

## Unit 7: Safety

How do we define a successful event? One of the primary success criteria we use is that everyone is kept safe. Learning Unit 7 concludes basic steps to take to insure the safety of everyone.

### Learning Objectives:

1. You will understand that a 4-H volunteer's first concern must always be for the safety of the members.
2. You will learn the ways Missouri 4-H works to assure the safety of volunteers and youth.
3. You will become more aware of the importance of planning for safety at local 4-H events.

### Preview Questions:

1. Why is it important for 4-H to consider keeping volunteers and youth safe?
2. What are two ways Missouri 4-H plans for the safety of volunteers?

Providing everyone with a safe environment is Missouri's second program anchor.

Safe environments are created in 4-H in several ways:

- Annual volunteer application and screening process  
When volunteers take just a few minutes each year to complete the application and sign the commitment form, it helps to assure that 4-H members, as well as volunteers, are safe.
- Volunteer orientation  
Volunteers are required to participate in a one time volunteer orientation training. Beginning in 2009, the post card that volunteers receive will also indicate that they have completed this one-time volunteer orientation.
- Ongoing volunteer training  
We encourage 4-H volunteers to take advantage of training. Many county or regional 4-H programs offer a variety of trainings on different topics. Trainings provide opportunities to visit with other 4-H volunteers to find out what is helpful to them or how they have solved certain problems. One of the most beneficial 4-H volunteer training events is the North Central Region Volunteer Forum, an annual conference held in one of 12 Midwest states every fall. Workshops and presentations are planned specifically for 4-H volunteers and many are taught by volunteers.
- Medical/accident insurance  
Most counties purchase special insurance for all club members that is available for special events. The insurance is very inexpensive and provides great coverage in case someone is injured.
- Health consent form required for all events  
Some counties now ask that a health consent form be completed every year for each member and kept on file at the Extension center. State events also require that a health form be submitted per event.
- Parental permission  
Parental permission forms give 4-H and hospitals permission to treat their children, if necessary.
- Planning for the Unexpected  
Even though we do not anticipate anything unfortunate happening, it is important to have an

emergency plan in place in case of the unexpected. A written plan is always best. Take time to think through the possible risks and discuss with other adults what should happen in case of emergencies.

- Prior to a 4-H event or activity, consider the possible risks and plan ways to eliminate or lessen the risk. For example, if your club meets in a local school and there is a playground, what plans do you have for making sure members are safe on that playground? Ask yourself questions such as:
  - Are there adults assigned to the playground?
  - Are members allowed to play on the equipment?
  - If someone is hurt, who will provide medical attention?
  - Is there an adult assigned to make emergency phone calls or make trips to the emergency room?

Carrying out ALL the steps below is the best way to create a safe environment for adults and youth - regardless of the 4-H activity.

- Be sure there is a stocked first aid kit available and an adult who knows basic first aid.
- Have a severe weather plan for Missouri conditions such as tornado, fire and lightning.
- Be sure there are enough adults to carry on with a project meeting, club meeting or activity in the event that one adult needs to leave the premises for some reason.
- Always think safety first and encourage members to do the same. Consider spending the first few minutes of your next 4-H meeting talking about the safety issues related to the day's activities at project meetings. Is it possible to involve youth in assembling a first aid kit at an upcoming 4-H meeting?