



# Outdoors for All Foundation

## Volunteer Manual

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# Welcome to Outdoors for All

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Outdoors for All Foundation. In 1979, Outdoors for All was incorporated as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization called the Ski for All Foundation. Today, we're the Outdoors for All Foundation: pursuing our mission to enrich the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities through outdoor recreation. We look forward to your help in achieving that mission.

## This Manual

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This manual is designed for you, our Outdoors for All volunteer. It presents a great deal of information, with the purpose of familiarizing you with Outdoors for All and ensuring that your volunteer experience is safe, enjoyable, and enriching.

## Who We Are

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Outdoors for All began in 1979 through the passion of volunteers and ski school staff who saw the need to start an adaptive ski program at the Summit of Snoqualmie – teaching 35 participants with developmental disabilities to downhill ski.

Over the last three decades, Outdoors for All has grown to include year-round outdoor recreation programs, serving more than 2,400 children and adults with disabilities each year – all thanks to the support of *more than 700 volunteers*. In 2006, we changed our name from the Ski for All Foundation to the Outdoors for All Foundation, in honor of our commitment to year-round, outdoor adaptive recreation opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.

The winter program at Outdoors for All has grown to include alpine skiing and snowboarding, sit-skiing (mono-ski and bi-ski), snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Our winter programs operate at two different mountain sites, The Summit at Snoqualmie and Stevens Pass. Off-snow programs throughout the year include day camps, cycling, mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, rock climbing and camping excursions. These programs take place at a variety of trails, parks, lakes, and rivers around Washington State and the Pacific Northwest.

Outdoors for All programs are funded through a variety of sources, including government grants, private donations (from foundations, corporations, and individuals), and participant fees. Participant fees account for only 35% of our annual budget, while the remaining 65% of the cost of running our activities is covered by donations and grants.

Outdoors for All is committed to providing recreational opportunities to any individual who needs financial assistance in order to access our programs. We award more than \$65,000 in financial grants to individuals and community programs each year, which makes access Outdoors for All's adaptive recreation programs more affordable.

## Adaptive Recreation Programs

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Outdoors for All is a leading expert in adaptive outdoor recreation in the Pacific Northwest. Our fleet of adaptive equipment is the largest in the area, and it includes specialized equipment for each of the programs that we offer. Our services are primarily focused within Washington State; however, we do provide services in neighboring states upon request.

Nationwide, Outdoors for All is one of the largest nonprofit organizations providing year round instruction in outdoor recreation. Our programs are designed to serve individuals, ages five and up, with all types of disabilities, including physical, cognitive, developmental, and sensory impairments.

Please review our website [www.outdoorsforall.org](http://www.outdoorsforall.org) for more information about our programs!

# Volunteer Overview

## Volunteer Roles

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Depending on their specific volunteer role, volunteers may report directly to the Lead Volunteer or the Program Managers for each program.

### Winter volunteer roles include (but are not limited to):

- Instructor
- Race Coach
- Race Crew
- Driver
- Vehicle Chaperone
- Equipment Manager
- Lodge Assistant
- Lead Volunteer
- Clinician

### Summer volunteer roles include (but are not limited to):

- Kayak Instructor
- Rock Climbing Instructor
- Mountain Bike Instructor
- Cycling Instructor
- Summer Camp Volunteer.

For a complete listing of our Winter and Summer volunteer roles, please review the Outdoors for All website.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

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- Regardless of your volunteer role, your primary responsibility as an Outdoors for All volunteer is to provide support to Outdoors for All participants. This includes creating a safe, fun, and positive learning experience for both yourself and the participant. Our priorities are safety first, fun second, learning third.

## Winter Volunteer Commitment

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- Every volunteer must complete the online training and receive a 100% score (you may take the test as many times as needed) prior to receiving their pass or teaching a lesson
- Any and all training exceptions should be approved by the Program Director
- All excused trainings must be made up. Contact the volunteer coordinator to schedule your training make up day.
- There will also be opportunity for you to attend extracurricular trainings (on top of the required pre-season training) on Wednesday evenings from 7-9pm. You can see what's offered and sign up through our website.

### Lessons and Absences

- Lessons are held at The Summit at Snoqualmie (Summit West) or The Summit Nordic Center, and Stevens Pass. Please refer to the Outdoors for All website for more information about each program.

- Instructors who commit to teaching a full 7-Week Lesson Series in January/February, and who also choose to purchase a discounted season pass through their respective mountain location, are *required* to make up any absences during another program day at the same mountain they volunteer at. To sign up for make-up days, please sign up on our website under Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities [here](#).
- If you are unable to attend a program session last-minute, please call and leave a message on the Outdoors for All Hotline at (206) 838-4995.

### **Cancellations**

- Outdoors for All occasionally cancels lessons due to bad weather or road closures. If this happens, make-up lessons will occur during the week(s) immediately following the regularly scheduled program.
- Before driving to your program location, please call the Outdoors for All Hotline at (206) 838-4995 to check for any changes to the daily schedule.
- Outdoors for All does not offer make-up lessons for participant or volunteer absences. Our participants depend on you to follow-through on your volunteer commitment.

### **Training Commitment**

#### **Alpine Commitment**

- First-year winter volunteers must complete 4 full days of training (9am-3pm)
- All new volunteers must also attend an Outdoors for All Orientation prior to volunteering
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year volunteers must complete 2 full days of training (9am-3pm)
- 3+ year volunteers must complete 1 full day of training (9am-3pm)

#### **Nordic Commitment**

- First-year x-country winter volunteers must complete 2 full days of training (9am-3pm)
- 2+ year x-country winter volunteers must complete 1 full day of training (9am-3pm)
- All snowshoe volunteers are required to do the same commitment of 1 full day of training (9am-3pm)

## **Summer Volunteer Commitment**

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### **Lessons and Absences**

- Lessons are held at various locations throughout western Washington. Please refer to the Outdoors for All website for more information about each program's location.
- Volunteers who consistently miss lessons or who are late to lessons, especially without prior notice, may lose privileges to volunteer in the future. Volunteers who are registered through Expertvoice to receive pro deals and discounts may also lose this volunteer benefit.
- If you are unable to attend a program session last-minute, please call and leave a message on the Outdoors for All Hotline at (206) 838-4995.

### **Cancellations**

- Outdoors for All occasionally cancels lessons due to bad weather, or various other reasons. If this happens, make-up lessons may be scheduled after the original program end date. This will be communicated to volunteers as soon as possible.
- Before driving to your program location, please call the Outdoors for All Hotline at (206) 838-4995 to check for any changes to the daily schedule.
- Outdoors for All does not offer make-up lessons for participant or volunteer absences. Our participants depend on you to follow-through on your volunteer commitment.

### **Training Commitment**

Each Summer activity requires a different training commitment. Training dates and sign-up can be accessed on our website [here](#). Please see below for details.

- Any and all training exceptions should be approved by the Program Director through the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Trainings exceptions may be approved for those who have demonstrated competency in a particular activity through prior experience or certifications.
- All excused trainings must be made up. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss training exceptions.

### **Summer Camp Commitment**

14-17 years of age (must apply and be accepted as a volunteer)

- Must complete our Summer Camp volunteer application [here](#) (Letter of Recommendations are highly encouraged)
- Complete our online training, which can be accessed [here](#).
- The Monday of each week there will be an in-person required training. For example, if you sign-up for a Summer Camp for June 22-26, there will be a training on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

18 and older

- Complete our online training, which can be accessed [here](#).
- The Monday of each week there will be an in-person required training. For example, if you sign-up for a Summer Camp for June 22-26, there will be a training on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Cycling Commitment**

- One (1) Learn to Ride training is required to volunteer for a Learn to Ride Series and/or Camp

### **Mountain Biking Commitment**

- One (1) Mountain Biking training is required to volunteer for a Mountain Bike 101

### **Rock Climbing Commitment**

- One (1) Rock Climbing training is required to volunteer for a Rock Climbing Series

### **Kayak Commitment**

- One (1) Kayak training is required to volunteer for a Kayaking Series

### **Custom Event Commitment**

- Custom Events do not require activity-specific training, unless otherwise specified. Training will take place prior to the start of the Custom Event

### **Fundraising Event Commitment**

- Fundraising Events do not require prior training. Training will take place prior to the start of your Fundraising Event shift.

### **Day in the Life of an Outdoors for All Instructor**

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- Instructors should arrive about 45 minutes prior to the start of lessons, and should plan on staying for 30 to 45 minutes after lessons to put away equipment and complete paperwork.
- When you arrive, check-in with your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager.
- Get yourself and your gear ready for the day.
- Attend the Instructor Meeting, sometimes called the "Morning Meeting" for day-time programs.
- Review your participant matching for the day, as this may change from week to week. Review your participant's Progress Report from previous weeks, and begin to make a plan for the day.
- Pull and prep any rental gear for your participant, and get his/her lift ticket, if needed.
- Greet your participant and discuss his/her goals for the day. Gear-up, and head out on the hill. Take breaks as needed.
- Break for lunch or dinner. If you are matched with a full-day participant, please stay with them unless you have arranged alternate supervision. This can be a great opportunity to learn more about your participant and gain a deeper rapport.
- Enjoy afternoon activities on the snow, with breaks as needed.
- Return your participant's equipment and complete their Progress Report. Support participant independence, and engage them in this process! Summarize the day, note any highlights or accomplishments, set goals for next week and discuss any changes to their schedule.
- Ensure that your participant connects with their ride home, and has all of their belongings. If your lesson is running late, please connect with your Lead Volunteer to ensure that your participant does not miss scheduled transportation.
- Check-in with your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager, before leaving for the day.

## Goal Setting

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- Goal setting is an important aspect of programming in order to ensure that the participant is meeting his or her wants and needs. Before lessons or programming begins, have a conversation with the participant and/or his caregiver to discuss desires and expectations. It is important to note that goals might not always be directly related to the activity (skiing, snowboarding, etc.), and instead, may be social, emotional or physical in nature.
- If possible, create SMART objectives. SMART objectives are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. The more specific the objective is, the easier it is to hold each other accountable.

### Examples of SMART objectives:

By the end of the series, \_\_\_\_ will attempt 3 “blue” runs.

By the third week, \_\_\_\_ will engage in appropriate conversation with two volunteers and one participant.

\_\_\_\_ will demonstrate parallel turning by the end of the series.

### Examples of ‘poor’ objectives:

\_\_\_\_ will get better at skiing.

\_\_\_\_ will have fun.

## Progress Reports

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- Progress Reports are an important part of every Outdoors for All lesson. Progress Reports help staff, volunteers and participants track on goal-setting, skier/rider improvement and participant behavior. Progress Reports are also an important way for Instructors to communicate tips/tricks and lesson plans, for a student who may have more than one instructor over the course of a lesson series. Please remember to complete a Progress Report at the end of every lesson!

## Risk Management

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- There are certain risks and dangers inherent in any activity, and the field of adaptive snow sports involve its own specialized set of risks. The goal of the following safety policies, guidelines and procedures is to identify the risks that we face and to develop methods by which these risks may be reasonably controlled to provide a safe and fun learning environment.
- The following material provides an overview of the major points of risk management within Outdoors for All’s winter programs. This is not an exhaustive list; rather, this offers a baseline from which each individual volunteer should operate.

