13.04.99.M1.01.pdf)
• If transporting participants in 12- or 15-passenger vans, has the program sponsor or volunteer reviewed the University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M0.01: Van Safety Procedures before transporting the participants?
• When multiple vehicles are used to transport participants, do all the drivers know the destination location and will they be provided individual driving directions?
• Will the drivers be briefed on anticipated driving or traffic conditions in relation to transporting participants?
• Does the program sponsor know whom to call if a vehicle breaks down (whether A&M System vehicle or personal vehicle)?
• Will the drivers be instructed on what to do if an automotive accident occurs?
• Does the program sponsor know whom to call if an automobile accident involves a System-owned vehicle?
• Will the program sponsor have in his or her possession telephone numbers of parents, guardians, or family members of participants if it becomes necessary to contact them while away from the main program activity site?
• Will the program sponsor have in his or her possession other contact numbers that may be relevant in the event of an emergency that occurs while traveling?
• Has the program sponsor assessed the appropriate loading and unloading sites for the buses, vans, and/or cars to avoid participant loading/unloading in or near traffic?
• Will a first aid kit be present in the vehicles used for transporting participants?

Charter Services

• Will this program use chartered transportation services of any kind (such as buses, boats, airplanes)? [Note: Chartered service is defined as a service secured to transport participants by land, sea, or air, in which one or more vehicles and operators are provided for this purpose.]
Charter Services, continued.

- Has the program sponsor confirmed with the charter service that the service maintains appropriate certifications and is certified according to the mode of transportation and that the certificates or licenses are up to date?
- Has the program sponsor confirmed that the charter service carries liability insurance and that the policy is current?
- Has the program sponsor considered arrangements for communicating proper safety measures to participants before loading?
- Does the program sponsor have enough information about the business practices and safety records of the charter service to maintain reasonable confidence in the ability of the company to deliver quality and safe service to program participants?
- For boat charters, has the program sponsor confirmed the availability of appropriate size life jackets for all program participants?

First Aid and Health Safety

- Has the program sponsor made arrangements to provide first aid training to counselors?
- Will individuals with first aid or other medical training (may include police or security forces) be present in the actual vicinity of program activities during program activities?
- Will medical technicians be on call to provide first aid?
- Will a first aid kit be provided immediately to the location of the program activities?
- Has the program sponsor inspected the contents of the first aid kit to ensure that used, out of date, or damaged items have been replaced?
- For strenuous outside activity, will counselors or program staff be provided information on recognition and treatment of heat exhaustion or heat stroke?
- For strenuous outside activity, will measures be taken to prevent heat exhaustion?
- Will the program sponsor/coordinate/director collect information from participants regarding special medical considerations? (i.e. medical release forms)
- Will the program sponsor provide appropriate security of sensitive medical information if there are participants who have special medical considerations?
- Is there a process in place to ensure that restrictions are appropriately applied (such as providing that alternative foods and other preventive measures are taken to avoid exposure when allergies are noted and ensuring that arrangements are made to prevent specific contacts in the case of severe allergies)?
- In cases in which medications need to be taken by participants, has the program sponsor considered issues related to securing the medications, scheduling reminders, refrigeration or storage needs, and return of the medication to the participants or parents at the end of the session?
- When programs will and/or serve their own foods, have plans been made to maintain proper storage or transportation temperatures, proper sanitation, and proper food-handling procedures?
- Has the program identified any volunteer that is current on certification related to CPR and other first aid procedures?