	Gasóga na hÉireann/Scouting Ireland			
	Document No. 001	Issued August 2025	Last Amended	Next Review August 2026
	Category:			
	<b>Scouting Ireland – Scouting Safely - Safety Guidelines for Scouters and Scout Groups</b>			

Related Documents

Revision Schedule		
Revision	Date	Description

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## 1 Introduction

This safety guidance is designed for volunteer Scouters and members of the Group Council to support the safe delivery of Scouting at the local level. It draws on best practices and relevant legal requirements, while recognising the real-world context in which volunteer-led Scout Groups operate. Where possible, links to official Scouting Ireland policies and resources are provided to avoid duplication.

Safety is a shared responsibility within the Scout Group, involving both youth members and adults. Our commitment to safety and well-being is rooted in the values of the Scout Promise and Law, which call on every member to act with integrity, respect, care, and responsibility.

The governance framework provided by the Scout Group Constitution and Charter places safety at the heart of good leadership and management. Together, the Promise, Law, Constitution, and Charter form both an ethical compass and a practical framework, ensuring that “Be Prepared” is more than a motto; it is a guiding principle that supports thoughtful planning and the safe delivery of our Scouting programme. Being prepared is about anticipating hazards, planning with care, and responding calmly when needed.

These guidelines are intended to support Scouters in strengthening their approach to safety over time. Every Group is different, so the expectation is to apply the guidance proportionately, based on your resources, size, and context.

These guidelines offer a framework of good practice that Scout Groups can work towards. It’s not about ticking boxes or being perfect, but about taking small, achievable steps to make Scouting safer for everyone. They also aim to help Scouters understand not only what is required, but also when and why.

Groups are encouraged to take a continuous improvement approach, starting with what’s practical now, and gradually building confidence, competence, and capacity over time.

Key areas covered in the guidance include:

- Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment
- Building / Den Safety
- Training & Competence
- Emergency Procedures
- Health & Wellbeing
- Travel and Transport
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Data Protection

These topics reflect the most common safety challenges Scout Groups face and are intended to be practical, supportive, and adaptable to your local context.

**Note:** More detailed guidance on Den and premises safety is currently in development and will be issued separately.

## 2 Roles and Responsibilities

Scouting in Ireland is volunteer-led, and while Scout Groups do not operate as formal employers, Scouters are volunteers rather than employees; nevertheless, they carry important legal and ethical responsibilities for the safety of their members. This section outlines the roles of individual Scouters, the group council, and parents and guardians in supporting a safe environment across all Scouting activities.

### 2.1 Safety Leadership

Group Leaders, the Group Council, and Section Team Leads can influence the safety culture of the group by demonstrating strong leadership, setting a positive example, and prioritising safety in their decisions and actions. This creates an environment where both Scouters and youth members feel comfortable raising concerns and making suggestions. Additionally, every adult volunteer plays a crucial role in fostering this culture of safety. By being attentive and approachable, all volunteers help identify and resolve potential hazards, ensuring a safe and positive experience for everyone involved.

As part of the Group Council's leadership responsibility, they play a key role in encouraging and supporting the following actions:

- The Group Leader, Section Team Leads, and all Scouters are competent in their safety roles within Scouting.
- Scouting Ireland policies and guidance are shared and applied as appropriate.
- Resources that support safe Scouting are identified and made available where possible.
- Programmes and activities are supported by risk planning and emergency response procedures.

### 2.2 Programme Scouters – Individual Responsibilities

Every Programme Scouter plays an essential role in helping to:

- Create and maintain a safe, welcoming environment for all members
- Work cooperatively with all other adults and members in the scout group
- Be prepared: Pre-plan, facilitate, and supervise Scouting activities with safety in mind.
- Manage risk and balance acceptable risk with benefits for participants
- Never endanger themselves or others: This means:
  - Following safety guidance and agreed procedures.
  - Leading activities you are comfortable with and have the necessary skills or support for.
  - Ensuring you are fit and well enough to take part safely in the scouting activity.
- Know and follow Scouting Ireland policies
- Complete mandatory Child Safeguarding training at required intervals
- Be appropriately vetted at required intervals for your jurisdiction:
  - Garda Vetting in the Republic of Ireland
  - Access NI in Northern Ireland.
- Maintain and develop your skills over time, seeking training or support when needed
- Report promptly any accidents, near misses, faulty or damaged equipment or safeguarding concerns
- Prioritise your wellbeing and avoid over-committing, balancing Scouting with other responsibilities.

- Honour your scouting commitments: if you cannot attend a planned meeting or event, especially where your skills or numbers are needed, give as much notice as you can.

### **2.3 Section Team Leads– Session Planning and Safety**

A Section Leader is a Programme Scouter designated with leadership responsibilities within a Programme Section (Beavers, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venture Scouts). Rover Scouts may operate independently or be supported by a designated Rover Point of Contact.

Each Section Leader and Rover Point of Contact supports safe programme delivery by helping with the following tasks, where relevant:

- Ensuring all youth members in their section are accurately documented on the national database
- Supporting the planning of safe activities, including ensuring risk assessments are considered and in place where appropriate.
- Helping to ensure that agreed safety measures are in place.
- Maintaining suitable supervision levels, aligned with Scouting Ireland guidance, and adjusting where needed for particular activities when required to ensure safety.
- Communicating clearly and appropriately with youth members and their parents/guardians about activity-related risks and safety measures.
- Ensuring each meeting or event is facilitated by Scouters who are vetted, registered, trained, and compliant with Scouting Ireland policies and procedures
- Ensuring that all Programme Scouters delivering the programme within the section possess the necessary competence for the activities they lead, and facilitating their access to additional relevant training as required.
- Ensuring that only fit-for-purpose equipment is used in their section, and promptly notifying the Group Quartermaster/Bo'sun of any faulty items for maintenance or replacement
- Reviewing incidents at section level and raising concerns with the Group Leader
- Recording attendance of all youth members and adults present at each meeting or activity and retaining records of attendance.
- Maintaining a section record (whether physical or digital) to include, but not limited to:
  - Activity Consent forms
  - Risk assessments
  - Contact numbers
  - Emergency procedures
  - Attendance

### **2.4 Group Leader – Group-Wide Safety Coordination**

The Group Leader (GL) holds overall responsibility for group-wide safety coordination and has key safety responsibilities, in line with their role in overseeing and coordinating Programme Sections and ensuring compliance with Scouting Ireland policies.

The Group Leader (GL) has the following safety responsibilities:

- Ensuring all programme Scouters and Section Team Leads are accurately documented on the national database
- Ensuring all Scouters are properly inducted, trained and vetted, and aware of their safety responsibilities,

- Ensuring the correct range of skills is available within the group for the activities being undertaken, and facilitating access to relevant training
- Coordinating incident reviews and learning
- Ensuring accident and incident reports are submitted to national office
- Being the primary point of contact for all critical safety issues within the Group
- Ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and supporting the Section Team Leads in undertaking risk assessments, as part of programme planning
- Working with the Group Council to ensure that insurance, premises safety, and documentation are in order,
- Promoting a safety culture that values open communication, continuous learning, and proactive risk awareness, across the entire Scout Group.
- Liaising with the County Team, Provincial Support Officers, and Scouting Ireland National Office on safety matters when needed, utilizing the support structures provided by Scouting Ireland

The actions required to fulfil these responsibilities can be shared among members of the Group Council or Programme Team, depending on the structure and capacity of the Group.

## **2.5 The Group Council – Group-Wide Safety Oversight**

In line with the Scout Group Charter and Constitution, the Group Council has a crucial role in group-wide safety oversight, which includes:

- Overseeing the implementation of safety practices across the group, supporting alignment with guidance and relevant legislation.
- Monitoring trends in incidents and risks within the group
- Organising annual reviews of facilities, risk processes, and safeguarding,
- Supporting the Group Leader in safety leadership, and providing administrative and other support services

## **2.6 Parents and Guardians – Their Role in Safety**

Parents and guardians are key partners in Scouting and play an important role in keeping Scouting safe. Their responsibilities include:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date health and emergency contact information for their child to the Section Leader or designated Scouter.
- Informing Scouters of allergies, medication, or additional needs that may impact their child's safe participation in Scouting activities.
- Informing Scouters promptly of any changes in health and wellbeing, medication, or circumstances that could affect a young person's safe participation in Scouting activities
- Ensuring punctual drop-off and collection, and following the Scout Group's safety and traffic procedures, and safeguarding best practice as communicated by the Group.
- Equipping their child appropriately for each activity, with suitable clothing, footwear, and gear for the activity, weather and terrain, as advised by Scouters
- Following the Scout Group's sign-in and sign-out procedures for arrivals and departures at all meetings and events.
- Reinforcing positive behaviour by supporting Scouters in applying the group / section Code of Conduct and promoting respectful behaviour among youth members

### 3 Legal and Regulatory Context

#### 3.1 Why Legal Compliance Matters for Volunteer Scout Groups

Volunteer Scout Groups, whether in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland, operate within a wider legal context that includes both legislation and general duties of care. While laws may not be specifically designed for voluntary youth organisations, many broader legal responsibilities do apply. Scout Groups are not expected to become legal experts. However, having a basic awareness of these areas can help Groups make informed decisions, act responsibly, and seek advice when needed.