# Volunteer Policies and Procedures

## Volunteer Guidelines

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- Absolutely no use of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs before or while you are volunteering for Outdoors for All. This includes during lunch, if you are teaching a full-day lesson. Violation of this policy will lead to termination of your position and/or other disciplinary action.
- No smoking during Outdoors for All programs, or in Outdoors for All buildings or facilities.
- Be prepared! Keep your body in shape, get plenty of sleep, take precautions when driving to the mountain, keep your equipment safe, stay warm, and eat to keep your energy up.
- Have knowledge of all terrain and select terrain appropriate for your student.
- Be knowledgeable of snow conditions and how they affect skiing. Plan your lesson accordingly.
- Act professionally at all times while representing Outdoors for All.
- In the case of an unexpected absence, call your Lead Volunteer or staff member and/or the Outdoors for All Hotline as soon as possible! If you miss one lesson without notification, or if you are consistently late for instructor meetings or lessons, you may lose your season pass privileges. If you have a scheduling conflict, talk to your Lead Volunteer as soon as possible.
- Outdoors for All does not arrange carpools. Volunteers assume full responsibility for transportation to and from events, unless they are traveling in one of the Outdoors for All vehicles. We recommend that you set up a carpool group with other volunteers in your program.
- Outdoors for All staff and Lead Volunteers are not responsible for any personal items left in any of the Outdoors for All buildings or facilities. Do not store any personal equipment overnight in any of the Outdoors for All buildings or facilities.
- Staying overnight in the Outdoors for All buildings/facilities is prohibited.
- Outdoors for All is an organization that operates in many natural spaces. In order for Outdoors for All's programs to succeed it is vital that we take care of the spaces in which we operate. Outdoors for All is devoted to the principles of Leave No Trace:
  1. Plan ahead and prepare
  2. Dispose of waste properly
  3. Minimize campfire impact
  4. Be considerate of other visitors
  5. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
  6. Leave what you find
  7. Respect wildlife
- Outdoors for All does not provide medical insurance or workers compensation for our volunteers.

## Volunteer Guidelines for Working with Participants

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- Before working with any participant, review his or her Participant Information Form (PIF) and past Progress Reports. If you notice anything that concerns you, please notify your Lead Volunteer, or program Manager

immediately. Please be respectful of the information on a person's PIF and do not discuss any information with other participants or volunteers.

- Ensure that participants are dressed and protected from existing weather conditions. Never take participants into adverse weather with inadequate clothing or equipment.
- During the lesson, check participants for cold or numbness in the extremities, signs of heat loss, and his/her comfort level. If you are concerned, bring the participant indoors and/or address this concern with the participant and/or his or her caregiver.
- Do not administer any medication, prescription or non-prescription, to any participant.
- Due to various participant dietary restrictions and food allergies, do not provide food or meals to a participant, unless it is food that they have brought with them. If a student forgets his or her lunch or lunch-money, please notify your Lead Staff or Volunteer.
- Ask permission from your participant before touching them. Although many activities necessarily include physical contact (such as transfers), you should still ask for permission.
- If a participant informs you that he or she is being mistreated or harassed during any Outdoors for All activity, report the incident to your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager.

## **Confidentiality and Privacy Statement**

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- In the course of volunteering with Outdoors for All, volunteers may have access to participant information, including medical information, as well as other personal information and data. Volunteers are expected to not disclose this information outside of Outdoors for All at any time during, or subsequent to, one's volunteer activities. Unauthorized use or disclosure of participant information may subject volunteers to civil liability under Washington State law.
- Outdoors for All asks that volunteers not share personal information regarding participants (or other volunteers) when not applicable to the direct supervision and support of the participant.  
i.e. Participant information should not be shared to other volunteers who are not directly supporting the participant.
- Outdoors for All does not fall within HIPAA guidelines in most cases when sharing information internally. Sharing of personal participant information must be for an approved reason and may in cases fall within HIPAA guidelines. Such as sending participant information forms through email.
- Any personal contacts of participants are only shared when mutually agreed upon and not distributed by Outdoors for All. Outdoors for All does not sell or share any participant contact information with public organizations and businesses.

## **Release of Liability**

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- Volunteers must sign and submit a release of liability form to Outdoors for All prior to participating in activity. Release of liability forms are current for one calendar year from date signed and should be completed annually.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

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Outdoors for All does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

## **Volunteer Management at Programs and Activities**

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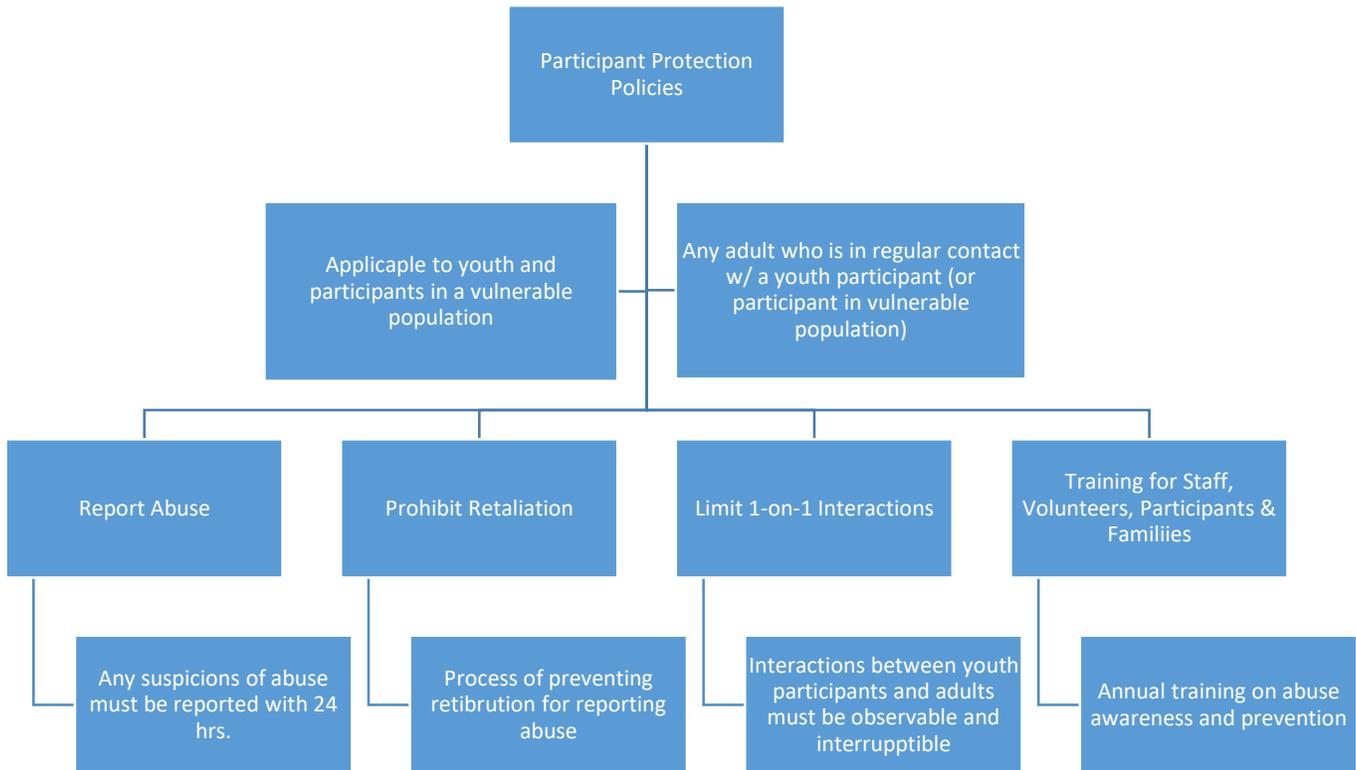
- Any person that receives training and assists in an Outdoors for All activity is considered an Outdoors for All volunteer. All volunteers should be provided a minimum training to successfully support the activity and needs of the Outdoors for All staff. Volunteers are not able to perform any task that would be outside the scope of the duties of Outdoors for All staff. Outdoors for All staff reserve the right to remove any volunteer that is insubordinate, disruptive, unreliable, or unfit for any other reason to volunteer for the activity.
- If volunteers are being provided by a partner or other organization at the activity, it is the responsibility of that organization to follow Outdoors for All volunteer guidelines. Roles and responsibilities of both supervising organizations should be clearly defined either in writing or verbally prior to the start of activities.

## **Dress Code**

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- If possible wear Outdoors for All branded attire (t-shirts, vest, jacket, hat) as appropriate for programs. Shirts must cover the entire torso. Sleeveless shirts must be hemmed (no cutoffs) and cover the shoulders (spaghetti strap tanks are not acceptable). Pants/shorts are to be free of holes and excessive stains and must be hemmed (no cutoffs). Shorts should reasonably cover the upper leg per discretion of the on-site Program Staff. Footwear that fits securely to the heel must always be worn during programs, except swimming in controlled pool environment. Flip flop sandals are not acceptable for use during program delivery.
- Additional clothing and footwear requirements may be required for specific programing.

# Participant Protection Policies



- Overview: Outdoors for All has adopted the principle of, "Safety First. Fun Second. Learning Third." As such, Outdoors for All is committed to maintaining a safe and positive environment for the development of all participants, volunteers, and staffs' physical, emotional and social well-being, and ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.
- Outdoors for All recognizes that the process for training and motivating participants will vary with each staff and volunteer instructor, and participant, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in the programs to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.
- Application of these Policies: The Participation Protection Policies apply to all participants, staff, and volunteers engaging in Outdoors for All events and programs, as discussed below.

## Definitions:

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- Participants: Any individual who is participating in an Outdoors for All event, activity, or program; most often a participant is an individual with a disability who is registered to receive services from Outdoors for All.
- Youth or Minor Participants: Any individual who is under the age of 18; minors cannot give consent
- Participants who are considered to be a part of a vulnerable population: any individual, whether a youth or adult who has a legal guardian.
- Staff: any paid employee of Outdoors for All
- Volunteers: Any individual who is donating their time and skills in support of Outdoors for All organizationally, at an event, or as an instructor. Examples of volunteers include but are not limited to: board members, interns, instructors or coaches, drivers, vehicle chaperones, equipment managers, or special event support.
- Lead Volunteer: A volunteer who is serving in a leadership or supervisory capacity within the structure of a program. A lead volunteer holds responsibilities above and beyond the scope of a generic volunteer (instructor, coach, etc.).
- Event: an organized function hosted by Outdoors for All for fundraising or participant gatherings
- Activity: An Outdoors for All sport or recreation pursuit in which coaching or instruction is provided by an instructor/coach to a participant or group of participants
- Program: Includes multiple activity options or a schedule of activities in which participants register to participate; can be a short time period, full day, or multiple days of activity.
- Policies: Refers to the collection of procedures and rules outlined in this Manual to be followed by any individual engaged in an Outdoors for All event, activity, or program.

## Prohibited Conduct:

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This section of the Manual sets forth expectations for all individuals involved in Outdoors for All programming related to emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct in activities, including bullying, hazing, and harassment.

Involvement with Outdoors for All may be suspended, terminated, or denied if an individual's conduct is, or was, inconsistent with this Manual and/or the best interest of the activity and others involved is not maintained.

It is a violation of the Manual and these Policies for any individual to engage in or tolerate: Prohibited Conduct, as outlined in this Policy; any conduct that would violate community standards equivalent to Prohibited Conduct that existed at the time of the alleged conduct, including applicable criminal and/or civil laws, any Outdoors for All policies, any Move United policies (a chapter organization of which Outdoors for All is a part), or any current or previous U.S. Center for SafeSport Policies.

- Prohibited Conduct includes:
  - A. Child Abuse
  - B. Sexual Misconduct
    - Sexual or Gender-related Harassment
    - Non-consensual Sexual Contact (or attempts to commit the same)
    - Non-consensual Sexual Intercourse (or attempts to commit the same)

- Sexual Exploitation
  - Bullying or hazing, or other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.
- C. Emotional and Physical Misconduct
- Stalking
  - Bullying
  - Hazing
  - Harassment
- D. Aiding and Abetting
- Allowing any person who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by Outdoors for All to be engaged with the organization, or affiliated with any Outdoors for All's partners
  - Providing any coaching-related advice or service to a participant who has been identified as suspended or otherwise ineligible by Outdoors for All
  - Allowing any person to violate the terms of their suspension or any other sanctions imposed by Outdoors for All.
- E. Misconduct Related to Reporting
- Failure to Report
  - Intentionally Filing a False Allegation
  - Retaliation: Outdoors for All takes measures to prevent retaliation when a claim of abuse of misconduct is made (i.e. Outdoors for All does not have an obligation to share the details of an investigation with those involved in the claim, in order to protect the privacy and prevent retaliation of those involved)
- F. Other Inappropriate Conduct
- Intimate Relationships in Which a Power Imbalance Exists
  - Intentional Exposure of Private Areas
  - Inappropriate Physical Contact
  - Sex Offender Registry

## Training and Education

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- Overview: Outdoors for All requires mandatory reporting of abuse, misconduct and violations of its Manual by any staff or volunteer. To facilitate reporting, Covered Individuals should have a basic understanding of sexual abuse, as well as "grooming," the most common strategy offenders use to seduce their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders select a victim, win the victim's trust (and the trust of the victim's parent or guardian), manipulate the victim into sexual activity, and keep the victim from disclosing abuse. Accordingly, staff and program volunteers will complete awareness training concerning misconduct in sport before performing services for Outdoors for All.
- Staff and Lead Volunteers: All staff and lead volunteers must successfully complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport training and quiz in order to earn one's certificate of completion in mandatory reporting, sexual misconduct awareness education, and emotional and physical misconduct. Staff and lead volunteers must either complete the full SafeSport training course or the SafeSport refresher course on an annual basis.
- Volunteer Training: Any Outdoors for All volunteer (not a lead) must complete the Outdoors for All training affirming organizational policies and procedures, definitions of abuse, and reporting. All volunteers must complete this training on an annual basis.

