



Risk Management Guide

for

**The Girls' Brigade
NSW**

May, 2007

Risk Assessment Guidelines

Background

The process of identifying and managing risks is not new, many of them are common sense precautions.

The safety of all our members is a strong argument for reducing the risks within our Companies. Negative events will cause unnecessary stress on Leaders and distract from our aim of Girls' Brigade.

The Girls' Brigade is legally bound by a "Duty of Care" to all people involved. (see Leaders Handbook p 63).

Each Church is responsible for ensuring the property is safe and for having policies and procedures for identifying and assessing and dealing with risks. Captains are responsible for being aware of the Church policy and alerting the Church management of any identified risks. The Captain is also responsible for assessing each event and activity and assessing and documenting risks as per the Church policy.

In addition to the legal responsibilities it is a good witness to families and the community that we give general safety and child protection highest priority.

- Girls' Brigade Companies must take "reasonable" steps to prevent foreseeable harm from occurring to people involved in their activities.
- If you fail to take "reasonable" steps and a person is injured as a result, you may have breached your Duty of Care and could be found to have been negligent.

The Risk Management Process

There are 5 steps:

1. Identifying the risks to all girls, Leaders, families and guests.
2. Assessing the frequency and severity of each risk
3. Identifying methods to remove or reduce each risk.
4. Implementing the methods to remove or reduce each risk.
5. Documenting the above steps on a Risk Assessment form (for suggestion see Attachment 1, Captains should also be aware of pro-formers used in their own Church) and periodically evaluating the effectiveness of the process.

The Risk Assessment Form

All Companies should, according to their Church policy, keep risk assessment forms as a record of risk areas and the steps taken to reduce the risks.

The records prompt the appropriate actions and are the basis of ongoing assessments.

In the event that someone is injured, they may be used as evidence to show that you have taken all reasonable measure to protect that person.

Leader Selection and Child Protection Guidelines.

Generally the Company Captain will select Leaders in consultation with the Church leaders. The Church should have clear guidelines and procedures for carrying out Child Protection Checks (usually attachment 4) and for Child Protection Training. If such procedures are not in place, the Company Captain should meet with Church leaders to develop procedures for selecting, checking and training Leaders.

Things To Consider When Assessing Risks

• Supervision

- Children and youth must be well supervised to enable Leaders to intervene in unsafe situations; it is good practice to expect children to do the unexpected and to anticipate this.
- The numbers of Leaders required will depend on the type of activity, its location, the age and number of participants. A minimum of two Leaders should be present at all times. The Leaders handbook gives suggested ratios (see page 68).
- No group should be left alone without a Leader or in clear sight of another Leader at any time.
- If you need to speak to one child alone please do so in clear sight of other Leaders.
- When planning activities, Risk Assessments should be completed to avoid unnecessary harm. This includes checking equipment for damages.
- When planning a camp, extra consideration should be given to space of camp site. Are all areas visible or will you need extra Leaders? What will happen for shower time? (see GB Code of Conduct).
- Do instructors have relevant qualifications, experience and insurance to offer extra activities eg abseiling, canoeing etc both at camp sites and in Company time?
- Always have up to date Membership Forms and permission notes.
- A Company needs to agree on a list of safe games to play and stick to this list. It is good practice for Leaders to explain the activity and Leaders expectation about safety and general behavior, before starting the activity.
- It is good practice to arrive in plenty of time for any activity so that preparation can be made and appropriate supervision is available as the girls arrive.
- Your Company should be adhering to the Child Protection Guidelines of your Church. Your Leaders should be completing the 'Working with Children's Check/Prohibited Persons Form as per your Church policy? Refer to the GB Code of Conduct for further advice about appropriate supervision.
- Where visitors are leading a group, a GB Leader should be present at all times.

• Transportation

- Every driver should confirm they have a current license and registration certificate; it is good practice to sight these.
- Ask drivers to complete a form that confirms they have a current license, car registration certificate, insurance, and their car is in good repair including working seatbelts.
- Check that their license is correct for the vehicle to be driven.
- Every passenger must wear a seatbelt.
- To prevent allegations of child abuse, it is recommended a young person not travel alone with a driver unless parent's permission has been given. The child must be seated in the rear of the car.
- It is good practice to notify parents the form of transport to be used and whether "P plate" drivers will be driving.

- **Environment**

While you may not own the buildings you meet in, it is your responsibility to ensure they are safe:

- Trips and slips. eg make sure different levels of flooring are clearly marked, and non-slip mats/flooring are present in entry ways.
- Heaters and fans should be properly guarded or fixed to walls out of reach.
- Florescent lights can explode - guards are recommended or careful consideration taken when planning activities.
- Hazardous substances. eg bleach, cleaners and pesticides should be stored in clearly labeled original bottles in cupboards where children have no access.
- Outdoors - Do you have adequate lighting? Are paths clear of debris? Are gates, fences and sheds in good repair?
- Any venue that you use should also meet these requirements. You will need to work along side managers of these venues to ensure the venue is safe for the activities you are planning.
- Be careful when carrying out manual handling tasks eg setting up tables, sports equipment - bend at the knees and ask for help.

- **Food Safety**

Food poisoning is most likely to occur when basic hygiene procedures have not been observed.

When preparing food you should observe these well-established precautions:

- Encourage thorough hand washing whilst preparing food.
- Food should be stored at less than 5°C or greater than 60°C.
- Raw meat and vegetables should be separated at all times and stored in separate containers.
- Do not allow rubbish to build up in food preparation areas.
- It is recommended that gloves and covered in shoes be worn and hair be tied back

- **First Aid, Allergies and Medication.**

- Each Company should have a Leader trained in First Aid including an understanding of anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions). All Leaders must know who this person is.
- All Companies need to have access to a well stocked and well maintained first-aid kit including personal safety protection eg gloves.
- Keep emergency contact numbers somewhere easily accessible. eg girl's/Leader's Membership Forms, local medical centres.
- Every Company must have an accident folder to record the details of all incidents. These should be kept for 20yrs.
- Collect Membership Forms annually to keep your records up to date and inform the girl's Leader of any special requirements or allergies.
- Cater for special diets in cooking activities or on camps. Try asking parents for help/ideas.
- Only give prescribed medication with permission and written instructions from the parent/guardian. It must be dispensed from the original container and be witnessed by another Leader.