If basic legal responsibilities are not met, there can occasionally be consequences for the Group, or in rare cases, for individual Scouters. This is why understanding and applying reasonable safety and safeguarding practices is important.

**Note:** This guidance reflects both Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI) law and good practice as of May 2025.

In the RoI, check the Irish Statute Book Website: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie>. Scouting Ireland, Tusla Child and Family Agency, the Charities Regulator, and the Data Protection Commission (DPC) for the most up-to-date laws and information.

In NI, check <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/explore/legislatures/ni>, Scouting Ireland the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI), the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI), and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO NI) for the most up-to-date information.

#### 3.2 Child Protection and Safeguarding

Scouting Ireland is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All adults in Scouting are expected to understand and follow the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures as part of creating a safe and positive environment for young people.

Please consult the Safeguarding section of the Scouting Ireland website for up-to-date guidance, forms, and reporting procedures: <http://scouts.ie/safety/safeguarding>

If you have a safeguarding concern or need advice, contact:

- ROI: (01) 499 8014
- NI: 028 9560 1800

In an emergency or if a child is at immediate risk, contact the Gardaí/PSNI directly.

#### 3.3 Data Protection (GDPR)

Scouting Ireland and Scout groups jointly collect and process the personal data of Youth and Scouter members, families (parents/guardians, next of kin and nominated emergency contacts). Each Scout Group acts as a separate data controller for the personal information it collects for its own use. Scouting Ireland's Data Protection Policy is set out in SI-DP01, available at <https://www.scouts.ie/legal/data-protection>. This policy applies to all Scouting Ireland staff and members. Scouting Ireland has appointed a designated Data Protection Officer (DPO), who can provide support and advice to scout groups on data protection laws and requirements.

The DPO can be contacted at [dataprotection@scouts.ie](mailto:dataprotection@scouts.ie) or by ringing National Office on +353 (0)1 4956300.

Based on the SI-DP01 policy, the following sections set out some key principles every group should apply:

##### 3.3.1 Collecting Information on Activity Consent Forms

- Ensure all membership data is current and up to date

- Ask only for what is needed- avoid asking for extra details that aren't directly related to the safety or logistics.
- Always provide a short introduction explaining why you're collecting this data and how it will be used, who it will be shared with and how long it will be retained for. Obtain explicit, written consent from parents or guardians to obtain and use the information requested.
- Once collected, ensure these forms are kept securely with restricted access and password-controlled access to the electronic files, and hard copy forms stored in a secure location, with restricted access.
- Use data only for the purpose it was collected (e.g. health info for first aid only).

### **3.3.2 Using WhatsApp Groups or Other Messaging Platforms**

- Before placing anyone (Scouters or parents) into a WhatsApp or similar messaging group, get clear, affirmative consent. (Use the 'invite' feature where possible for consent)
- Explain that joining the group means that phone numbers may be visible to other group members.
- Limit discussions within these WhatsApp groups to scout-related topics.

### **3.3.3 Contacting Parents or Guardians**

- Make sure that you have parental consent specifically for contacting them via the chosen method, e.g. included on consent forms.
- When contacting parents via emails or texts, stick to key updates about scout activities.

### **3.3.4 Photograph and Media Consent**

- Photographs where an individual is directly or indirectly identifiable are considered to be personal data.
- Before taking photos of members or using any images, obtain explicit written consent.
- Define where the photos will be used (e.g. on your website, printed newsletters, or social media).
- Delete photographs once their original purpose has been fulfilled. It is acceptable to retain a select few for historical purposes, such as documenting group milestones or reflecting on the group's history, provided they directly contribute to that context.

### **3.3.5 Storing Personal Data**

- Store digital records on a secure cloud-based software with controlled access.
- Store paper records in a secure location that only authorised Scouters can access.
- Keep the information only as long as it's needed. Delete or securely dispose of outdated information.
- Provide access to personal information only to designated Scouters who access it for safety or logistical reasons.
- When a volunteer is leaving the group, ensure they confirm that any personal data of members stored on their personal devices has been securely deleted.
- Under GDPR, Health data is deemed sensitive information; ensure any medical-related data has a higher degree of security with limited access.

### **3.3.6 Sending Emails and Communication Practices**

- When emailing groups of Scouters or parents, always use the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) field. This prevents the recipients' email addresses from being shared publicly.

### **3.4 Health and Safety**

In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, health and safety legislation places clear, enforceable duties on employers and other "duty-holders." If your Scout Group employs staff, those formal duties apply. However, even where no staff are employed, Scout Groups still have a general duty of care toward their youth members and volunteers. While Groups are not formal employers, they are encouraged to follow safety practices that are reasonable, proportionate, and achievable in a volunteer-led setting.

Any group in control of Scout premises must also comply with relevant fire safety legislation in its jurisdiction. Additionally, you should be aware of gas safety regulations, electrical installation standards, and building control obligations.

Scouters also have a personal duty of care. This means taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of young people, fellow volunteers, visitors, and themselves.

Scout Groups are encouraged to follow these key good practice principles:

- Maintain a safe den or meeting space, with safe access, exits, and fire safety measures
- Plan activities with safety in mind, including simple, suitable risk assessments
- Put reasonable safety measures in place to reduce identified risks
- Ensure Scouters have the training and support they need for the activities they lead
- Record and report accidents or near misses, and learn from them
- Have basic response plans (e.g. for first aid, fire, and critical incidents)
- Use safe transport and accommodation
- Work only with suitable third-party providers and clarify safety responsibilities
- Follow relevant Scouting Ireland policies and good practice
- Follow any additional legal requirements that apply to your activity or location

The remainder of this guidance focuses on specific health and safety matters, with each chapter addressing key topics relevant to safe Scouting at group level.

## **4 Safety in Premises and Buildings**

Scout meetings can take place in community halls, Scout Dens, churches, schools, or shared spaces; each with unique arrangements and responsibilities. The Scout Group Council, acting as the “person having control” of the den (whether it is owned, leased, or hired by the hour), is encouraged to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the premises and any equipment provided are safe and do not present unnecessary risk to health.

This is about applying common-sense precautions and working with property owners or landlords, where relevant, to support a safe environment for Scouting.

### **4.1 Scout dens occupancy models:**

Scout dens are categorised into three main occupancy models, as outlined below. In all cases, the Scout Group Council retains an important role in supporting the safety of volunteers, youth members, and visitors during Scouting activities held at the den. The level of responsibility and control may vary depending on the occupancy model.

A separate guidance document is being prepared, containing more detailed, practical advice on managing safety in scout dens and meeting places.

#### **4.1.1 Owned or Long-Term Leased Dens**

The Scout Group Council has full control over the building, either because the group owns it outright or holds a long-term lease. In this case, the Group typically has responsibility for all aspects of safety, including maintenance, inspections, fire safety systems, insurance, and repairs.

This doesn't mean doing everything yourself but working with qualified contractors and volunteers to meet your responsibilities over time.

#### **4.1.2 Rented Dens (Medium-Term Lease or Licence)**

The Scout Group occupies the premises under a lease or licence agreement. Safety responsibilities are typically shared between the Group and the landlord, as outlined in the lease or rental terms.

For example, the landlord may manage structural maintenance and fire systems, while the Group looks after day-to-day safety during meetings and activities.

#### **4.1.3 Hourly or Occasional Hire**

The Scout Group rents a space by the hour or for individual events, such as in community halls, parish centres, or schools. In these cases, the venue operator is responsible for the overall premises. The Scout Group's role is to ensure that its own activities are safe, to follow the venue's procedures, and to report any hazards noticed during use.

Being a good guest helps keep everyone safe and supports positive relationships with local venues.

## 5 Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment

This section provides practical support to help Groups introduce or strengthen their use of risk assessment. You don't need to be an expert in safety or risk assessment; simply make a start and build gradually over time.

### 5.1 Why Risk Assessment Matters

Scouting challenges young people to try new things, step outside their comfort zones, and develop confidence and skills. Our motto, "Be Prepared," reminds us that preparation makes adventure both safe and enjoyable.