- Additional Resources: Training is available through the U.S. Center for SafeSport, free of cost, annually to minor participants, subject to parental consent. Parent training is also available, free of cost. Training materials may be found through the U.S. Center for Safe Sport: <https://athletesafety.org/training/index>.

## Supervision of Participants

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- During events and programs, Outdoors for All strives to minimize one-on-one interactions to create a safe program environment and to protect participants, and all involved in Outdoors for All events. Outdoors for All trains staff and volunteers to maintain the concept of “two-deep leadership” to limit one-on-one interactions. Two-deep leadership means a minimum of two adults (staff, volunteers, etc.), or one adult and the parent/guardian of the relevant participant, are present when working with a participant.  
For purposes of this section, and promoting the Participant Protection Policies, “a participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population” means an individual, whether an adult or a minor, who has a legal guardian.
- All staff and volunteers working with participants are required to abide by these Participant Protection Policies, in order to prevent abuse within Outdoors for All activities and events, and facilities under Outdoors for All’s jurisdiction.
- Appropriate One-On-One Interactions: One-on-one interactions between a minor participant, or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, a staff or volunteer (who is not the participant’s parent or guardian) are permitted only if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- Monitoring: When one-on-one interactions between a staff or volunteer and minor participant, or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, occur at Outdoors for All events, other staff or volunteers will monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes: knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one (e.g. conducting a spot check).
- Out-of-Program Contacts: Staff and volunteers are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor participants, or participants who are considered to be in a vulnerable population, in settings outside of Outdoors for All’s programs that are not observable and interruptible (including, but not limited to, one’s home and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Nonetheless, such arrangements are strongly discouraged.
- Individual Meetings: An individual meeting may be necessary to address a participant’s concerns, training program or competition schedule, etc. Under these circumstances, staff and volunteers are to observe the following guidelines.
  - Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions are at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
  - Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as near the check-in area of an Outdoors for All activity.
  - If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open, and any windows must be uncovered.
- Individual Training Sessions: An individual training session(s) with a minor participant, or participant that is considered to be in a vulnerable population, may be preferred or necessary. Under these circumstances, permission of a minor participant’s, or participant who is considered to be a part of a vulnerable population’s, parent or guardian is required in advance of the individual training session(s), Outdoors for All encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session, so long as the observing parent or guardian is not a

distraction to the participant. Individual training sessions should be observable and interruptible by another adult at all times.

- Individual Care or Support Sessions: Participants with disabilities may require additional care or support activities of daily living (i.e. toileting, dressing, eating, etc.). Outdoors for All staff and volunteers are not trained to provide support to a participant who requires support for his or her activities of daily living. Should a participant require support for any of these types of activities, Outdoors for All asks that the participant provide his or her own caregiver, preferably a household member. Outdoors for All requires advanced notice that a participant may require support during an activity for these types of tasks.
- Prohibited One-on-One Interactions: Except as set forth above, minor participants, and participants who are considered to be in a vulnerable population, will not be left unattended or unsupervised during Outdoors for All activities; including being left alone during practice time. Outdoors for All staff and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with a minor participant, or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, in any room or building.
- Violations: Violations of this policy must be reported to Outdoors for All pursuant to its Reporting Policy. Violations will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary or permanent suspension. Some violations may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## Physical Contact

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- Appropriate physical contact between participants and volunteer coaches or staff is a productive and inevitable part of recreational activities. Especially in adaptive sports, participants may require physical assistance with equipment and movement. Guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct in sport.
- Appropriate Physical Contact: Outdoors for All adheres to the following principles and guidelines in regards to physical contact with participants.
  - Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact: Physical contact with participants – for **safety**, **celebration** and **consolation** – has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include:
    - the physical contact takes place in public
    - there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
    - the participant receives verbal notice of the contact about to take place
    - the physical contact is for the benefit of the participant, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult
- Safety: The safety of our participants is our number one priority. In many instances, providing appropriate physical contact can make the activity space safer. Examples include:
  - spotting a participant so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
  - positioning a participant's body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination (with the participant's consent)
  - in emergencies, making participants aware that they might be in harm's way because of other participants moving around them or because of equipment in use
- Celebration: Recreational activities are physical by definition, and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. Appropriate public expressions of celebration include:
  - greeting gestures such as high-fives and fist bumps

- congratulatory gestures such as celebratory side hugs and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment
- Consolation: It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed participant (e.g., a participant who just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes publicly:
  - putting an arm around a participant while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”)
- Prohibited Physical Contact: Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:
  - massages or rubdowns
  - asking or having a participant sit in the lap of another individual
  - lingering or repeated embraces of participants that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact
  - slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a participant
  - “cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay
  - playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training (e.g., tickling or “horseplay” wrestling)
  - continued physical contact that makes a participant obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
  - any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment;
  - physical conduct in violation of Outdoors for All’s Participant Protection Policies.
- Violations: Violations of this policy must be reported to Outdoors for All pursuant to its Reporting Policy. Violations will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary or permanent suspension from Outdoors for All programs and activities. Violations may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## Social Media and Electronic Communication

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- Described earlier in this manual is the concept of “two-deep leadership.” Meaning all interactions between a youth participant (or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population; such as an individual with an intellectual disability) and staff or volunteers should be observable by at least one other individual. This concept extends to electronic communications. All interactions between participants and staff or volunteers should be professional in nature and linked to the implementation of an Outdoors for All activity. There shall be no one-on-one electronic messaging between a minor aged participant (or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population) and staff or volunteers.
- Outdoors for All asks that volunteers and staff do not seek out participants on social media platforms.
- For volunteers, it is not advised that volunteers accept a “follow” or “friend” request on social media from a youth participant (or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population).
- Staff are not permitted to accept “follow” or “friend” requests from youth participants (or participants who are considered to be in a vulnerable population) on social media, even through one’s personal social media channels.

- When emailing or texting with a youth participant (or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population), staff or volunteers should always include the participant's parents or legal guardian.
- Telephone communication with staff or volunteers should be to the parent or legal guardian of a youth participant (or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population). Staff and volunteers should not contact youth participants via the telephone without the consent of a parent or legal guardian.
- Misconduct: Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional or sexual abuse, bullying, harassment and hazing). Such communications by staff, volunteers, or participants will not be tolerated and are considered violations of this Manual).
- Violations: Violations of this policy must be reported to Outdoors for All pursuant to its Reporting Policy. Violations will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary or permanent suspension from Outdoors for All programs and activities. Violations may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### Photos and Video, Public Sharing

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- Photo, video, and other media release is included in the Outdoors for All liability waiver. Any photo or video taken by an Outdoors for All staff person is considered property of Outdoors for All and any public sharing of the videos or photos should be an approved usage per Outdoors for All social media guidelines.
- Photos or video taken by volunteers should be considered property of Outdoors for All and acceptable for public sharing, however it is advised that volunteers seek approval from the participant, or participant's family, prior to capturing photos or videos. It is not advised that volunteers share or publish photos or videos of participants without the consent of the participant or participant's family.
- Photos and videos taken by members of the general public of participants, not involved in the Outdoors for All program, and are not approved by director or on-site staff, is discouraged and forbidden.

### Changing Areas and Locker Rooms

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- For the transition to certain Outdoors for All programs (i.e. swimming, skiing, etc.), access to a changing area or locker room is needed to appropriately dress for the activity. The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy, as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.
- While Outdoors for All does not generally post staff members or volunteers inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas, staff members do make occasional sweeps of these areas. Staff members conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female-designated areas and men checking on male-designated areas.
- Staff make every effort to recognize when a participant goes to the locker room or changing area during an activity and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, will check on the participant's whereabouts.
- One-on-One Interactions: Except for participants on the same team, at no time are staff or volunteers to be permitted to be alone with a participant in a locker room or changing, except under emergency circumstances or if the staff or volunteer is related to the participant.
- If Outdoors for All is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by staff and volunteers will be designated if needed.
- If a participant needs support changing or preparing for the activity, Outdoors for All will invite a parent or caregiver to the program to support the participant. Parents/caregivers must still abide by all Outdoors for All policies regarding use of locker rooms, bathrooms, and changing areas. They may not be alone with unrelated participants in such areas, and must abide by restrictions regarding female- and male-designated areas.

- There will be no use of cell phones or other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, in the locker rooms or changing areas. Such devices should be left outside of the locker room in a secure area, vehicle or checked with a staff or lead volunteer.
- Under no circumstances shall a staff or volunteer intentionally expose his or herself to a participant.
- Violations: Violations of this policy must be reported to Outdoors for All pursuant to its Reporting Policy. Violations will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary or permanent suspension. Some violations may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## Transportation and Travel

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- Outdoors for All has established policies to guide our transportation and travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase participant safety and improve the programmatic experience, while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.
- Transportation: Within some Outdoors for All programming, transportation is either included, available for an additional fee and a participant must indicate in his or her registration that they would like to utilize Outdoors for All transportation, or it is not available at all.

When transportation is included, this implies that a portion of the activity schedule will require all participants to utilize Outdoors for All transportation. (i.e. shuttling between two activity locations).

When transportation is available for an additional fee, this implies that participants can take part in a vanpool in order to reach the designated program area.

When transportation is not available, this implies that the participant must provide his or her own transportation to the designated program area.

When transportation is provided, all Outdoors for All vehicles are well maintained and compliance with state laws. Only staff and volunteers that have completed Outdoors for All Driver's Training are eligible to drive an Outdoors for All vehicle. All eligible drivers maintain a valid driver's license, are listed on the Outdoors for All insurance, and must have current CPR & First Aid training.

- In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, staff and volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent or guardian, may not drive alone with an unrelated minor/participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, and should only drive with at least two other participants or another adult at all times. The only consideration for an exception to this policy is unless otherwise agreed to by the participant's parent or guardian in advance of travel.  
Efforts must be made to ensure that staff and volunteers are not alone with a minor, or a participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, by, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups or having a chaperone ride along in the vehicle.
- Volunteers supporting an event or an activity must provide their own transportation to the designated program area unless otherwise specified by an Outdoors for All staff member.  
Carpooling is typically encouraged between volunteers using a volunteer's privately owned vehicle.
- Travel: Within some Outdoors for All programs, overnight travel is arranged for the participating members of the group, e.g. camping trips, veteran excursions, etc.
- Outdoors for All will provide an adequate ratio of adult staff or volunteer chaperones to support minor participants, or participants that are considered to be in a vulnerable population. Outdoors for All's policy dictates a maximum ratio of five participants to one chaperone on overnight programs.  
Chaperones can either be staff or volunteers.

- Participants will share accommodations, with 2-4 participants assigned per room/tent depending on accommodation type. Participants will only share a room with other participants of the same sex and age group. Participants will be grouped by age and sex for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone.
- Staff and volunteers will provide supervision to minor participants, and those considered to be in a vulnerable population, by upholding the standards of Outdoors for All and its core values, upholding the standards of the facility in which the group is staying, supporting the programmatic goals of the activity, and promoting the goals of each individual involved in the activity. (i.e. conducting room checks, adherence to the travel/trip itinerary, supporting itinerary logistics, etc.)

When conducting room checks, the concept of two-deep leadership is applicable, as all interactions between staff, volunteers, and participants should be observable and interruptible.

At no point while traveling should an adult (staff or volunteer) be one-on-one with a minor participant, or participant who is considered to be in a vulnerable population, in a room or behind closed doors.

