

FORMS

– Not that Complicated

BY JULIAN CELMS

When do we use the Camping and Outdoor Activity form? How do we use this form for Tours, Visits and Fundraisers? These are two of the most frequent questions we receive about forms.

Throughout the year I hear many stories about groups filling out this form to go swimming at the local pool, visit the local fire station, or plant trees in a field. Other Scouters ask, “What form do we use for fundraising?” In these cases, leaders and group committees have added unnecessary forms to their workload.

Hopefully, the following information will assist all leaders with some of the basic elements of when to use (and not use) some of our forms.

What is necessary for every activity is concerted effort by the leadership team to reflect on the proposed activity, determine what type of inherent risk may be present and the appropriate steps that need to be taken for planning and executing the activity.

It’s important to note that we don’t have a concrete list of how’s, what’s, when’s and why’s. Scouting offers adventurous activities for a broad age range, in varying types of geography,

in diverse types of weather conditions, with different degrees of experience of both youth and leaders. This sets up an interesting dynamic; the same activity in the middle of summer in one part of Canada can have very different consequences elsewhere. Section 10 000 in Bylaw, Policies, and Procedures (B.P. & P.) is your primary resource to assist you in navigating the how’s, what’s, when’s and why’s of planning for camping and outdoor activities. The best way we can express what we expect when planning for all activities is this:

Leaders and Participants Are:

in the Right Place,
at the Right Time,
with the Right People
and with the Right Equipment.

Determining Categories of Scouting Activities

Let’s examine some common Scouting activities in the following table. To the right of the Activity column is the Category level as described in B.P.&P., Section 10 000 (1, 2 and 3).

- Category 1 is “Green” – go carefully. Regular weekly meetings whether they are held indoors or outdoors at the regular meeting place.
- Category 2 is “Yellow” – proceed with caution. Includes any outdoor activity away from the meeting facilities, or, of an extended nature, up to and including short term camping, two nights or less. In this activity level, we use implied consent for activities — with previous communication to parents about what the activity is, and the member arrives with all the required equipment and is prepared for the activity.
- Category 3 is “Red” – stop, be alert, check things carefully before proceeding. Usually a long term overnight activity of three nights or longer, or activities of shorter duration, but requiring advanced levels of skills and competencies.

The Process group of columns describes some of the key elements in the risk management process — communicating with parents, use of the Camping and Outdoor Activity Application, Parent/Guardian Consent Forms and the Tour Permit.

Which column in the Process list do you notice is filled out for **every** activity? You’re right, the first thing is communication. But, communication isn’t a “form”. By communication, we mean you need to communicate with parents/guardians, but this does not necessitate the use of a form. When successfully used, effective communication helps spur parent participation and support of your program. Ensuring effective and active communication with parents is a priority that, when you invest in it, you reap the rewards. There are many ways to communicate with parents. The Parent Activity Communication Template is one example, designed as a tool to help leaders provide details of activities for parents. Look for it on the “For Scouters”, then “Program Support” section of www.scouts.ca.

The **Camping and Outdoor Application Form** is used for camping and outdoor related activities. Let’s be straight

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forward about this. Activities such as biking, hiking, canoeing, swimming (when no lifeguard is present) are clearly activities that require this form.

Tours, visits and fundraisers do not apply to this form!

These activities (such as going to a seniors' home, a fundraiser, planting trees in a nearby field, visiting the fire station, etc.) do not require special skills as defined in B.P.&P., Section 10 000. The key is to use some common sense, and consider where the activity falls within the categories as defined in B.P.&P., Section 10 000.

Parent Guardian Consent Form

In addition to regular and effective communication with parents about the nature of activities, this form is only used for higher risk activities, activities that have a duration of three nights or greater, and trips out of Canada. This form contains critical medical information about the member, so it's important to keep a copy on hand at all times.

Tour Permit

This form is used when groups travel outside of Canada for 12 hours or more. Please submit this to your council office four weeks prior to your departure to allow adequate time for your council and the national office to process. A Parent/Guardian consent form is required for **ALL** out of country travel as well.

By categorizing the activity, clarifying with your group committee, using your common sense, and communicating clearly with your parents, you'll find using forms will be much easier. Scouting is a grand adventure and doesn't have to be complicated.

— Julian Celms is the national Program Director for Beavers, Cubs and the Outdoors.

References:

BP & P: Section 10 000, Section 20 000

Activity	Category			Process			
	1 - Green	2 - Yellow	3 - Red	Communication	Camping and Outdoor Activity Application	Parent/Guardian Consent Form	Tour Permit
Play soccer at park adjacent to meeting facility	X			X			
Go swimming at local pool (lifeguard provided by pool operator)		X		X			
Go swimming while on a hike (no lifeguard supervision)		X		X	X	X	
Collect food for food drive	X			X			
Door to door fundraising with Scout Popcorn	X			X			
Go on a one day hike/trip to local conservation authority		X		X	X		
Trail hiking in local community forest for afternoon		X		X	X		
Overnight camping trip, two nights or less		X		X	X		
Overnight sleepover at local museum	X			X			
Venturers go white water canoeing for a day			X	X	X	X	
Scouts go rock climbing			X	X	X	X	
Cubs participate in archery at camp			X	X	X	X	
Section goes bicycling for regular meeting		X		X	X		
Section goes canoeing for a day		X		X	X		
Section visits/tours U.S.A. for two days		X		X		X	X
Section goes camping in U.S.A.		X		X	X	X	X
Scouts go on a five day canoeing trip			X	X	X	X	
Beavers canoe for part of an afternoon		X		X	X		

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