While Scouting is exciting and adventurous by nature, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that it doesn't place anyone at unnecessary risk. Effective planning and risk assessment support safe, well-managed adventures while preserving the spirit of exploration.

Considerations when planning activities:

- What level of risk is suitable for your group's age and experience?
- What benefits does the activity provide in the context of scouting learning objectives?
- Can the risks be managed to an acceptable level?

### 5.2 Key Definitions

- **Hazard Identification:** Recognising anything with the potential to cause harm
- **Risk Assessment:** Evaluating the likelihood and consequence of harm from identified hazards, then determining measures to eliminate or reduce those risks.
- **Residual Risk:** The level of risk remaining after controls have been put in place; ensure it is acceptable relative to benefits.
- **Risk Context:** Factors influencing risk: participant profile (age, experience), environment, policies, season, group experience. Understanding the context helps focus attention on relevant hazards.

### 5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Programme Scouter:** Takes the lead on risk assessments for activities they're delivering, including identifying hazards and planning controls.
- **Section Leader:** Ensures all section activities have up-to-date risk assessments and that members are briefed on relevant hazards, controls and procedures. Supports Programme Scouters in preparing assessments.
- **Group Council:** Provides oversight of the Group's risk management process, encouraging documentation of assessments for both routine and special events.
- **Expedition/Activity Leader:** For high-risk or complex events (camps, water activities, international trips), there is appropriate planning, including emergency and contingency arrangements.

### 5.4 Foundations for Effective Risk Assessment

The following practices support good risk management and safer Scouting

#### 5.4.1 Training & Communication

- Provide hazard-awareness and risk-assessment training for Scouters
- Communicate risk assessment findings clearly and assign risk-management roles.
- Encourage a culture where people feel comfortable raising concerns.

#### **5.4.2 Collaborative Approach**

- Involve Scouters, youth members, and experienced Scouters.
- Engage young people in identifying hazards and suggesting controls.
- Use age-appropriate language and visual aids when briefing.

### **5.5 When is a Risk Assessment Required**

#### **5.5.1 Assessment of Adventure Skills and Typical Scouting Activities**

Scout Groups are encouraged to develop written risk assessments for all core adventure skills and related activities. These assessments should:

- Cover the skill levels the group plans to deliver and the activities described in the relevant competence criteria.
- Be prepared with input from individuals experienced and competent in the adventure skills and associated activities
- Form part of the group's risk assessment library, available for reference when planning meetings or events.
- Be reviewed from time to time by competent Scouters to check that guidance and controls remain appropriate and relevant, especially as young people progress.

#### **5.5.2 For Routine Meetings:**

This approach is suitable when activities are well-known, low-risk, and regularly delivered.

##### **a) Standard Venue Checklist**

- Create a simple venue checklist to help confirm the building is safe and ready for use (fire safety equipment, exits, lighting, first aid kit, damaged items)
- Review this checklist at the start of each term or after significant changes.

##### **b) Routine Meeting Risk Assessment**

- Maintain a simple meeting risk assessment as a helpful reference to support safe meetings. It should cover the main risks relevant to your group without becoming overly complex. Make sure it reflects your group's needs, including age, allergies or other considerations.
- Update this assessment at the start of each term or if your standard meeting approach changes.

##### **c) Higher-Risk Meeting Elements**

- Identify any higher-risk activities planned for a specific meeting (knife use, fire, specialised tools) that fall outside the routine meeting assessment.
- Refer to your group's adventure skills risk assessment library for the relevant controls.

##### **d) Meeting Plan**

- In your meeting plan, combine the standard activity risk assessment with any adventure skill-specific assessments for activities you intend to run.
- If a specific written assessment does not exist, prepare one with input from competent individuals

##### **e) Dynamic Risk Assessment**

- Before each meeting, run through the venue checklist, standard activity assessment, and any relevant adventure skill assessments.

- Identify any changes or new risks, confirm controls are in place, and brief Scouters and participants.

#### f) Documentation

- Keep brief notes on near misses or any adjustments made. These can support learning and improvement.

### 5.6 Situations or Activities Requiring Specific Written Risk Assessment:

An event specific, written risk assessment is strongly advised for activities and events that present higher or less familiar risks, including, but not limited to:

- Overnight stays, camps, or hikes.
- Meetings or activities held outside your Scout Den or usual meeting place.
- Activities provided by third parties or led by external instructors.
- Water-based or adventurous outings (e.g., climbing, kayaking).
- Large public-facing events (e.g., fundraisers, parades).
- Travel and transportation arrangements beyond routine local journeys.
- Any new or unusual activity or circumstance not previously risk assessed.

### 5.7 Risk Assessment Process

Scouters can use the process below as a helpful guide, adapting it to their situation.

#### 5.7.1 Identify Hazards

Hazards are anything with the potential to cause harm. Common categories include:

- **Physical hazards:** Uneven ground, heights, fire, electricity, knives and tools
- **Environmental hazards:** Weather, water hazards, sun exposure
- **Biological hazards:** Insects, animals, poisonous plants
- **Human factors:** Fatigue, inexperience, medical conditions, allergies
- **Organisational hazards:** Poor communication, transport logistics, supervision ratios, inadequate training

See Appendix 2 for a prompt sheet to get you started with hazard identification.

#### 5.7.2 Assess the Risks

For each hazard, consider:

- Who might be harmed?
- How might the harm happen?
- How likely is it to occur

**Example:** *Youth members might trip and fall while hiking, which can lead to sprains or fractures.*

For most activities, a simple traffic-light scale works well:

- **High** – Very likely to happen and could cause serious harm. Needs urgent action.
- **Medium** – Might happen and could cause some harm. Needs controls.
- **Low** – Not very likely and would only cause minor harm. Keep an eye on it.

Some Groups may prefer to use a risk grid (matrix) that looks at two things separately (see sample matrices below):

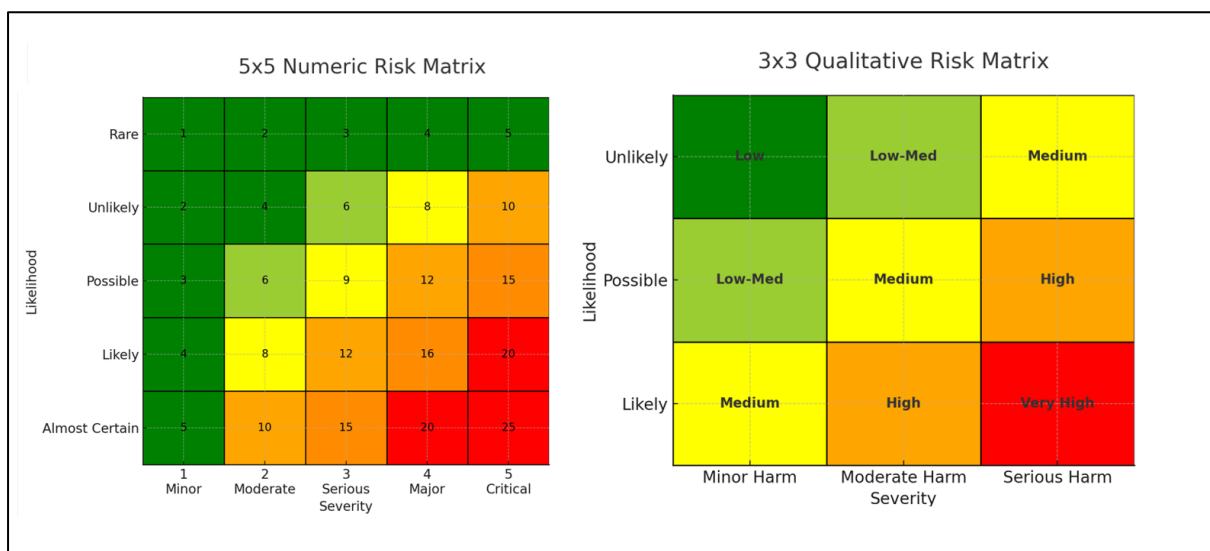
- **Likelihood** – how likely it is to happen
- **Severity** – how bad the harm could be

This can be done with words (e.g. *unlikely* / *possible* / *likely*) or with simple numbers (e.g. 1–5).

⚠ A note of caution: matrices are only a tool to help you think about hazards. The colours and numbers can sometimes give a false sense of comfort, as if the risk is fully understood or controlled just because it sits in a “green” box. What matters most is not the grid itself but:

- Spotting the hazards that could cause harm
- Putting sensible controls in place
- Checking that those controls are actually used and effective

A “low” score does not mean there is no risk, and a “high” score does not automatically mean the activity cannot go ahead. Always use your judgement, apply Scouting Ireland guidance, and remember that *Be Prepared* means thinking ahead, not just filling in a table.