- Violations: Violations of this policy must be reported to Outdoors for All pursuant to its Reporting Policy. Violations will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary or permanent suspension. Some violations may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## Responding to Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations

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Note: Nothing in this policy shall be construed to require a victim of child abuse or other misconduct to self-report.

No one should investigate suspicions or allegations abuse or other Prohibited Conduct, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of allegations as a condition of reporting to Outdoors for All or to appropriate authorities.

Within Washington State, mandatory reporters are obligated by law to immediately report abuse, abandonment, neglect, or financial exploitation to authorities when there is “reasonable cause to believe” that an incident has happened, or “reason to suspect” that physical or sexual abuse is or has occurred. Outdoors for All staff are considered mandatory reporters.

Additionally, in Washington State anyone who is not considered a mandatory reporter is a permissive reporter. Permissive reporters are encouraged under Washington State law to make a report when they have reason to believe that abuse, abandonment, neglect, or self-neglect, is, or has, occurred.

- Reporting: Reporting Requirements related to
  1. Child Abuse:
  2. Sexual Misconduct:
  3. Emotional and Physical Misconduct:
  4. Other Misconduct and Abuse of Individuals with Disabilities

Any staff or volunteer who learns of information and reasonably suspects that a participant has suffered an incident of abuse (including sexual abuse, emotional or physical misconduct, or other misconduct), shall immediately make a report of the suspected abuse to both Law Enforcement and Outdoors for All.

- a. Law Enforcement:

The agency designated by the Attorney General, consistent with federal requirements set forth in section 226 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. § 20341).

Any applicable state law enforcement agencies.

Learn more about this requirement by visiting:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting>

<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.34.020>

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/mandatory-and-permissive-reporters>

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/mandated-reporter>

#### b. Outdoors for All

Through Outdoors for All online reporting form, [<https://www.tfaforms.com/4870383>].

By Phone at 206-838-6030, during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9:00am–5pm PST).

Directly to the Outdoors for All Incident Review Official: Program Director.

Current Program Director: Alecia McConnell

- **Anonymous Reports:** Reports may be made anonymously to Outdoors for All. Anonymity means Outdoors for All will not know the personally identifying information of the reporter. It does not mean that the underlying information will be protected. However, an anonymous report may limit Outdoors for All's ability to investigate and respond to a report, and if an adult participant reports anonymously, it may not be possible for Outdoors for All to verify that mandatory reporting obligations have been satisfied. Consequently, Outdoors for All strongly encourages all individuals who submit a report to provide their name and contact information.
- **Confidentiality for Third-Party Reporters:** Unless necessary to Outdoors for All's investigation or resolution of a matter, Outdoors for All does not disclose a Third-Party Reporter's personally identifying information.
- **Failure to Report:** Failure to alert the appropriate authorities of suspicions of abuse may result in disciplinary actions from Outdoors for All and may violate State law.

## Policy Monitoring

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- By monitoring the interactions among staff, volunteers, participants and others involved in Outdoors for All events and programs, Outdoors for All works to prevent, recognize and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors as set forth in our Participant Protection Policies and Volunteer Manual, while reinforcing appropriate behaviors.
- Outdoors for All monitors compliance of these policies and procedures across all areas of the organization and amongst all levels of support (i.e. staff, volunteers, interns, participants, parents, etc.).
- **Methods of Monitoring:** Outdoors for All utilizes multiple monitoring methods to observe how individuals are interacting, including but not limited to: formal supervision (with regular evaluations), informal supervision (with regular or random observation; i.e. roving or spot checking interactions), and maintaining frequent contact with staff members, volunteers and participants who may be interacting out of line-of-sight of the program staff lead.
- **Responding to Interactions:** While DSUSA has a formal reporting policy, staff members and volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations and potential boundary violations.

Staff members and volunteers will redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors and report behaviors if necessary.

## Disciplinary Process

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- If there is suspected abuse or neglect, or a claim of abuse or neglect, taking place within an Outdoors for All program, or with a participant who is involved in an Outdoors for All program, Outdoors for All has a legal and ethical responsibility to report such suspicions or claims to the appropriate authorities and/or support investigations into such claims of abuse or neglect.
- During an investigation, Outdoors for All may limit the participation of individuals involved in the claim, through temporary suspensions or long-term bans from the organization.
- Outdoors for All does not have an obligation to share the details of an investigation with those involved in the claim, in order to protect the privacy and prevent retaliation of those involved.
- Limiting participation may be for a short term basis, or may be a permanent suspension. Additionally, may report the claim to overlapping organizations within the local area or national level.
- Should a claim need to be filed with local or State authorities Outdoors for All will support the investigation of the agency (agencies) to the best of our ability, and follow the agency guidance for communication with the involved parties.

## Background Check Policy

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- All Outdoors for All volunteers and staff, over the age of 18, are required to undergo a criminal background check processed through the Washington State Patrol prior to participating in Outdoors for All events with participants.
- Volunteers and staff must complete an electronic or paper release, authorizing designated Outdoors for All staff to review the findings of the Criminal History Information and Child/Adult Abuse Information Act from the Washington State Patrol Identification & Criminal History Section in accordance with Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.43.830 through 43.43.845.
- Background Checks must be processed on an annual basis for all current volunteers and staff.
- Volunteers and staff can request the results of their Background Check with written notice to Outdoors for All's Volunteer Coordinator ([volunteer@outdoorsforall.org](mailto:volunteer@outdoorsforall.org)).
- Should the Background Check reveal criminal records that indicate the volunteer or staff member is not suitable for participation in Outdoors for All events, Outdoors for All will notify the subject of the Background Check. Examples of Background Checks that are not suitable for participation in Outdoors for All events include, but are not limited to: felony or misdemeanor convictions.
- Volunteers and staff are required to disclose other potentially disqualifying factors to Outdoors for All for review. Potentially disqualifying factors include but are not limited to: having a history of misconduct with other organizations or employers, termination from a paid or unpaid position due to misconduct, demonstrates behavior that could be hazardous to one's self or others, and not meeting the position requirements.

Records are secured at the Outdoors for All headquarters for a period indicated by applicable law or seven years after the individual is no longer affiliated with Outdoors for All, whichever date is later.

# Winter Program Specific Guidelines

Outdoors for All uses a wide variety of equipment during Winter Programs. To keep our equipment organized and in good working condition, please remember to:

- Check all equipment before, during and after your lesson. Any deficiency that affects the operational safety of the participant's equipment must be reported to your Lead Volunteer, Equipment Manager or Program Manager, and the equipment should be taken out of service. Fill out an equipment repair tag and attach it to the piece of equipment
- Clean all equipment of snow, ice, dirt and water before and after use.
- Return all equipment to its proper place after use.

## Alpine Ski Binding Adjustment

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Ski binding adjustment is an important aspect of Outdoors for All's risk management.

- Instructors may not make any adjustments to a participant's ski bindings.
- If your participant is having issues with his or her Outdoors for All rental equipment, please see the Equipment Manager or Program Manager for assistance.
- All Equipment Managers and Program Managers working with Outdoors for All's rental ski bindings must be Marker Binding Certified for the current season.
- If your participant is having issues with his or her personal equipment, or with equipment rented from another organization, please refer him or her to a ski shop.
- Outdoors for All staff and volunteers, regardless of his or her training, may not make adjustment to a participant's personal ski equipment, or equipment that is rented from another organization.

## Retention Harness

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- Any participant who has experienced a tonic-clonic seizure (formerly grand mal) within the last 24 months is required to wear a retention harness while riding the chairlift. It is recommended that a participant who has experienced any other kind of seizure within the last 24 months wear a retention harness on the chairlift.
- If your participant does have a seizure while on the chairlift:
  - Remain calm, and ensure your own personal safety before attempting to assist the person having a seizure.
  - Do not attempt to hold the person.
  - Notify the lift attendant before reaching the top that you will require a full stop to unload. Do not unhook the retention strap from the chair until you have come to a full stop at the top of the chairlift.
  - Ask the lift attendant to notify Ski Patrol.
  - Once Ski Patrol has taken control of the student's well-being, notify your Lead Volunteer and an Outdoors for All staff member.

## Helmets

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- Outdoors for All's helmet policy requires participants, volunteers, and any participating family and caregivers to wear helmets when actively participating in Downhill Skiing, Downhill Snowboarding, and any other activity when directed by Outdoors for all staff and released parties.
- The selection and use of an appropriate helmet is the sole responsibility of the user. Outdoors for All will not be liable for any injury or damages resulting from failure to use a helmet or incorrect use or selection of a helmet.

**WARNING:** Outdoor activities are inherently dangerous and use of a helmet is no guarantee of safety and the activities requiring the use of a helmet may expose the participant to forces that exceed the limits of protection provided by a helmet.

## High Visibility Vests

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- Participants with visual impairments are advised to wear an appropriate VI vest. Guides and instructors of participants with visual impairments are required to wear a VI vest.

## Equipment Tethers

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- When tethering any sit or stand equipment from behind (Alpine or Nordic), the tether line must be attached with a girth hitch to the instructor's skin at the wrist. This is also true if you are tethering a stand-up skier. This is to prevent the tether line from coming loose if the instructor loses his or her grip on the tether line, or if the instructor were to fall. The tether line must be attached to the equipment with a carabiner or a girth hitch. If applicable, the tether line must be attached to the manufacturer's recommended attachment point.
- When tethering a stand-up skier, acceptable points of attachment between the tether and student are the tips of the skier's skis or a waist harness.
- All tethers must be approved Outdoors for All tethers.
- Outdoors for All strongly encourages the use of two separate tethers (as opposed to one long tether line) when tethering a bi-ski. New bi-ski instructors should expect to practice tethering with two individual tethers.

## Sit Skis

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- Outdoors for All has weight limit of 200lbs for participants who wish to use our sit ski equipment. We do not have the equipment or the instructors to definitively support someone on a lesson who is over 200Lbs.
- When teaching a mono ski lessons, always use a heel piece binding block to prevent the bucket from ejected out of the bindings.
- Prior to using any sit-ski equipment, ensure that the evacuation system is ready and accessible. This includes having a locking carabineer available for use in the event of a chairlift evacuation. This is only true for alpine sit ski equipment as the Nordic sit ski is not allowed on the chairlift under any circumstances.
- In any situation where a student in a piece of equipment cannot self-arrest, then the equipment should be tethered via two points of contact to the instructor at all time. All sit-skis with fixed outriggers must always be tethered by the instructor. There are no exceptions to this rule.

- All fixed outriggers must come off the bi-ski before loading a chair lift. Fixed outriggers should also be removed if you are doing a full run with a bucket assist. This is for the safety of the instructors and the student.
- Tethering prevents runaway equipment. If any instructor does not feel comfortable being fixed to the tether line, make alternate arrangements. The safety of the instructor is as important as the safety of the student
- An approved sit ski tetherer (Primary Sit Instructor) must be the primary instructor on every sit ski lesson. He or she must be approved by a Lead Sit Clinician.
- An instructor may not tether for the first time in a lesson setting. His or her first experience on tether must be in a clinic or training setting.
- It is up to the discretion of the Primary Sit Instructor assigned to the lesson if another instructor (with some previous training experience) may tether during that lesson.

## **Chairlift Loading and Unloading Procedures**

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### **General Loading Guidelines**

- Instructors may use the lesson or ski patrol lift line while they are teaching a lesson
- Always explain the loading procedure to the student before loading a chairlift for the first time. Use common sense and focus on safety. Allow the student to be as independent as is safely possible.
- Make sure to perform a dry run with the lifting assistant when loading sit equipment
- Make sure that the sit equipment is in load position
- When using a Mountain Man bi-ski remove the load miller pin prior to loading and put it back prior to skiing
- Make sure the retention strap is readily available.
- Any tethers used for sit or stand students must be removed from the instructor's wrist(s) prior to reaching the loading area.
- The instructor and the lifting assistant must communicate with the lift operator, as well as with each other. Typically, the person with the best view of the chair counts out loud for the load.
- Use proper lifting techniques. Lift with your legs, not your back.
- If the student is too heavy for you to lift, get help or switch students. Do not attempt to lift loads that are too heavy for you.
- All students with hand-held outriggers (stand and sit) should unload with the outriggers in the skiing position—this is to prevent any potential shoulder injuries during the unload.
- All sit skis with fixed outriggers must be removed from the ski before loading the chair lift.

