

## Emergency Response Guidelines

The details of the Emergency Response are dependent upon the location or facility and the type of activity.

GGC owned facilities will provide you with the basic plan; however, you will need to fill in some of the details relevant to your participants and activities.

When using outfitters or facilities for specialized activities, you will need to contact them to obtain information on their emergency response planning. You will develop your plan taking this information into consideration.

When an emergency occurs, if possible, assign someone to take notes of actions during the emergency. As soon as possible afterwards, each person involved should make their own notes about their actions.

A communications plan is an important part of emergency response planning. The Communication Plan Guidelines outlined in this section will assist you in determine who to contact when and how to deal with your emergency.

### Missing Person

*A Missing Person refers to a participant who is unaccounted for. It is important to constantly monitor the group and to pay special attention whenever there is a change in the activity. Early recognition of an unaccounted for participant can often result in preventing the incident from becoming more serious. The following are some general guidelines to assist with managing this type of situation:*

- Have buddies check-in with their buddy to determine exactly who is missing
- Determine the time and place where the person(s) was last seen
- Check the facility and surroundings focusing on areas where the person is most likely to be
- Check areas that may pose a hazard (on the street, water front/pools, rock cuts, etc.)
- Assign someone to remain with the group. Assign as many available adults to assist with checking high likelihood areas
- Establish a firm timeframe to report back to rest of group (no more than 20 mins)
- Establish a timeframe for follow-up with parents
- Contact authorities if your efforts to locate the missing person(s) has not been successful – in an urban environment this should be no longer than 30 mins. In remote environments this should be no more than 1 hour
- In an urban environment immediately attract the attention of people in the area – bystanders can assist by being on the look out for suspicious activity

### Evacuation

*An evacuation refers to having to quickly remove the group from an unexpected and potentially dangerous situation. This may relate to exiting a building, relocating a campsite or leaving a public area. Each situation is going to be different so it is important to consider the following guidelines before having to manage this type of situation:*

- Consider reasons you may need to evacuate – fire, severe weather (note degrees of weather), severe injury, wide-spread illness
- Define a meeting place to go to outside of the danger area – inform the group of this location
- Determine a means of transportation if leaving the site

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- If possible, conduct a buddy check-in and head count before leaving the site
- Upon arrival at evacuation site conduct a buddy check-in and headcount
- Determine an all-clear signal or system for communicating when it is safe to return to the site
- Reassure participants and attend to their needs
- Monitor the situation for changing or threatening conditions

### **Intruder**

*An intruder refers to a person believed to have the intention of harming or through his/her actions could harm supervisors or participants. This could be a random situation or a result of a pre-existing relationship with a group member or nearby member of the public. The following are some general guidelines to assist with managing this type of situation:*

- Lockdown area/facility/room – lock and barricade doors, keep the group out of sight and from making any noise
- If possible, without alerting the intruder, communicate with others in other activity areas of the potential threat
- Note identifying features and threatening actions of an intruder
- Contact the police and report the situation
- Conduct a headcount
- Be prepared to remain in a lockdown situation for a substantial period of time

### **Traumatic/Medical Emergency**

*A traumatic or medical emergency is a situation where a participant or supervisor requires immediate medical attention from trained professionals. This situation could develop from a traumatic accident (vehicle crash) or an acute medical condition (appendicitis) – these are emergencies that require urgent medical care. First aid may assist in stabilizing the patient but she ultimately needs to be in an emergency equipped hospital. The following are some general guidelines to assist with managing this type of situation:*

- Assign someone to look after the patient (preferably someone with first aid training)
- Manage the safety of the group
- Contact EMS and explain the situation – use the communication plan from the Emergency Response Plan (SG.4)
- If possible, send a group to meet the emergency response crew responding and lead them to the patient
- Assist the first responders as directed
- Take care of the needs of the group
- If possible, send a GGC representative with the patient
- Contact the home contact and/or provincial office
- Contact the family if necessary after speaking with the provincial office
- Determine the best course of action for the group

### **Parent/Guardian Does Not Arrive to Pick-up Child**

*The following are some general guidelines to assist with managing this type of situation:*

- Call parent/guardian and ask permission to have child go with another parent/guardian
- If no answer, arrange for her to travel with a screened volunteer. Leave a message for parents at all contact numbers.
- If possible, continue calling during travel
- Set up a policy in advance so that parents/guardians know what will happen if they are late (late fee donation to Unit if more than 15 minutes, clearly explain your guidelines to parents)

### **Communications Plan Guidelines**

A Communications Plan is the written set of instructions to follow for contacting emergency agencies, GGC authorities and parents in the event of a crisis situation and is incorporated into your Emergency Response Plan. The plan covers a number of functions that need to occur to smoothly manage emergency communications. For most situations, the communications pattern would look something like this:

1. The Responsible Guider or Substitute Group Leader contacts:
  - EMS and/or other local authorities, when necessary
  - Group members (to provide reassurance)
  - Home Contact Person (if applicable to your activity)
2. Home Contact Person (where applicable) or Responsible Guider makes initial contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide current status report and next steps
3. After dealing with immediate needs, Responsible Guider or another group leader may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) personally to discuss further details, answer questions and problem solve where applicable.
4. Once the situation is over the Responsible Guider notifies GGC Authorities as per the Incident Reporting guidelines in Safe Guide.

### **Crisis Management**

A crisis is an incident or situation that may potentially cause or has caused harm to an individual or group. It is also a situation that may have negative public or internal implications for Girl Guides of Canada. Examples of a crisis are:

- Death of a Member
- Serious injury
- Sexual misconduct or impropriety in the relationship between a volunteer or staff or child's parent
- Abuse or negligence of a child
- Misuse of Guiding funds
- Criminal charges against a Member
- Charges of discrimination or violation of human rights

The national office will manage the communication of a crisis with its Members, their families and media. Only those individuals authorized to do so will speak publicly or with the media on behalf of the organization.

What to do in a crisis situation:

- Ask for assistance from EMS in contacting parents/guardians
- Notify the Provincial Commissioner. Your District Commissioner/ACL will be able to help you reach her. Or your provincial office or website may have an emergency contact number.
- Provide the Provincial Commissioner with details of the incident. Use the script with the Emergency Response Plan (SG.4) as a guide
- Do not talk to the media
- Do not use cell phones or send electronic messages to friends and family
- Contact the national office as quickly as possible once the immediate crisis is over. Your Commissioner can assist or follow your provincial communication plan. Provide details of the incident. Use the script with the Emergency Response Plan (SG.4) as a guide.

Any media inquiries received by GGC members should be referred immediately to the national office. An appropriate response to the media would be:

“I’m sorry, our policy is for all media inquiries to go through the national office. Please contact them and the appropriate person will respond to you as soon as she is available. The phone number is (416) 487-5281.”