The key point is not to make it more complicated than it needs to be. For most Scouting activities, there are already standard safe ways in place – training, supervision, protective equipment, and established routines. What matters is applying these consistently.

The level of detail in your risk assessment should match the activity:

- **Routine or familiar activities** – a simple approach is usually enough.
- **New or higher-risk activities** – take a closer look and carry out a more detailed check.

### 5.7.3 Decide on Suitable Controls

Once hazards have been identified and risks assessed, select practical control measures to reduce those risks.

- Some controls will aim to eliminate the hazard entirely or reduce the likelihood of harm occurring.
- Others will focus on minimising the severity of injury, limiting the impact, or preventing the situation from escalating if something goes wrong.

- Controls should allow the activity to proceed safely, while still preserving the spirit of adventure and the learning opportunities that make Scouting unique.
- Controls should be appropriate to the participant age, health, and experience

Consider the following simple hierarchy to ensure the adventure can be implemented safely.

Control Type	Description	Example
Eliminate / Substitute	Replace or remove the hazard where possible while keeping the activity engaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swap a loose scree slope for a well-trodden path of similar challenge. (Hazard -Falls)</li> <li>• Hike outside peak heat hours. (Hazard – Heat exhaustion/dehydration)</li> </ul>
Engineering Controls	Introduce or use physical safeguards to limit exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Handrails &amp; Fixed Ropes at steep or exposed sections.</li> <li>• Trail Markings: Place flags or cairns as trail markings to keep groups on track.</li> </ul>
Administrative Controls	Establish procedures, training, & supervision to guide safe behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained mountain skills and adventure skills facilitator</li> <li>• Pair a less experienced hiker with a more experienced buddy.</li> <li>• Safety talk, emergency procedures.</li> <li>• Regular rest and hydration stops</li> </ul>
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking Boots with ankle protection, layered clothing, waterproof jacket and trousers.</li> </ul>

#### 5.7.4 Record Findings.

Record your risk assessment in whatever format works best for your Group. You may use the sample template in Appendix 1 or create your own, as long as it is clear and practical. The aim is not to overcomplicate things, but to capture enough detail so that everyone involved can understand the hazards and the controls in place.

Whatever format you use, your risk assessment record should include:

- Hazard Description: Briefly describe each potential source of harm.
- Risk Level: Note whether it's High, Medium or Low.
- Control Measures: List specific actions or equipment to reduce the risk.
- Responsible Person: Name who will put the control in place and verify it.
- Verification Method: Indicate how you'll record that controls are implemented (e.g. scouter sign-off, photo, checklist tick).

#### 5.7.5 Activity Limits and Safety Margins

Every activity has limits. If you exceed those limits, it could put people at risk or violate policy. These limits include:

- Environmental: weather, tides, water levels, daylight
- Participants: age, fitness, health, experience
- Leadership: supervision ratios, qualified adults
- Equipment: is it available, suitable, and in good condition?

When planning an activity, Scouters should agree on these limits, record them on the risk assessment, and ensure the group is aware of them. Before starting any activity, and during the activity, if you're nearing or past agreed limits, consider adjusting, postponing, or cancelling.

Consider adding a simple checklist to your risk assessment or event plan to confirm limits before and during the activity.

#### **5.7.6 Emergency Planning.**

Even with careful planning, emergencies can happen during your weekly meetings, at an event or at camp. People must know what to do in the event of an emergency.

You may have a standard emergency procedure in place for your Den or regular meeting location, but more complex events, like large camps, adventurous activities, or international travel, may need a tailored emergency plan.

Emergency plans should include:

- Clear roles (Who is in charge and makes decisions)
- Accurate contact details for emergency services, parents/guardians, and Scouting Ireland support contacts
- Reliable means of communication
- Evacuation plans and routes
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for members with additional needs
- First aid cover, with trained people and up-to-date supplies.

Document your emergency procedures and make sure they are shared with all Scouters and relevant youth members. For major events, include them in your event plan or risk assessment.

Review your standard emergency plans at appropriate intervals.

#### **5.7.7 Communicate:**

Share your risk assessment and actions with everyone involved: Scouters, youth members, and as needed, parents or guardians. Make sure anyone exposed to identified hazards or responsible for controls understands their role.

Briefings should be:

- Timely: Conduct before activities begin.
- Clear: Use simple language, visual aids, or demonstrations.
- Interactive: Invite questions to confirm understanding.
- Inclusive: Adapt methods for participants with additional needs.

#### **5.7.8 Implement Controls:**

A risk assessment is only effective if the identified controls are implemented and effectively monitored. It helps to assign people to each control, so it's clear who is doing what. A quick tick or note can confirm it's done. The Scouter in charge should check that controls are in place before and during the activity and are working as intended.

### **5.8 Dynamic Risk Assessment.**

Even the most thorough risk assessments and experienced Scouters can face unexpected changes during an activity: a sudden storm rolls in, a key volunteer is unavailable at the last minute, or a trail becomes impassable due to a fallen tree. When things don't go as planned or new hazards emerge, it's essential to reassess on the spot. An informal review, known as dynamic risk assessment, doesn't

require spreadsheets or laptops. When circumstances warrant a review of risk and control measures, do the following:

- **Pause & Discuss:** Talk with your team. Identify the issue and revisit your activity limits.
- **Agree a Revised Plan:** Decide what adjustments are needed, or whether to cancel.
- **Communicate:** Let Scouters and participants know the changes.
- **Record:** If possible, make a quick note or voice message to record the situation and the decision made. Record afterwards the event or activity if not possible during the event or activity.
- **Monitor:** Keep an eye on things and repeat the cycle if needed.

By embedding dynamic risk assessment into your practice, you maintain safety and flexibility, allowing the adventure to continue, even when surprises occur.

### 5.9 Review & Update.

Risk management is a cycle. Build review of the risk assessment into the 'Review' part of your plan → do → review cycle.

- What went well?
- What didn't?
- Did controls work?
- Did we encounter unexpected hazards
- Are updates to the risk assessment needed?

Review general and specific assessments annually, or after incidents or major changes.

### 5.10 Templates and assistance

You will find a risk assessment template in Appendix 1.

A prompt list of typical hazards is in Appendix 2. This list isn't exhaustive; it's just a prompt to start you thinking about hazards. Every activity has its own risks and should be assessed in context using good judgment and experience.

## 6 Health & Wellbeing

Scouters play an important role in promoting the health and well-being of all members through their actions, example, and decisions, guided by the values of the Scout Promise and Law. No one can do everything, and that's OK. Looking after your own well-being helps you be a better Scouter in the long run. Aim for a healthy balance between Scouting commitments and personal well-being.

Familiarise yourself with Scouting Ireland's key policies on:

- Safeguarding (Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection)
- Anti-Bullying
- Conflict Resolution
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

These policies offer practical tools to help address challenges and support a safe, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere.

In addition, Scouters should:

- Lead by example with respectful and inclusive behaviour, even when things are stressful or challenging
- Be mindful of your own wellbeing, and learn to recognise signs of stress or burnout, and take time out when needed.
- Pay attention to signs of mental health challenges in young people or fellow volunteers, and use available referral supports or guidance as appropriate.
- Keep expectations realistic, for yourself and others, particularly during busy periods such as events, camps, or fundraising efforts.
- Encourage a culture where it's genuinely OK to say "no," ask for help, or share when things are becoming too much

## 7 Water Safety

Scouting in Ireland has a long maritime tradition. Since 1912, Sea Scouting has connected young people with Ireland's waters, developing seamanship, teamwork and leadership skills through safe adventures afloat.

**Important: Sea Scouting isn't just for Sea Scout Groups.** Any Scout Group planning activities on, in, or near water should use Scouting Ireland's **SAILS Framework**. This framework provides a clear pathway, training opportunities and practical resources to help every Scout Group bring young people safely afloat, whether it's kayaking on a local lake, sailing on the sea, or canoeing on a river.

### 7.1 The SAILS Framework

The SAILS Framework is made up of five strands:

- **Safety Afloat** – best practice for planning and running safe water activities.
- **Adventures Afloat** – a programme pathway to achieve nautical badges.
- **Inclusion Afloat** – tools and resources to support participation for all abilities.
- **Leadership Afloat** – the internal boating certification scheme required to supervise activities afloat.
- **Sustainability Afloat** – guidance on protecting our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

### 7.2 Safety Afloat

Safety is the foundation of all water activity. Every Scout Group running activities on or in the water must ensure:

- Activities are risk assessed and planned using Safety Afloat guidance.
- Leaders are competent for the craft, conditions, and venue, with Leadership Afloat certification where required.
- Correct personal protective equipment (e.g. buoyancy aids, helmets) is worn by all participants.
- Equipment, craft, and emergency cover are checked and fit for purpose.
- Weather, water conditions, and access points are suitable.
- Emergency and rescue arrangements are in place, including hypothermia awareness and shoreside contacts.