- Students skiing with a snow slider should use the slider to get to the loading ramp. The student may ride the chairlift with the slider resting across his or her lap, or the slider may be passed off to an assistant instructor who will carry it up the chairlift on a different chair. Once on the chairlift, the slider must be tethered to the chair. Please see your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager if you have any questions.
- If the chairlift that you're riding has a "lap" bar, you must lower the bar while you're riding the chair. This guideline applies to all students and instructors, regardless of any equipment or adaptations in use. If you're unsure how to lower the bar while using a specific piece of equipment (such as a sit-ski or the slider), please see your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager.

### **Loading Speeds**

- Each chair loads at a different speed. The instructor is responsible for determining which speed is best for each load/unload.
- Prior to entering the loading ramp, notify the lift attendant of your desired speed for the load and unload, as well as any special instructions. For example: "I would like a slow at the bottom, and a full-stop up top. Can I please have a pull back?" **PLEASE NOTE:** If you ask for a "pull back", make sure there is a second lift attendant available to stand near the "stop" button in the event of a mis-load. It is not recommended that you ask for or receive a "pull back" if there is only one lift attendant at the bottom of the chairlift.
- It is the instructor's responsibility to make certain that the lift attendant knows the desired speed for the load and unload before entering the loading area. Never assume that the lift operator knows what you want, or that he or she will remember what speed you took for your last run. Be clear and always communicate.
- It is acceptable to let empty chairs pass if either the instructor or student is not ready to load.
- If a mis-load is inevitable, signal to stop the chair immediately to avoid making the situation worse.

### **Retention Straps**

All students using a sit-ski, as well as all students wearing a retention harness, must be secured to the chair by a retention strap. The retention strap should be wrapped around a primary structural component of the chair, and the carabiner is then attached back onto the safety strap itself. Please note:

- The thin metal slats on the backs of chairs are not part of the chair's primary structure. Therefore, the retention strap should not be attached to these slats.
- Do not use a locking carabiner to attach the safety strap around the chair. Locking carabiners may freeze when locked, preventing an unload.
- When loading, make certain that the student is as far back on the chair as possible. Attach the participant's retention strap to the chair as soon as possible, and ask for a STOP if attaching the strap becomes an issue.
- Do not hesitate to stop the chair if you can't attach the retention strap. SAFETY FIRST!

### **Unloading Guidelines**

- Explain the unloading procedure to the student prior to unloading. You should also make the participant aware of when they are and are not attached to the chair. Unloading takes practice.

- If the safety of the unload is in jeopardy, remain on the lift and notify the lift operator to stop the chair. Never jump from the chair lift.
- As you approach the top of the lift, make visual contact with the lift operator and indicate your desired speed for the unload (stop, slow, full speed) using hand signals. The lift operators at the top have been instructed to follow your hand signal.
- The timing for when you should detach the carabiner, unwrap the retention strap and raise the chairlift bar depends on each specific chairlift. Please check with your Lead Volunteer regarding the lifts that you will be using during your lesson.
- Instructors should remain on the chairlift until the sit-skier is safely off the chairlift

### **Hand Signals**

- Full Speed: Thumb up.
- Slow/Half Speed: Thumb down.
- Full Stop: Arm extended, palm facing the lift operator.

### **Chairlift Evacuation Procedures**

- Stay calm, and stay in the chair. Never attempt to remove yourself or your participant from chair.
- Talk to your participant and keep them calm.
- Wait for Ski Patrol. Ski Patrol will walk you through the evacuation procedure step by step.
- If your participant uses a retention strap, keep the strap secured until they are securely connected to the evacuation line.
- Never drop anything (skis, handheld outrigger, etc.) from the chairlift.

## **Terrain Parks**

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- Any instructor that wishes to take a participant into the terrain park must understand and follow the SMART style safety code. Instructors should only take participants on features in the terrain park if the student can ski them independently. Equipment should only go over features if it is designed to be able to do so safely

## **Responsibility Code**

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It is important to integrate the seven points of the Responsibility Code into each of your on-snow activities. Be a role model for safety, and remind your participant and fellow volunteers of safety concerns on a regular basis.

- Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.

- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift you must have knowledge and ability to load, ride, and unload safely.

**KNOW THE CODE. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

This is a partial list. Be safety conscious.

Officially endorsed by: NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION

# Summer Program Specific Guidelines

## Rock Climbing

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### Volunteer Responsibilities

- All volunteers must attend any required training prior to volunteering at an Outdoors for All climbing event
- All instructors/volunteers must have read the general volunteer manual and the rock climbing specific policies and procedures, and responsibilities
- All belayers must be checked off to belay by a qualified Outdoors for All staff member prior to belaying participants
  - In order to belay, one must demonstrate the ability to properly load a GriGri or ATC, tie and check a figure 8 follow through knot, belay without releasing the rope from the brake hand, and lower a climber. Once someone is checked off, this should be recorded and they will be given a belay card.
- Lead Volunteer
  - Must be checked off to belay by a qualified Outdoors for All staff member. Supports managing equipment and setting routes. Supports participant matching process and overall group management. Supports duties otherwise not specified, and held to a higher degree of responsibility and trust than a general volunteer
- Qualified staff or lead volunteers will physically and visually inspect all equipment; ropes, harnesses, helmets, webbing, carabineers, and belay devices before each session.
- Lead volunteers or staff will set or check all anchors.
- Lead volunteers and instructors will check all climbing areas, prior to the session, for loose debris.
- In case of rain (present or previous), lead volunteers will check all climbing areas and determine if the lesson can continue.
- A lead volunteer will be stationed at all climbing areas.
- Before each climbing activity, the instructor must double-check:
  - Helmet (including bouldering)
  - Harness
  - Harness tie-in
  - Belay anchor
  - Belay set up

### Climbing Instruction

- Bouldering (unroped traversing)
  - May be done at indoor gyms, following the facility's guidelines. Participants, volunteers, and staff will follow the bouldering policies set forth by the gym.

- Top Roping
  - All other climbs will be top roped. Top rope anchors will be built by a qualified staff or lead volunteer using Outdoors for All hardware and ropes and will meet the requirements for industry standard redundant climbing anchors. Anchors should be set with two reversed, opposed & locked carabineers attached to the rope. Climbers will be tied into the rope with a figure 8 follow through knot through both harness hard points. When setting top roping anchors, a qualified staff or lead volunteer should use pre-existing bolts (permanent). Should temporary (removable) bolts or new permanent bolts need to be placed, Outdoors for All will contract the work to a climbing company.
- Note: We are not presently teaching participants proficiency in anchors, equipment set-up, knot tying, or belaying. If a student shows interest and ability in any of these topics, instructors are welcome to explain or even practice them in a mock set-up. Participants may not tie their own knots or belay without the permission of a qualified staff or lead volunteer.

### Safety Policies

- All participants, volunteers, and staff are required to wear a helmet for all outdoor climbing activities while climbing, belaying, while assisting climbing participants or in the designated climbing area.
- All participants, volunteers, and staff must adhere to the policies and procedures of the indoor climbing gym that they are climbing at. Typically, that includes but is not limited to
  - All belayers must check off to belay through the gym
  - Outdoors for All staff and volunteers cannot teach and check off a participant on how to belay
- All knots will be dressed, tightened, and backed up.
- All harness tie-ins must go through both harness hard points and be double-backed
- All climbers must wear shirts and closed-toe closed heel shoes. Any loose clothing should be tucked in or tied back. Long hair should be pulled back or tucked under the helmet. Any loose or protruding jewelry should be removed. All sharp objects should be removed from pockets.
- All belay devices shall all be UIAA approved and have a known history. Any equipment used in climbing activities must pass Outdoors for All equipment standards and policies.
- Only Outdoors for All climbers, belayers, and instructors who are actively involved in a climb should be in the designated climbing area. All others who are not actively participating or assisting in a climb must be outside of the climbing area.
- After climbing, students will have the option of being lowered or down climbing
- All equipment should be handled gently, and never dropped, thrown, or stepped on. Special care should be taken to ensure that participants understand the importance of equipment safety.
- First aid kit and cellular telephone will be on site.

### Cycling

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### Volunteer responsibilities

- All volunteers must attend any required training prior to volunteering at an Outdoors for All cycling event
- All instructors/volunteers must have read the general volunteer manual and the cycling specific policies and procedures, and responsibilities
- Would prefer volunteers to have baseline set of skills to help maintain bikes
- Volunteers are not expected to know how to fix every bike of the over 200 that we have in our fleet
- Volunteers should understand the basic types of bikes that we have and who may benefit from them
  - Standard
  - Strider
  - Upright trike
  - Recumbent trike
  - Therapy trike
  - Side by side tandem
  - Inline tandem
  - Upright hand cycle
  - Recumbent hand cycle
- Prior to each ride volunteers must help insure that
  - Each bike goes through ABCQH check
    - Air
    - Breaks
    - Chain
    - Quick releases
    - Handlebars

### Safety Policies

- All riders must wear a helmet before getting on any cycle
  - insure proper fitting with respect to a shunt or cochlear implant
  - two fingers above brow, two fingers below chin, two fingers around ears
- Appropriate clothing – no obstructions that will get caught in the chain/wheels
- Must wear closed toed shoes
- To ride independently all riders must be able to
  - Verbally communicate or communicate in a way that is understandable for all parties
  - Have keen situational awareness
  - Understand the road rules of the environment in which they will be biking
    - Stop signs, traffic lights, right of way, cross walks, side of the road
  - Properly start, stop, and steer the bike and follow commands,
  - All of this applies to the support of a caregiver operating a bike as well.
- First aid kit and cellular telephone will be on site.

## Mountain Biking

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### Volunteer Responsibilities

- All volunteers must attend any required training prior to volunteering at an Outdoors for All mountain biking event
- All instructors/volunteers must have read the general volunteer manual and the mountain biking specific policies and procedures, and responsibilities
- Volunteers should have a basic understanding of bike maintenance
- All volunteers should be comfortable riding green or blue terrain
- Volunteers should know the different types of mountain bikes we have and who would benefit from them
  - Standard
  - Upright handcycle
  - Recumbent foot pedal
  - Prone handcycle

### Equipment Policies and Procedures

- Bikes are to be checked by credentialed volunteers or staff before and after each program to check for safety issues.
  - Each bike goes through ABCQH check
    - Air
    - Breaks
    - Chain
    - Quick releases
    - Handlebars
- Each time a bike is used it is to be checked off from our bike use sheet to ensure that routine maintenance is being done to the Fleet.
- Each time a Bike is used it must be cleaned to ensure the bikes longevity.
- All equipment should be handled gently, and never dropped, thrown, or stepped on. Special care should be taken to ensure that participants understand the importance of equipment safety

### Safety Policies

- All riders must wear a helmet before getting on any bike
  - insure proper fitting with respect to a shunt or cochlear implant
  - two fingers above brow, two fingers below chin, two fingers around ears
- Appropriate clothing – no obstructions that will get caught in the chain/wheels

- Must wear closed toed shoes
- Recommended but not required to wear leg and arm padding
- First aid kit and cellular telephone will be on site.

#### Site use and operating on private or public land

- Outdoors for All's park policy requires all individuals that are participating in an Outdoors for All program must abide by the park rules in which they operate. It is the responsibility of the instructor to guide best practices when riding on trails or in areas designated with features.
- Respect all posted signage, trail and road closures, if you are unsure ask an Outdoors for All Staff or Lead Volunteer.
- Do not trespass on any private property
- Follow all posted and known etiquette for trail or park use.
- Follow and enforce all rules and regulations of the area.