### 7.3 Where to find more

Scouting Ireland, through Sea Scouting, has developed a wealth of resources to support Groups planning water activities. These include training, templates, and detailed guidance to make going afloat safe, achievable and enjoyable.

- **Full resources and the SAILS Framework:** [www.seascouts.ie](http://www.seascouts.ie)
- **Direct link to Safety Afloat:** [seascouts.ie/safety-afloat](http://seascouts.ie/safety-afloat)

*Remember: whether you are a Sea Scout Group or a land-based Scout Group organising a single kayaking session, water safety is everyone's responsibility. The SAILS Framework gives you the tools to make adventures afloat safe, inclusive and fun.*

## **8 Scout Group Road and Transport Safety Guidelines**

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all youth members and adult volunteers during Scouting activities is of paramount importance. This includes all forms of travel and transportation. This chapter outlines core considerations and good practice guidance for road and public transport arrangements within the island of Ireland. All travel should be planned carefully and carried out in line with the applicable transport laws and safety regulations in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. International travel by ferry or air is outside the scope of this section and should be planned separately using comprehensive guidance specific to international trips.

Scout Groups arrange transport for youth members to activities and events, utilising public transport, private coach hire, or, in Scouters' private vehicles.

When the Scout Group is not providing or arranging transport for an event, the responsibility lies with parents/guardians for ensuring their child's safe travel to and from the activity. Scout Groups should avoid coordinating private carpooling between families to prevent liability concerns. Parents/guardians should make their own direct arrangements for their child's transport in these instances.

The following sections apply when the Scout Group provides or coordinates transport.

### **8.1 General Journey Management & Emergency Procedures**

#### **8.1.1 Supervision & Ratios:**

- Ensure supervision levels meet Safeguarding policies for transport.
- Youth members should be supervised throughout the journey, including during stops or delays.

#### **8.1.2 Passenger Conduct:**

- **Seat Belts:** All occupants, including passengers in rear seats, must wear seat belts when the vehicle is moving. It is the Scouter's responsibility to ensure compliance.
- **Child Restraints:** Children under 150 cm in height or 36 kg in weight should be secured in an appropriate child restraint system (CRS) suitable for their age and size.
- **Behaviour Management:** Establish clear guidelines for behaviour inside the vehicle or on public transport. This includes:
  - No shouting, excessive noise, or sudden movements that could distract the driver or, if on public transport could disturb other passengers.
  - On public transport of hired coaches/busses, keep aisles and exits clear.
  - Following instructions from Scouters and transport staff.
  - **Prohibited Substances:** Smoking or vaping is strictly prohibited on public transport or on any hired or private vehicle used to transport youth or adult members.

#### **8.1.3 Emergency Preparedness & Accident/Incident Response:**

In the event of an accident or medical emergency, your immediate priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.

- Administer appropriate first aid if you are qualified. Every transport activity should have access to a well-stocked and accessible first-aid kit.
- Carry essential documentation: Signed parental/guardian consent forms, emergency contact details for all youth members, and an incident-report form.

- Carry emergency equipment: For private vehicle transport, carry high-visibility vests for all occupants and a hazard warning triangle.
- Contact Emergency Services: In a serious emergency (e.g., serious injury, fire, major collision), always contact the relevant emergency services (e.g., Garda Síochána/PSNI, Ambulance, Fire Service) immediately.
- Report to your Group Leader: Report all accidents, incidents, and near misses (situations that could have led to harm) as soon as practicably possible after ensuring immediate safety. Complete the accident and incident form, where relevant

## **8.2 Using Scouters' Private Vehicles to Transport Members**

Scouters driving their own vehicles to transport youth members or fellow Scouters on behalf of the Scout Group should adhere to the following:

### **8.2.1 Driver Requirements:**

#### **a) Licence:**

- Scouters should hold the appropriate, valid driving licence for the vehicle being driven, including, where applicable, for any trailer towed.
- Learner permit holders (ROI) or provisional licence holders (NI) must not transport youth members or tow trailers on behalf of the Scout Group.
- Always check your specific driving licence document for the categories you are entitled to drive and tow. If unsure of licence entitlements, check with the National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) in ROI, or the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) in NI.

#### **b) Vetting & Safeguarding:**

- Scouters/volunteers transporting youth members on behalf of the Scout Group must have current Garda vetting or Access NI clearance and up-to-date safeguarding training.

#### **c) Driver Conduct:**

- Obey all road traffic laws and rules of the road.
- Do not use a handheld phone while driving. Hands-free may be used but should be set up in advance.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and not permitted.

### **8.2.2 Vehicle Requirements:**

#### **a) Roadworthiness:**

- The vehicle should be in good working order, including tires (with adequate tread depth), brakes, lights, fluid levels, and mirrors.
- Regular maintenance checks should be done.
- A valid NCT (National Car Test - ROI) or MOT (Ministry of Transport - NI) certificate should be in place where applicable.

#### **b) Insurance:**

- Ensure your personal insurance covers carrying passengers and equipment for voluntary activities.
- Scouting Ireland's insurance policies do NOT cover private road vehicles.

### **8.2.3 Vehicle Breakdowns:**

- If your vehicle breaks down, move it to a safe location if possible (e.g., hard shoulder, lay-by) and turn on your hazard warning lights.
- On a motorway, exit the vehicle and move occupants behind the barrier or off the carriageway.
- Always prioritise personal safety over the vehicle.
- For detailed breakdown advice on what to do in the event of a breakdown, see the Road Safety Authority (RSA) website in the Republic of Ireland or the nidirect (Driver & Vehicle Agency, DVA) website in Northern Ireland.

### **8.3 Scouters Towing Trailers or carrying equipment in a private vehicle**

This section outlines requirements for Scouters using their private vehicles to tow trailers or transport Scouting equipment.

#### **8.3.1 Driver Requirements for Towing Trailers:**

- Scouters must hold the correct licence category for the combined weight of the trailer and car (or other towing vehicle)
- Scouters are expected to be competent and confident when towing, including reversing, manoeuvring, and emergency braking.

#### **8.3.2 Trailer Requirements:**

- **Registration Plate:** A duplicate of the towing vehicle's registration must be clearly displayed on the trailer's rear.
- **Roadworthiness:** Before each use, check that the trailer is roadworthy. Look for: a secure coupling, working lights, proper tyre pressure/tread, no visible damage, and a working safety chain or cable.
- **Towing Capacity:** Ensure the combined weight of the towing vehicle and loaded trailer remains within the vehicle's towing limits as per the owner's manual or VIN plate.
- **Speed Limits:** Observe the lower speed limits that apply when towing (e.g. 80 km/h unless posted otherwise).
- **Insurance:** Ensure your private insurance policy covers third-party liability while towing, especially for trailers over 750kg DGWV, which may need to be named on the policy. Check with your insurance provider.
- **Secure Loading:** Use restraints (e.g., ratchet straps, cargo nets, bungee cords) to prevent equipment shifting during transit. Make sure your view isn't blocked, especially through mirrors.
- **Weight Distribution:** Distribute weight evenly and keep heavy items low to the ground.

#### **8.3.3 Carrying Scout Equipment in Your Vehicle:**

- **Secure Loading:** Use restraints to ensure that equipment is securely loaded and cannot shift around inside the car while you are driving. Make sure your view isn't blocked, especially through mirrors.
- **No Obstruction:** Make sure that controls and mirrors are unobstructed and equipment doesn't interfere with airbag deployment.

#### **8.3.4 Transporting LPG Gas Cylinders:**

LPG cylinders are considered Class 2 Dangerous Goods under ADR (European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road) regulations, but private transport of small quantities (up to 333kg net) is exempt from full ADR rules. Transport of LPG cylinders under this quantity still requires the following safe transport measures:

- Cylinders should be TPED-approved (Transportable Pressure Equipment Directive - indicated by a  $\pi$  mark)
- Secure them upright, valve cap fitted and restrained from movement.
- Ventilate the vehicle (e.g. leave windows slightly open) if transporting inside.
- Never smoke or allow ignition sources near gas during transport.
- It's good practice to carry basic details about the gas and what to do in an emergency.

Be mindful of other potentially hazardous items, such as flammable liquids (e.g., fuel for stoves, lamp oil), sharp tools, or other equipment that could pose a risk. All such materials should be stored and transported safely, following relevant guidelines, and kept separate from youth members. Never transport petrol or other highly flammable liquids in the passenger compartment.