## **Kayaking**

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#### Volunteer Responsibilities

- All kayaking volunteers must undergo all required training
- All instructors/volunteers must have read the general volunteer manual and the kayak specific policies and procedures, and responsibilities
- All equipment should be inspected for any damage prior to being used in a lesson. Check for obvious leaks or holes
- Ensure that equipment is taken care of. Kayaks should not be dragged on the ground
- All transfers are led by participant with support of staff. Volunteers may assist in specific ways such as guiding legs/limbs into boat cockpit, or insuring seat back stays upright
- Adaptive equipment is assigned by staff only
- Help keep participants within 30 yards of group – participants must be within visible and audible distance at all times
- A volunteer must be on the water prior to participants getting on the water so that they are ready to provide assistance
- Understand safety signals
  - Wave paddle vertical from side to side
  - paddle horizontal – stop

- tap your head – I am okay
- paddle held vertical up in the air – proceed to that location
- long whistle – come back to shore immediately

### Safety Policies

- Everyone must wear an appropriately fitting, coast guard approved PFD on the water
- Everyone is in a tandem boat unless explicitly checked off by staff
- A participant must never be strapped or taped to any part of the kayak, adaptive equipment or paddle
- When outfitting a boat to fit a participant, make sure that you are not inadvertently trapping them in the cockpit
- Seizure policies
  - Any person who has experienced a seizure within the last 12 months is required to wear a type I PFD while on the water.
  - A person with a seizure disorder must be in a tandem kayak
  - A volunteer/staff member in a separate kayak must paddle alongside a person with a seizure disorder in order to be in position to raft up quickly
  - The person with a seizure disorder must be a part of the planning of what to do if a seizure takes place – you should also ask them about their seizure history to determine if it is appropriate for them to paddle
- On the water there should be a ratio of 1 Outdoors for All staff/volunteer to every 5 participants in single kayaks or 6 participants in tandem kayaks. Ideally that ratio should be smaller with certain groups of people that we serve
- **Participants should never be taken into the vicinity of potential hazards such as downed trees, shallow water, or dams**
- Adverse weather
  - If there is thunder or lightning everyone must get to the nearest shore as quickly as possible
    - You may only get back on the water if it has been 30 minutes since the last thunder or lightning occurrence
  - Be aware of how wind and cold air temperature or water will affect the safety of the day and plan accordingly to for the safety of all
- Trained Outdoors for All staff and volunteers should carry rescue equipment, a phone, and a first aid kit
  - Rescue equipment includes and paddle float, a bailer, and a rescue rope
  - Do not use rescue equipment or have rescue equipment on boat unless rescue training has been completed.

### Day Camp

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#### Volunteer Responsibilities

- Volunteers must attend all required training, including rock climbing, cycling, and kayak training

- If you are volunteering for a specific sport, please read the section in the manual on that specific sport for policies and procedures
- Volunteers do not help campers use the toilet, eat, or receive medications.
  - Notify staff if your camper needs help with this.
- Outdoors for All encourages high-fives only. Please do not allow a camper to sit on your lap, hug, or hold your hand.
- Notify staff if you notice a camper is missing.
- No phone use during camp including calls, texts social media, etc.

# Incident Procedure

Any incident related to Outdoors for All must be reported to a Lead Volunteer and a Program Manager in a quick, accurate, and responsible manner. Please adhere to the following guidelines if you witness or experience an incident while volunteering for Outdoors for All.

## 1. Get Help

Send one or more competent persons (preferably an adult) to get Ski Patrol. Have them note the exact location of the injured person so that they know where to send Ski Patrol. If you feel the need to send a second messenger, make sure the person tells the Lift Operator they are a "second runner" so as to avoid confusion. Make sure you have Ski Patrol's phone number saved into your phone prior to going out on a lesson.

## 2. Protect the Accident Site

Cross your skis above the accident scene to clearly mark your location. Ask a bystander to assist you by hiking uphill a short distance to direct traffic away from the accident.

## 3. Protect the Injured Skier/Rider

Do not move the injured person except when it is necessary to protect them. In a life-threatening situation, apply immediate first aid to the best of your capability. Stop severe bleeding by direct pressure. If you are trained in CPR, begin artificial respiration if the injured person is not breathing. Treat for shock by keeping the injured skier warm, comfortable, and lying down until Ski Patrol arrives. Avoid any contact with body fluids (such as saliva and blood) without protection. Never administer food, drink, or medications. Stay calm. Talk to the injured person; tell them what is happening. Obtain witness' names, addresses and phone numbers.

## 4. Do Not Discuss the Incident

Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than your, Outdoors for All staff members and Ski Patrol. Do not give an opinion, place blame, or admit guilt – just state the facts. Legal liability for an incident is never determined on the scene. If it becomes an issue, all relevant facts and circumstances are investigated and analyzed. Statements such as "I shouldn't have ..." or "I'm sorry ..." are usually interpreted as admission of legal liability that obscures other relevant facts.

Go with the injured skier to the Ski Patrol building. If you have more than one student, go only after handing the other student off to another Outdoors for All Instructor, Lead Volunteer or Program Manager. Provide Ski Patrol with the individual's Participant Information Form, if applicable, so that they are aware of any important medical considerations.

## 5. Fill Out an Incident Report Form

Fill out an Incident Report Form with your Lead Volunteer or an Outdoors for All staff member. Please review the blank Incident Report Form at the end of this section. No matter how small the incident may be, it's important for your Lead Volunteer and the staff know about it. When filling out an Incident Report Form:

- Use legible writing.
- Use complete sentences.
- Be objective.
- Get the names and witness statements from all those who saw the incident.

- Complete the form as soon as possible after the incident, preferably within 24 hours.
- Do not leave any blank lines. Do not abbreviate. Instead of "N/A", write "does not apply".

**REMEMBER**, the Incident Report Form may be the only thing you have to refer to five years after the incident. Make it accurate, succinct, and complete.

## 6. Follow-Up

An Outdoors for All staff member will follow up with the person once they've been treated. Follow up with your Lead Volunteer and/or the Outdoors for All staff member to check on the status of your participant after their injury.

### Lost child policy

Prior to heading out on the slopes it is best to name a meeting place where you will go if you become separated. If you do lose your student, notify your Lead Volunteer and Outdoors for All manager so they can start the emergency action plan and help you find your student. Notify Ski Patrol and the lift attendants so they can help you find the student. Note what the student was wearing. Split up with your co-instructor to start looking for your participant on the trails and lifts you were recently on.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** When in doubt, seek advice from your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager.  
If you have any questions concerning any of the above policies, please contact the Outdoors for All office.

## INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Use back if more space is needed.

(Be complete – write legibly – no blank lines – do not abbreviate.)

Activity	Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____ General Location: _____
Injured Party	Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Participant (Address on file with Outdoors for All.) <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
Location Description	Exact Location: _____ Description of Area (Be Detailed): _____ _____
Injury	What was the person doing when injury occurred? _____ _____ _____ Description of Injury: _____ _____ Injured party's description of incident ("exact words"): _____ _____
First Aid	1 <sup>st</sup> Responder Name: _____ First Aid: _____ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Responder Name: _____ First Aid: _____ Professional medical service rendered? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Did injured party return to activity? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Explain: _____ _____
Witnesses	Name: _____ Phone: _____ Address: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____ Address: _____ Name: _____ Phone: _____ Address: _____
Volunteer Information	Volunteer Name: _____ Phone: _____ Signature: _____  Supervisor's Name: _____ Phone: _____ Signature: _____
Follow-Up (Completed by Staff)	
Incident # _____ Date _____ Staff Name _____ Title _____	
Spoke to whom (name and relationship): _____	
What was said: _____ _____ _____	

# Disability Awareness

Every person, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, race, religion, creed, or ability, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Thank you for treating Outdoors for All participants, volunteers and staff the way you would like to be treated: with respect.

A person is a person first, not a condition or a feature. Any reference to a person's appearance, features, religion, age, gender, ability, etc, is appropriate only when the reference is pertinent to the conversation. A person with a disability may have some challenges that cause them to talk, walk, think or look differently from others. Most people with disabilities learn to accommodate for their differences and live the same type of life as anyone else; just as others have learned to accommodate for their left or right handedness, or wearing glasses or contacts.

To be more effective when working with your participants, you should be knowledgeable about the disability or disabilities that your participants may have. The more knowledge that you have about various disabilities, the better you will be able to assess each participant's individual needs.

## Disability Information

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This disability information is provided so that you can make informed decisions when working with Outdoors for All participants. The information presented here describes some *typical* characteristics of the different types of disabilities we may see as Outdoors for All volunteers.

Be aware that there is no such thing as a *typical* person. Please use the information here to understand the general nature of a person's disability, and as a guideline for assessing potential issues that may impact the participant's performance.

### Categorizing Disabilities

Disabilities are either congenital or onset later in life. A *congenital* disability is one that the person is born with, such as spina bifida or Down syndrome. People with a congenital disability only know what it's like to function with their current level of ability. An *onset* disability is one that a person acquires later in life, due to a traumatic injury or a disease after birth. Examples include multiple sclerosis (MS) or spinal cord injuries.

There are two primary types of disabilities: diseases and conditions. A *disease* is progressive and generally gets worse, resulting in an increasingly affected condition. Examples include diabetes, multiple sclerosis (MS), and muscular dystrophy. A *condition* is a fixed state of ability, which generally does not get worse. Examples include spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy and intellectual disability. A person may benefit from therapy, but there are no existing means to cure a condition. Some disabilities may begin as a disease, such as cancer or polio, but become conditions when the progress of the disease is arrested.

We also discuss disabilities in reference to their physical, cognitive and/or sensory nature:

**Physical Disability**— A condition or disease that interferes with mobility or physical movement. Onset can be at birth or later in life, due to an accident or the onset of a disease. Examples include amputation, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis (MS), post-polio syndrome, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, head/brain injury. The following terms can help describe a physical disability:

Paresis — Partial loss of function.

Plegia — Complete loss of function.

Hemi — Affecting one side of the body (i.e. right leg and right arm).

Para — Affecting the lower extremities.

Quad — Affecting all four limbs.

**Cognitive Disability** — A wide group of conditions that involve cognitive delays as a result of damage to the brain. Cognitive disabilities are specifically classified as developmental disabilities if the condition appears during the first 18 years of life, with an indefinite duration. Cognitive disabilities can be caused by congenital abnormalities, trauma, disease and/or deprivation, and the origin can be organic (related to disease) or non-organic (caused by injury or trauma). Examples include autism, learning disabilities, Down syndrome, attention deficit disorder (ADD), intellectual disabilities, head/brain injury and stroke.

**Sensory Impairment** — A group of conditions or diseases that affects a person's ability to see, hear, smell, touch, taste, and understand spatial awareness. Examples include visual impairments (some vision), blindness (no vision), hearing impairments (some hearing), and deafness (total loss of hearing). Sensory Impairments are also common among people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, or other Pervasive Developmental Disorders- Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS). When coupled with these types of disorders, Sensory Impairment most commonly presents as affecting touch, taste, and spatial awareness.

## Disability Specific Information

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### Amputation

An amputation is a condition involving the removal of a limb or portion of the body. A person may have an amputation for one of several reasons: amputation can result from injury (e.g., trauma or burns), disease (e.g., cancer or diabetes) or congenital limb loss (limb deficiency due to a developmental defect, often during pregnancy).

Amputations are characterized by the location of the amputation. Disarticulation refers to the removal of a limb at the joint.

Hip Disarticulation — Removal of the entire leg at the hip.

Above-Knee (AK) — Above the knee and below the hip.

Below-Knee (BK) — Below the knee and above the ankle. Leaves a functional knee.

Above-Elbow (AE) — Between the elbow and the shoulder.

Below-Elbow (BE) — Between the elbow and the wrist. Leaves a functional elbow.

Shoulder Disarticulation — Removal of the entire arm at the shoulder joint.

Unilateral Amputation — Multiple amputations on the same side, for example, BK and BE.

Bilateral Amputation — Multiple amputations equal on both sides, for example, double BK.

*Considerations:* Since amputees typically wear prosthetics, the type of prosthesis depends on the type of amputation. When working with your participant, make sure that the residual limb is protected from injury and the elements. Be aware that people who normally walk with prosthetics may have difficulty adjusting to participation in sports without their prosthesis. Watch for muscle fatigue.

Assess the participant to discover relevant information, such as when the injury occurred and whether there are any secondary conditions. Because a portion of the body is missing, balance issues may impact the participant's performance.

*Equipment:* If you or the participant have a difficult time getting their prosthetic foot into a ski or snowboard boot, consider using a plastic bag over the prosthetic foot to help it slide into the liner more easily. Depending on how an amputation or prosthetic affects the participant's balance, consider using poles or outriggers for stability. Make equipment adjustments to ensure that the participant is able to hold a flat ski with his or her prosthetic.

## Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a condition that affects a person's movement and posture. The condition is the result of brain damage (typically, a lack of oxygen) that occurs prior to, during, or just after birth. CP manifests in a variety of different ways, usually physical, and may include speech and/or cognitive impairment. The area and the degree of damage to the brain determines the individual's level of ability.

Typical characteristics of an individual with CP may include paralysis, weakness or the inability to coordinate motor function. Other aspects of CP may include abnormal muscle tone, a delay in normal development and/or abnormal reflex activity. Some people with cerebral palsy have difficulty with hearing, vision or speaking (dysarthria). CP is generally not associated with learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities. Individuals with CP may also experience seizures and abnormal sensation of the limbs, such as hypersensitivity or diminished sensitivity.

*Considerations:* If the person is non-verbal, ask the participant how he or she communicates. Ask the person to demonstrate how he or she says yes and no. If balance is an issue, the individual may need equipment adaptations or modifications to assist with balance and stability. In addition, many people with CP are unable to relax their limbs (due to muscle spasticity). Increased muscle spasticity can make falling more painful and potentially dangerous, so take extra care to avoid falls.

*Equipment:* If a participant has difficulty with their ski tips crossing or scissoring, consider using tip connectors or a ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** If a participant has difficulty with balance on turn initiation, consider using outriggers. Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance. Depending on a participant's individual diagnosis, he or she may use a bi-ski or mono-ski.

## Intellectual Disability (ID)

An intellectual disability limits a person's ability to learn at an expected level; it also affects a person's functional skills within their home environments. Intellectual disability can be caused by injury, disease or development of the brain before or after birth. Intellectual disabilities were formerly known as "mental retardation," which is no longer an acceptable term (although you may continue to see this term used on some of our participant's Personal Information Forms).

*Considerations:* Use clear instructions, and break a task down into one component at a time. Work with the individual or caregiver to figure out how he or she learns best.

*Equipment:* If a participant has difficulty with their ski tips crossing or scissoring, consider using tip connectors or a ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance.

## Down Syndrome

Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by an extra chromosome. Individuals with Down syndrome often experience cognitive delays, although the effects are typically mild to moderate. These cognitive delays may include characteristics such as poor judgment, a short attention span, impulsive behavior (including an inability to comprehend danger), and delayed language and/or speech development. Individuals with Down syndrome also may experience decreased or poor muscle tone, as well as excessive joint flexibility.

*Considerations:* Use clear instructions, and break a task down into one component at a time. Work with the individual or caregiver to figure out how he or she learns best. Be aware of impulsive or stubborn behavior, and watch for signs of fatigue. Many people with Down Syndrome learn best through memory, so repetitive movements may work best for teaching.

*Equipment:* If a participant has difficulty with their ski tips crossing or scissoring, consider using tip connectors or a ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** If a participant has difficulty with coordination or following directions, consider using stand-up tethers to help build muscle memory. Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance.

### **Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurological syndrome that is usually hereditary. ADD is characterized by distractibility, short attention span, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, and restlessness that interfere with everyday function. ADHD is ADD combined with excessive activity and energy.

*Considerations:* Keep the individual engaged and focused by staying active! Individuals with ADD/ADHD often have a hard time sitting still to listen as you explain something. Make your lesson interactive, and encourage the person to learn by doing.

### **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**

Autism spectrum disorders are a group of neurological disorders characterized by communicational and behavioral impairments. Common characteristics of autism include repetitive mannerisms and limited patterns of behavior, including obsessive resistance to change. Many individuals with autism have trouble understanding social cues and feel uncomfortable in social situations; this can include awkward or repetitive conversation, discomfort with touch, and inappropriate behavior.

ASD can be associated with intellectual disability, difficulties in motor coordination and attention. Some persons with ASD excel in visual skills, music, math and art.

*Considerations:* Use a calm, even tone of voice and give clear, succinct and direct instructions. Give the person ample time to respond before repeating instructions. Provide visual cues when possible (e.g., a thumbs up when the participant is doing well; pointing in the direction you want the participant to go). Avoid idioms and sarcasm when speaking, as many individuals with ASD take things literally. Having a schedule for the day and sticking to it also works well. Many people with ASD learn best through memory, so repetitive movements may work best for teaching.

If the individual becomes frustrated, or has a “melt-down,” give him or her space and time to calm down. If the person becomes physically aggressive, keep yourself and others safe – stay out of the way. And do not feed into attention seeking behavior. Please work with your Lead Volunteer or the Program Manager to address any behavioral concerns.

*Equipment:* If a participant has difficulty with their ski tips crossing or scissoring, consider using tip connectors or a ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** If a participant has difficulty with coordination or following directions, consider using stand-up tethers to help build muscle memory. Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance.

## Brain Injury

Brain injury can be caused by a variety of factors. Symptoms are determined by the section of the brain that is injured, and can vary greatly. Effects of a brain injury can be physical, cognitive, social, and/or emotional. Damage on one side of the brain tends to affect the opposite side of the body, and the degree of impairment depends on the portion of the brain that is injured. People with brain injuries often have a predisposition to seizures.

### The Brain

- Frontal Lobes — Thinking, speaking, basic movement, emotions, behavior, personality, judgment
- Parietal Lobes — Sense of touch, sense of pain, spatial perception
- Temporal Lobes — Hearing, memory
- Occipital Lobes — Vision

The two most common types of brain injury are:

**Stroke/Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA)** — A stroke, or CVA, is a temporary loss of blood (and therefore oxygen) to the brain. Strokes are either *ischemic* (blockage of a blood vessel) or *hemorrhagic* (eruption/dissolution of a blood vessel).

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** — A traumatic brain injury is caused by non-organic events such as injury or trauma.

Common characteristics of brain injury include partial loss (hemiplegia) or complete loss (hemiparesis) of function or control of one side of the body. People with this condition often have balance issues and/or possible vision loss. Other common characteristics include lack of balance or coordination, limited agility and cognitive difficulties (including memory deficits, limited attention span and/or lack of judgment).

*Considerations:* Individuals with an acquired brain injury are often frustrated by what they can't, or can no longer, do. Be considerate, and support the person to accomplish his or her goals. Set realistic expectations, within a realistic time frame. If memory loss is of concern, write down important information or loop-in the individual's caregiver into your conversation. Be aware of their judgment in relation to safety awareness on the hill as that may have been affected as well.

*Equipment:* Depending on the participant's diagnosis, choose equipment that will support his or her individual needs. If a participant has difficulty with their ski tips crossing or scissoring, consider using tip connectors or a ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** If a participant has difficulty with coordination or following directions, consider using stand-up tethers to help build muscle memory. Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance.

### Seizure Disorder (Epilepsy)

Epilepsy is a disorder of the central nervous system marked by unusual electric activity in the brain that causes seizures. Seizures are sudden, brief changes in how the brain work: this causes partial or complete, brief or prolonged, lapses in consciousness. Epilepsy is a physical condition manifested by focal point, petit mal, or grand mal seizures. In many cases, there is no known cause of epilepsy.

Seizures usually last a short time (a few seconds), and can be either convulsive or non-convulsive. The most common types of seizures are:

- **Tonic-Clonic** (formerly Grand Mal seizure): The most dramatic type of seizure, characterized by loss of consciousness, rigidity, jerking of the extremities and falling. When a Tonic-Clonic seizure occurs, move the person to a quiet area or place the person in a comfortable position. Try to position the person on his or her side. Do not place anything between the person's teeth. Be comforting after the seizure.
- **Absence seizure** (formerly Petit Mal seizure): Characterized by a brief lapse of unconsciousness or awareness. Usually lasts only a few seconds, and may appear as a blank stare. As with other types of seizures, mental processes cease during an absence seizure. Other symptoms may include muscle twitching, rolling or blinking eyes, or visual fixation on one object. The person may not even be aware that a seizure is taking place.
- **Myoclonic seizure**: Rapid, brief jerks of arms or legs however the person usually still has awareness
- **Atonic seizure (drop attack)**: Seizure that produces an abrupt loss of muscle tone

*Considerations:* Seizures can be brought on by a variety of factors, including fatigue, cold, stress or problems with medications. If possible, it's important to know any potential triggers for your participant's seizures. When a person has a seizure, keep calm and make sure that the person doesn't hurt themselves when they lose consciousness. Do not attempt to restrain a person while they're having a seizure. Make the person as comfortable as possible. After regaining consciousness, an individual may feel confused, disoriented and sleepy. During seizures many people lose continence. Make sure to be polite and discreet if someone needs to clean up or change clothes. Be sure to allow an individual to rest after a seizure.

*Equipment:* Please know the Outdoors for All seizure policy, and use a seizure retention strap when appropriate. When in doubt, talk to your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager!

## **Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

A hearing loss occurs when one or more parts of the ear or brain that are needed to process sounds become diseased or damaged, resulting in partial or total loss of hearing. Hearing loss can be caused by injury to the ear or brain. Damage to the middle ear can often be off-set by the use of a hearing aid. Damage to the inner ear or the brain is often more severe, and hearing aids may not be beneficial. Some people with hearing loss associated with the inner ear may also have balance issues. Speech impairments are a common secondary condition.

When talking about someone with hearing loss, it is more appropriate and respectful to use the term "hard of hearing" in lieu of "hearing impaired". "Hearing impairment" can imply that something is not as it should be, and ought to be fixed if possible.

*Considerations:* People with hearing loss may communicate in a variety of ways. Some methods of communication include reading lips, sign language or finger spelling. People with hearing loss often rely on facial expressions and body language to understand the conversation. Be sure to speak clearly and face the person when speaking. Do not over-enunciate words.

*Equipment:* Use high-visibility guide vests to help your participant to see you, and to help identify your lesson on the slopes.

## **Visual Impairment**

The most common causes of visual impairment in the United States are diabetes, myopic degeneration and glaucoma. Legal blindness is defined as corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less. This means that at a distance of 20 feet, a person who is legally blind can see what a person with 20/20 vision can see at 200 feet. More than 90% of persons who are legally blind have some residual eyesight. Many can perceive light and can sense motion.

*Considerations:* When working with a person with a visual impairment, communication and guiding are two very important concerns. Speak to the participant so that he or she is aware of where you are. Use a normal voice and tone. Take the time to determine the level of sight the person has and ask how long the person has had the visual impairment. A person who has recently lost sight may have more balance issues or nausea. Determine whether the person has other secondary conditions, such as a brain injury.

When guiding, always ask the participant how he or she prefers to be guided. Be consistent and use clear communication. Remember, you are the person's eyes in an unknown environment.

*Equipment:* Use high-visibility guide vests to help your participant to see you (if they have any vision), and to help identify your lesson on the slopes. Consider using a bamboo pole to support kinesthetic learners. Use a two-way headset for better communication at higher speeds – this is particularly important for intermediate to advanced participants with little to no vision.

### **Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS)**

Post-traumatic stress (PTS) is a mental health condition that is triggered by either direct or indirect exposure to a traumatic experience. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. Although often referred to as post-traumatic stress *disorder* (PTSD), it's important to understand that PTS is a *normal* response to an *abnormal* set of circumstances, and is therefore not a *disorder*.

Some common symptoms of PTS are psychophysical and emotional numbing/detachment, hyperarousal (irritability or constant alert for danger) and acting or feeling as if the event is recurring (flashbacks). Visual cues include irritable behavior or anger outbursts, trouble with concentration, hypervigilance (constantly "on guard") and an exaggerated startle response.

*Considerations:* As with any of our participants, ask before touching an individual with PTS. Avoid possible triggers, if possible – these might include crowds or loud and unexpected noises (such as avalanche explosives). If the participant has a flash back or an anxiety attack, give them space to remove themselves from the activity. Make sure that they're safe, then check-in after a few minutes. Don't hover, and when appropriate, ask how you can help them feel more comfortable.

### **Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)**

A spinal cord injury is a severe injury or disease to the spinal cord that causes partial or complete loss of sensation and loss of voluntary movement below the level of the injury. The injury is often caused by a broken bone of the vertebrae or a dislocation of the vertebrae. Typically, the higher up the injury occurs along the spinal cord, the greater the loss of function.