### **8.3.5 Transporting Other Hazardous Materials:**

Be mindful of other potentially hazardous items such as:

- Flammable liquids (e.g. stove fuel)
- Sharp tools
- Pressurised canisters

Store these safely, away from passengers, and don't store fuel inside the seating area of the vehicle.

## **8.4 Driving on Campsites**

Vehicles, with or without trailers, may be driven on any of the National Scout Centres or campsites. Only designated drivers listed on Scouting Ireland's insurance are permitted to move vehicles on-site. On arrival, check in with Scout Centre staff, who will assist you in driving your vehicle to your pitch for unloading.

When visiting a network or other campsites, check the driving and vehicle policies of the site in advance and follow the site-specific procedure. These procedures are for the safety of all participants and to protect the grounds and facilities. Advise Scouters and parents/guardians dropping youth members off at camp about the procedures that are in place.

## **8.5 Using Private Coach or Bus Hire for Transport**

When hiring a coach or bus for Scouting activities, ensure the following:

- Use licensed operators with valid Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licences in ROI or Operator's Licence in NI. Licensed operators are required to ensure that:
  - The driver holds a valid CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence).
  - The vehicle has a current CRW (ROI) or MOT (NI) roadworthiness cert.
- Before departure, give a quick briefing covering:
  - Seat belt use (required for all seats)
  - Emergency exits

- Expected behaviour during the journey

## **8.6 Using Public Transport (Bus or Train)**

When using scheduled public transport services (e.g., bus or train) for Scouting activities, follow these guidelines:

### **8.6.1 Planning & Preparation:**

- For reserved services, ensure that tickets are secured in advance for the entire group.

### **8.6.2 Supervision:**

- Assign Scouters to supervise boarding, disembarking, and during the journey.
  - On platforms or roadside stops, keep youth members back from the edge until it's safe to board.
- Set a clear meeting point on platforms or at stations for the group to gather before and after travel.

### **8.6.3 Emergency Awareness:**

- Make sure Scouters are familiar with emergency exits, alarm cords, and help points.
- Brief youth members on what to do in an emergency in simple, age-appropriate language.

### **8.6.4 Behaviour:**

- Remind youth to be respectful and considerate of other passengers.
- Keep noise to an appropriate level and follow all public transport rules.

## 9 When things don't go to Plan (Accidents and incidents)

Sometimes, things go wrong even when you've done everything right. An accident might happen, someone may get hurt, or an incident may occur that catches us off guard. That's a reality of life and of Scouting. What matters most is supporting those affected and learning from the experience.

In Scouting, we believe in learning by doing, and that principle doesn't stop when something goes wrong. These moments offer valuable opportunities to learn, improve, and strengthen how we do things.

Thankfully, most accidents and incidents in Scouting are minor – a grazed knee, a twisted ankle, or a misunderstanding but occasionally, something more serious occurs. Try to remain calm, look after those affected and reach out for help if you need it.

### 9.1 Step One: Take Care of People

Your immediate priority is to ensure everyone's safety.

- Removing everyone calmly from immediate danger.
- Remove young people from any distressing sights or sounds, moving them to a safe, supervised area.
- Assess for injuries
- Call emergency services (999/112) right away for serious situations.
- Provide first aid if qualified
- Once it's safe to do so, contact your designated home contact (if away), Group Leader, provincial Support Officer (PSO), or Scouting Ireland as appropriate to the seriousness of the incident.
- Avoid guessing what happened or assigning blame; just focus on facts and care. Accurate reports come later.

Remember, you don't have to manage everything alone; if overwhelmed, reach out for support.

For Scouters or adult volunteers affected by any incident, please share details of Scouting Ireland's free, confidential Scouter Wellness Assistance Programme, which is available 24/7, 365 days a year, providing access to therapeutic support provided locally by qualified, empathetic, and experienced counsellors. Structured counselling is delivered face-to-face, by telephone, or by video. Online information, self-help tools, and resources are hosted on their digital Support Hub.

Contact Lena free and confidentially as follows:



- **Tel:** 1800 201 346 or 0808 164 0370
- **Email:** [support@lenabyinspire.com](mailto:support@lenabyinspire.com)
- **Scan** the QR code to access Lena's digital Support Hub
- **Visit:** <http://enasupporthub.com>
- PIN for the hub is: SCOUTHUB

### 9.2 Step Two: Record What Happened

Once everyone is safe and emergency actions are complete, record what happened as soon as possible.

Capture:

- **Background:** What activity or event was taking place when the incident occurred?
- **Who was involved:** Names of all individuals directly affected and those who witnessed the event.

- **What happened:** A clear, chronological account of the incident and the mechanism of any injury.
- **Where and When:** The precise location, date, and time of the occurrence.
- **Nature of Injuries:** A description of any injuries sustained.
- **Actions Taken:** Details of any immediate actions, such as first aid administered, and by whom, calls to emergency services, or scene management.
- **Photographs:** Take appropriate photographs of the scene, injuries (with consent), or damaged equipment, ensuring they are relevant and respectful.

Use the official Scouting Ireland Incident Report Form to capture the relevant details.

Gather short, factual statements from adults or youth who witnessed the event. Avoid assumptions or opinions. Complete the Incident Report Form accurately. Submit the completed form to your Group Leader as soon as possible. Your Group Leader will then ensure it is forwarded to Scouting Ireland.

#### **Important: Data Protection and Sharing Information (GDPR Compliant)**

Do not share copies of the Incident Report Form directly with parents, guardians, or external parties. These forms contain personal and sensitive data (such as dates of birth, contact details, and medical information) which is protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

If a parent or guardian requests information or a copy of the report, refer them directly to Scouting Ireland who have procedures to handle such requests in a GDPR-compliant manner, ensuring only relevant information is shared appropriately.

### **9.3 Step Three: Review and Learn**

Once the situation is managed and reported, take time to reflect as part of the **Plan > Do > Review** cycle. The purpose of this step is to learn from experience and improve how we do things.

Review the facts relevant to the occurrence, considering questions such as:

- What exactly happened, leading up to and during the occurrence?
- Was a risk assessment in place for the activity, and was it fully followed?
- Did the existing risk assessment adequately identify the potential for this type of incident and include appropriate control measures?
- Were there any 'near misses' or warning signs that occurred beforehand which might have been overlooked?

Reflect on:

- Should we update our planning, training, equipment, or risk assessments, to avoid a similar incident
- What went well in how we responded?
- What could we do differently next time?

### **9.4 Step 4: Capture and Share Learnings:**

Use your review to make meaningful improvements:

- **Update Risk Assessments** to reflect new hazards or changes in control measures.
- **Organise Training or Briefings** for Scouters or youth if procedures are changing.
- **Share Learnings or Good Practice** across your Group, County, or with Scouting Ireland so others can learn too.

### 9.5 Follow-up:

- **Check in** with anyone involved (youth or adults) to offer support.
- **Remind Scouters** how to access support services (e.g. EAP).
- **Follow up** on agreed actions, like updating forms, replacing kits, or revising plans.
- **Keep a log** of incidents and near misses to support ongoing learning.

By learning from experience, we make Scouting safer, strengthen our group, and protect our members and volunteers.

### 9.6 Significant Incidents

If a serious accident or critical incident occurs during a Scouting activity, support and guidance are available from Scouting Ireland.

Follow these steps to notify the appropriate individuals and obtain support.

### 9.7 Notification Procedure

For serious incidents (e.g. serious injury, fatality, or major disruption):

- Phone and text your Provincial Support Officer (PSO) immediately.
- If there is no reply in 10 minutes, contact the Head of Operations at (086) 047 4308.
- After another 10 minutes, if still no reply, contact the CEO at (087) 036 8082.

All PSO and HQ contacts: [www.scouts.ie/about-scouting-ireland/contact-us](http://www.scouts.ie/about-scouting-ireland/contact-us)

Ensure that Scouters attending the event have these contact numbers saved in advance.

### 9.8 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Scouting Ireland offers an Employee and Scouter Wellness Assistance Programme. Group Leaders or Commissioners involved in an incident should encourage anyone distressed to use the EAP helpline.

Contact Lena free and confidentially as follows:



- **Tel:** 1800 201 346 or 0808 164 0370
- **Email:** [support@lenabyinspire.com](mailto:support@lenabyinspire.com)
- **Scan** the QR code to access Lena's digital Support Hub
- **Visit:** <http://enasupporthub.com>
- PIN for the hub is: SCOUTHUB

## 10 Insurance

Scouting Ireland provides Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance for all registered members while participating in normal scouting activities anywhere in the world.

It's important for all members and Scouters to understand the following points

- The first €100 of any personal accident costs is not covered.
- Travel-related incidents and expenses abroad (e.g. air ambulance, emergency travel) are not covered by this core policy.

For Groups travelling outside the island of Ireland, Scouting Ireland arranges a separate Travel Insurance Policy, which provides additional cover for travel-related risks not included in the standard policy. This includes:

- Medical expenses abroad,
- Emergency travel costs
- Rescue and recovery services
- Cover for personal luggage, valuables and cash
- Cancellation and curtailment
- Compensation for delays

Scouting Ireland publishes an [Insurance Briefing for Scouters](#), which outlines:

- The scope and limits of existing insurance cover
- Activities that are covered as standard
- Activities that are excluded or require advance referral
- Guidance on using third-party providers, insuring property or equipment, marine and water-based activities, and travel insurance
- Responsibilities around reporting incidents and submitting claims

### 10.1 Scouters' Responsibilities When Organising Activities

All Scouting activities should be appropriately insured. Scouters organising activities are responsible for checking that:

- The activity is clearly covered under Scouting Ireland's policies
- The cover is suitable for the nature, location, and risks involved

If you're unsure whether an activity is included, take the following steps:

- Refer the activity to Scouting Ireland or its broker (Marsh) for advice
- Seek written confirmation that the cover is in place or request an extension where possible

### 10.2 Waivers and Indemnity Agreements

Scouters may occasionally be asked to sign legal documents when booking venues or activities.

These usually fall into two types:

- A waiver is a document where a participant or the parent or guardian of a youth participant agrees not to hold the provider responsible if something goes wrong.
- An indemnity (or "hold harmless") agreement goes further, committing the Scout Group to take on responsibility for any claims or legal costs, even if the incident was not the Group's fault.

**Important:** Scouting Ireland's insurance **will not** cover any additional liability accepted through signing these types of documents

For this reason:

- Do not sign waivers or indemnity agreements on behalf of yourself, the Scout Group, or youth members
- Youth members cannot legally sign waivers as they are under 18
- Parents should not be asked to sign waivers either.

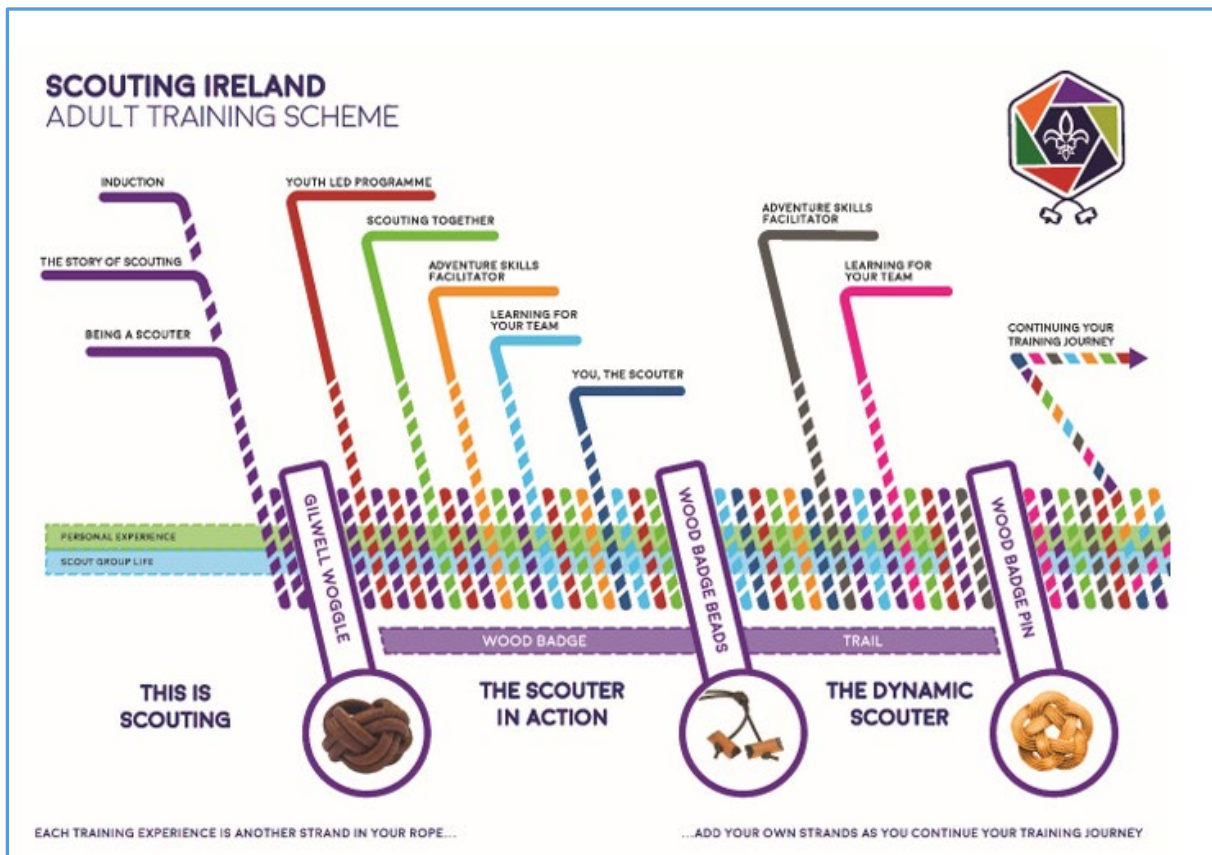
If any organisation asks for a waiver or indemnity, refer it to Scouting Ireland or Marsh well in advance of the activity. This allows time for proper advice to be given or alternative arrangements to be explored if the provider is unsuitable.

## 11 Training and Competence

### 11.1 Woodbadge Training Scheme

The Woodbadge Training Scheme is Scouting Ireland’s training framework for adult volunteers. It is designed to help Scouters build the skills and confidence needed to deliver the One Programme effectively. It is aligned with WOSM standards and recognised internationally through the awarding of Woodbeads

Provincial panels deliver training of volunteer trainers. Formats may include online, blended, weekend residential, or non-residential sessions. Scouting Ireland may also recognise externally delivered courses for certain elements of the scheme.



### 11.2 The Four Phases of Woodbadge Training

#### 11.2.1 Phase 1: This is Scouting <sup>1</sup>

This initial phase focuses on induction and the foundations of the Scouter role. It includes:

- **Application & Vetting:** New volunteers meet their Group Leader to discuss the Scouter role and expectations, complete forms, and begin the Garda vetting process.
- **The Story of Scouting:** An online e-learning module introducing the history, values, and purpose of Scouting and what it means to be a Scouter.

<sup>1</sup> Phase 1 of the Woodbadge Training Scheme is currently under review. While the existing arrangements remain in effect at time of publication of this guidance, updated Phase 1 requirements are expected to come into operation in 2026. Groups and Scouters should continue to follow the current scheme until further notice from Scouting Ireland.

- **Being a Scouter:** A practical core training course covering programme delivery, teamwork, safeguarding, and leadership. Offered in residential (weekend), blended, or 2-day non-consecutive formats.

### 11.2.2 Phase 2: The Scouter in Action

This phase combines hands-on experience with formal learning.

During this phase, Scouters::

- Joins a section team and begin weekly participation
- Applies learning in real programme planning and delivery
- Work under the guidance of experienced Scouters and receive mentoring
- Complete further training modules:
  - **Youth Led Programme:** A weekend course that teaches how to deliver youth-led activities, games, and programme cycles. Scouters are expected to run a six-week youth-led programme afterward.
  - **Adventure Skills Facilitator (ASF):** A weekend course to support youth progression to Level 5 in your chosen Adventure Skill. (See below for further details).
  - **Learning for Your Team (LFYT):** A short learning module on a topic that benefits the group e.g. Risk Assessment, Overnights and Adventure Planning. This can be internal or external. External courses should be approved by the Provincial Training Coordinator.
  - **Scouting Together:** A residential weekend focused on leadership and reflective practice, particularly valuable for Section Team Leads, or team leads.
  - **You the Scouter:** A half-day reflective session reviewing the Scouter's learning journey. On successful completion, the Woodbeads are awarded.

### 11.2.3 Phase 3: The Dynamic Scouter

In this phase, the Scouter completes:

- A second Adventure Skills Facilitator course
- An additional 5-hour LFYT module

On completion, the Scouter receives the Woodbadge Pin.

### 11.2.4 Phase 4: Continuing Your Journey

Scouters who have completed the Woodbadge scheme are encouraged to continue their development by:

- Attending additional LFYT or ASF courses
- Attending advanced Woodbadge courses (e.g. for Group Leaders, Commissioners, or Train the Trainer)

## 11.3 Adventure Skills Facilitator Training

As part of the Woodbadge journey to obtain your wood beads, you must complete at least one Adventure Skills Facilitator (ASF) course to achieve your Woodbeads, and a second ASF course to earn their Woodbadge Pin.

ASF training is designed to equip Scouters with the confidence and competence to support youth members progressing to Level 5 in a chosen Adventure Skill.

### 11.3.1 Scouting Ireland Courses

Scouting Ireland's Adventure Skills Teams deliver ASF training in a growing number of disciplines. As of now, the following courses are available:

- Camping ASF,
- Backwoods ASF,
- Pioneering ASF.

### 11.3.2 Externally provided Adventure Skills Course

Scouting Ireland recognises training from accredited external bodies for the following:

- Hillwalking: Mountain Skills 1 (Mountaineering Ireland)
- Emergencies: REC 3 or equivalent (e.g. Remote Emergency Care)

Scouters can build their skills in water-based Adventure Skills through completing training with Canoeing Ireland, Sailing Association, or Scouting Ireland's Sea Scouting Team <https://www.seascouts.ie/>

## 11.4 Learning for Your Team (LFYT) Modules

While there is a minimum LFYT requirement for the Woodbadge Training Scheme, Scouters are encouraged to pursue additional modules that match their role or development goals.

To be approved as an LFYT module, the following criteria must be met:

1. The module must have clearly defined learning objectives
2. It must run for a minimum of three hours
3. It must be relevant to, and benefit, the Scouter team within your group or section

Several LFYT modules are already offered internally by Scouting Ireland and have been reviewed and approved by the Training Team Lead.

Other modules may also be proposed by a County Training Coordinator or Provincial Training Coordinator. If the proposed module meets the above criteria and aligns with the LFYT purpose, it can be submitted to the Training Team Lead for review and approval.

Examples of Approved LFYT Modules include:

- Overnights and Adventures in the Outdoors
- International Adventure Planning
- Scouting Safely
- CSA Mentor Training
- Knife Skills – Level 2

External courses are signed off by the Provincial Training Coordinator and can include the following :

- *HACCP Food Safety* – useful for camp kitchen hygiene
- *Manual Handling* – helpful for transporting equipment or setting up Den infrastructure
- *Water Safety / Lifesaving* – essential for water-based activities

Scouters should speak with their Group Leader or County Training Coordinator to confirm:

- What LFYT options are currently available locally
- Whether a specific course meets LFYT criteria

Even if a course doesn't formally count as an LFYT module, it may still offer valuable skills and enhance your contribution to the Scouting team.

### **11.5 The Role of Training in Safe Scouting**

Training is a foundation of safe, high-quality programme delivery. Scouters should be trained and competent in the activities they lead. Ongoing development beyond Woodbadge is encouraged by Scouting Ireland. Scout Group Leaders and Group Councils should also encourage and support volunteers to continue their training.

### **11.6 E-Learning and the Scouting Ireland Online Platform**

Scouting Ireland is developing an e-learning platform to support training. This platform will complement the Woodbadge Scheme and LFYT modules, offering flexible, self-paced learning.

Access the elearning platform at <https://scouttraining.ie/elearning/>.

Current e-learning modules available include:

- Safeguarding "On My Honour".
- Air Activities Stage 6 theory elements.
- Role and Function of the Treasurer: An overview
- The Story of Scouting
- Knife Skills Level 1: Introduction to the safe use of folding knives.
- Knives Skills: The safe use of kitchen knives.

New e-learning courses will be added over time.

Check the elearning platform and communication channels for updates about new modules and how to access them.

### **11.7 Recording and Recognition**

All training, internal or external, should be logged in your official Scouter training record. This helps:

- Track your progress
- Supports your journey towards being awarded your woodbeads.
- Show your skills for current or future roles

## 12 Maintaining Records

Maintaining clear, accurate and accessible records is important for

- Managing safety,
- Meeting legal obligations,
- Supporting accountability within a Scout Group.

Records should be stored securely and managed in line with GDPR.

Each Scout Group should maintain the following records:

- Risk assessment for activities, events, transport, etc.
- Log of incidents, near misses, and injuries
- MMS Database: Keep Scouting Ireland's national system updated as members join and leave, and keep contact details updated
- Activity consent forms
- Den and Equipment Records:
  - Maintenance logs, safety checks, and servicing for tools and gear
  - Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for any hazardous materials
  - Records of fire drills, electrical checks, inspections, and repairs
  - PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) for youth or adults needing evacuation support
  - Ensure your member database is up to date, both locally and on Scouting Ireland's national database, including emergency contact details, medical information, and consent forms.

## Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment Template

Risk Assessment – [Activity / Event / Situation]						
<b>Risk Context:</b> <i>Describe the factors influencing risk: participant profile (age, experience), environment, season, group experience. Identifying context helps you focus on relevant hazards.</i>						
<b>Prepared by:</b> <i>Include the names of those who contributed.</i>				<b>Date Created or Last Reviewed:</b>		
Hazard	Risk	Who is at risk?	Level of Risk (Low/Med/High)	Controls	Responsible Person	In Place (✓)
Fire	Burns	Scouts & Scouters	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated fire circle</li> <li>Adult supervision at all times</li> <li>Clear ground around fire</li> <li>Briefing before activity</li> <li>First aid kit nearby</li> </ul>	Scouter in charge	✓
Fire	Fire spread - Environmental damage	Environment or property damage	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire kept to designated fire pit</li> <li>No fire during dry/windy conditions</li> <li>Water bucket /fire blanket</li> <li>Area cleared of flammables</li> <li>Fire fully extinguished after use</li> </ul>	Scouter in charge	✓
Manual Handling				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>		
Sun Exposure				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>		

## Appendix 2 – Hazard Prompt List

This document provides a sample hazard reference to support risk assessments for Scouting Ireland activities. It doesn't cover everything and shouldn't be relied on by itself. You still need to consider your specific activity and location to identify any hazards that may not be listed here. Every activity, location, and group are different, and other hazards may still be present. This list is intended only as a prompt to help Scouters and event organisers think through possible risks, and not as a comprehensive checklist.

The list is grouped by hazard category.

### Physical Hazards

- Uneven ground (trips, slips, loose surfaces)
- Heights/falls from height
- Burns (campfire, stove, hot surfaces)
- Electricity (shock, faulty equipment, overloaded sockets)
- Knives, axes, saws, and sharp tools
- Sharp objects (broken glass, exposed nails, tent pegs)
- Manual handling (lifting poles, heavy gear)
- Falling objects (e.g. pioneering structures, overhead items)
- Impact or collision with vehicles (on public roads)
- Impact or collision with vehicles (campsites, carparks)
- Entrapment (ropes, submerged objects, confined spaces)
- Explosions (e.g. gas leak or stove fuel malfunction)
- Noise exposure (from tools, vehicles, whistles)

### Environmental Hazards

- Weather extremes (cold, heat, strong winds, lightning)
- Sun exposure (sunburn, sunstroke, UV)
- Fog / poor visibility
- Slippery or wet surfaces (decks, riverbanks, wet grass)
- Flooding, rising water, or water ingress
- Deep water hazards (drowning, immersion risk)
- Dust, sand, smoke, or airborne irritants (especially in dry or backwoods settings)
- Altitude-related illness (if travelling to high-altitude destinations)
- Air quality issues (e.g. smog, wildfires abroad)
- Natural disasters (e.g. earthquake – very low risk in Ireland but noted)

### Biological Hazards

- Insect bites and stings (wasps, ticks, midges)
- Animal attacks (wild or domestic animals)
- Animal-borne diseases
- Poisonous plants (nettles, ivy, fungi)

- Biological agents (viruses, bacteria, e.g. COVID-19)
- Food or water contamination (illness from poor hygiene)
- Inadequate sanitation or poor hygiene practices

#### **Human Factors**

- Fatigue and overexertion
- Inexperience or unfamiliarity with the activity
- Peer pressure or risky behaviour
- Behavioural incidents (bullying, harassment, aggression)
- Emergencies or unmanaged conditions
- Lost / missing youth members (e.g. during camps or at events)
- Allergies (food, insect, environment)
- Stress, anxiety, or emotional distress
- Young people or vulnerable persons without adequate support
- Inappropriate clothing or footwear (e.g. no rain gear or hiking boots)

#### **Organisational Hazards**

- Inadequate adult-to-youth supervision ratios
- Lack of training or Scouter competency for the activity
- Poor communication or briefing (internal or with services)
- Transport or travel risks (handover issues, road travel)
- Poor route planning or inaccessible emergency exit
- Safeguarding issues (youth left alone)
- Lack of first aid capacity on-site or during activity
- Insufficient emergency preparedness or response plan
- Delayed access to medical help
- Poor lighting (especially for night-time or indoor activities)
- Inadequate toilet or hand-washing facilities
- Unsafe food storage or cooking conditions
- Public order risks (e.g. at large-scale events)