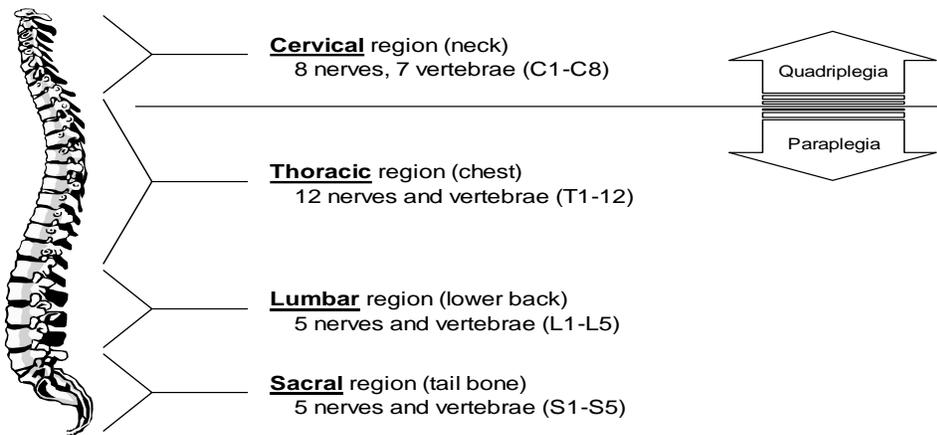
### **The Spinal Cord**

The spinal cord is an extension of the brain and is composed of nerve cells and fibers. The spinal cord connects the brain to the nerves that control the body's muscles, skin and organs —it is the vehicle through which the brain communicates with the body.

Muscle movement begins in the brain as electrical impulses descend through the lateral and anterior parts of the spinal cord, through the spinal nerves and out to the muscles. When this motor pathway is injured, the result is a person's inability to move those muscles below the level of injury.

Sensation occurs when impulses travel from the skin or organs through the spinal nerves, up the spinal cord to the brain. When this sensory pathway is injured, the result is a loss of sensation below the level of injury.

The spinal cord is protected by the backbone, composed of bony structures known as vertebrae. The spinal cord is located in a canal that runs through the center of the vertebrae. There are four major sections of the spinal column.



Spinal cord injuries can be caused by disease (tumors, spina bifida) or by traumatic injury, and they are categorized by the area of the spine where the injury occurs. For example, an injury to the third vertebrae of the thoracic segment is known as T<sub>3</sub> injury. Different areas of the spine are associated with specific functionality. Generally speaking, the higher the injury occurs along the spine, the greater the impact on person's functionality.

There are two common classifications of spinal cord injuries, determined by the level of impact:

**Paraplegia** — Injury of the lower spine (thoracic, lumbar or sacral) with partial or complete paralysis of the lower body, without involving the arms, shoulders, neck or head.

- L<sub>4</sub> and below — Paralysis/paresis includes the lower legs, typically from the knees and below. Most people with a sacral or lower lumbar injury can walk with bracing and crutches.
- L<sub>1</sub> through L<sub>3</sub> — Paralysis/paresis now includes the lower extremities, including hip flexors, quadriceps and below. Many people with this level of injury can walk with bracing and crutches.
- T<sub>12</sub> through T<sub>9</sub> — Paralysis/paresis includes lower extremities and abdominal muscles. Trunk balance may be compromised. Most people with this level injury use a wheelchair. Upper body strength is not impacted by the injury.
- T<sub>8</sub> through T<sub>2</sub> — Paralysis/paresis now includes upper chest muscles and below. Trunk balance is compromised, which can impact dynamic balance. People with T<sub>8</sub> and above almost always use wheelchairs that require additional support.

**Quadriplegia** — Injury of the upper spine (cervical, T<sub>1</sub> and above) with partial or complete paralysis of the body involving both arms and legs. This level of injury may also involve shoulders, neck, head and respiration.

- T<sub>1</sub> through C<sub>8</sub> — Paralysis/paresis now includes intrinsic hand muscles. A person with a T<sub>1</sub> injury and above is considered a quadriplegic (depending on the completeness of the injury) because all four extremities are now involved. At this level, the ability to hold things with the fingers is impacted.
- C<sub>7</sub> through C<sub>5</sub> — Paralysis/paresis now includes the fingers, hands and arms. Many people with this level of injury use powered wheelchairs because they lack the arm muscles necessary to propel a manual chair.
- C<sub>4</sub> and up — Paralysis/paresis now includes the neck. People with this level of injury generally have movement limited to the head and neck. People with injury at this level often require devices to assist with breathing.

### Potential Considerations Associated with Spinal Cord Injury

- **Autonomic Dysreflexia:** Autonomic dysreflexia can be a life-threatening condition. Autonomic dysreflexia is a hypertensive (high blood pressure) crisis that can occur in people with a SCI above T6 level. Symptoms include sweating, gooseflesh, pounding headache and increased spasticity. It is caused by the body's inability to sense and react to specific stimuli, including such things as bladder distention from a kinked indwelling catheter or full leg bag, catheter irritation, skin pressure sores or spasticity from a stretched muscle. If autonomic dysreflexia occurs and is not managed correctly and immediately, it could lead to a stroke, coma or even death. Many individuals who could be prone to this condition are aware of the symptoms. Should symptoms occur, sit the person upright and loosen any straps to relieve excessive pressure on the skin. Help the participant check the urinary catheter or leg bag for kinks or plugs. Check for spasticity and relieve the muscle by decreasing the stretch on the spastic muscle.
- **Skin Sores/Pressure Sores:** Sores can develop in areas of insensitive skin, especially in areas of bony prominence such as ankles, knees, hips, sacrum, and ischium. Pressure sores are a very serious condition. Avoid prolonged pressure on the skin by performing weight shifts often. Be aware of improper positioning and check for pressure and pinching. Use adequate padding on bony areas.
- **Thermoregulation:** Many people with an injury of T8 or above are prone to impairments of internal temperature control. It is important to make sure that the individual is dressed appropriately, so that they do not become too cold or overheat.
- **Bladder functioning:** Be aware that many people with SCI have a tube (catheter) inserted into their bladder to deal with bladder control. The catheter connects to a plastic bag that attaches to the leg. People with SCIs are trained to deal with this issue. When working with a participant with an SCI, make sure adaptive equipment does not interfere with the leg bag and that the leg bag is placed in a position that will not cause pressure sores.

*Other considerations:* Many people with SCI use wheelchairs for mobility. Remember that just because the person is in a wheelchair, it does not mean there is anything wrong with the person's brain or hearing. A wheelchair provides a mechanism for moving around and becomes part of the person's "personal space." Never move, lean on, or touch a person's chair without permission. Always ask a person in a wheelchair how you can help before doing so.

*Equipment:* Depending on the participant's level of injury, consider using outriggers, the slider, a bi-ski or a mono-ski to support his or her individual needs. Be conscious of how equipment is fit, and use padding to avoid skin irritation or pressure sores. Consider using some type of grip assist for outriggers, if needed.

## Spina Bifida

Spina bifida is a birth defect of the spinal column and spinal cord. In this congenital condition, the spinal column fails to fully develop and close around the spinal cord, causing partial or complete paralysis below the level of injury. Individuals with spina bifida also may experience a disruption in the flow of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), which nourishes and cushions the brain and spinal cord. This disruption often results in a buildup of fluid and pressure in the head. A *shunt* may be used to relieve excess pressure in the brain. A shunt is typically located under the skin running from the base of the skull, down the side of the neck and across the chest, where the CSF is reabsorbed by the body. An individual with a shunt may not be able to ski with a helmet.

The symptoms of spina bifida are similar to a spinal cord injury at the level of the spinal cord exposure. The extent of an individual's impairment depends on the level of the exposure. Most instances of spina bifida occur in the lower spine, but it can occur at any level. The lower the level of exposure, the more lower-extremity function the person will have. In some cases, the person may be able to walk with bracing.

*Considerations:* Take special care to provide appropriate padding for the location of the spinal column defect. If necessary, place a donut-shaped pad around the tender area to provide protection. Individuals may also have a curvature of the spine, impacting the person's center of mass and resulting in balance issues.

People with spina bifida are often prone to skin problems caused by poor circulation. Make sure to take protective measures to avoid pressure sores, frostbite, excessive heat or cold, etc. Many people with spina bifida have extreme allergic reactions to latex. Duct tape, ace bandages and coban (vet wrap) frequently contain latex.

*Equipment:* Depending on the participant's diagnosis, consider using outriggers, the slider, a bi-ski or a mono-ski to support his or her individual needs. Be conscious of how equipment is fit, and use padding to avoid skin irritation or pressure sores.

### **Multiple Sclerosis (MS)**

Multiple Sclerosis is a progressive disease of the central nervous system in which the body's nerve fibers become scarred (sclerosed). The myelin sheath (insulation surrounding the nerves) allows messages from the brain and spinal cord to be sent throughout the body. Individuals with MS lose sections of myelin sheath along different portions of the nervous system, which in turn blocks the electrical impulses of the nerves. The scarring and deterioration of the myelin sheath can take place anywhere throughout the nervous system. Because MS can strike anywhere in the nervous system, the symptoms can vary widely, even with the same person.

MS is unique in its cycle of remissions, seeming to come and go over time. Symptoms can vary from day to day, and no two people have the same symptoms. MS is characterized by muscle weakness, chronic fatigue, balance problems, heat intolerance, and sometimes visual and cognitive impairments. Some people experience paralysis or weakness in their extremities, mood swings (lability) and slurred speech. Many people with MS have an unsteady gait and shaky movements of the limbs (ataxia).

*Considerations:* When working with a person with MS, watch for evidence of fatigue. Provide assistance as needed, and avoid unnecessary exertion. As symptoms can vary, it's important to have a continuing dialogue with the individual about his or her needs from day to day.

*Equipment:* Depending on the participant's diagnosis, consider using outriggers, the slider, a bi-ski or a mono-ski to support his or her individual needs. A participant may choose to use both stand and sit equipment during the course of one day, depending on his or her level of fatigue.

### **Muscular Dystrophy (MD)**

Muscular Dystrophy includes a group of hereditary disorders that are characterized by the progressive and irreversible wasting of muscle tissue. MD may include weakness of both voluntary and skeletal muscles, which control movement. The degeneration of the muscle tissue originates within the muscle tissue itself (compared to MS where muscle atrophy is the result of neurological defects).

Most types of MD appear by early adulthood, and are more common in males than females. The most common type of MD is Myotonic MD, which has a very slow progression and affects the central nervous system, eyes, heart, and endocrine glands. Duchenne MD, the second most common type, affects children (usually boys) and is often fatal (usually in the 20s).

The various types of MD have different symptoms; however, all typically experience a progressive loss of muscle tone. The muscles first affected are usually the pelvic girdle and upper legs, then the shoulder girdle and arms. People with MD may walk with the aid of crutches or a cane, although eventually most require a wheelchair.

*Considerations:* Because of the lack of muscle tone, the person's joints may be more susceptible to injury. Strength, endurance and balance may be issues impacting performance. When working with a person with MD, watch for evidence of fatigue. Provide assistance as needed, and avoid unnecessary exertion.

*Equipment:* Depending on the participant's diagnosis, consider using outriggers, the slider, a bi-ski or a mono-ski to support his or her individual needs. A stand participant with low muscle tone may benefit from the use of a tip connector or ski bra. **\*Do not allow participants to ski backwards while using tip connectors!** Remember to introduce equipment adaptations, such as tip connectors, with a short or long-term plan to phase them out of your lesson! Ideally, this equipment is a stepping stone that allows a participant to gain ownership of a certain movement or skill without assistance.

## Working with People with Disabilities

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### Language

Language can be inappropriate, negative and demeaning. If information about a disability is pertinent, then use language such as "person with a mobility impairment" or "person who uses a wheelchair." Notice how we choose to put the *person* first, and then any information about his or her disability.

Old Terminology	Acceptable Terminology
Handicapped	Person with a disability or person who is disabled.
Afflicted/Stricken-With	Person who has _____.
Victim	Person who has survived _____.
Crippled	Person with a mobility impairment. Person who uses _____.
Retarded/Retard	Person with a developmental disability.
Lunatic/Nuts/Crazy	Person with a mental illness.
Deaf and Dumb	Person who is deaf and mute.
Normal	Person without a disability. Able-bodied.

## Enable Ability

Appreciate what people *can* do. The difficulties a person faces often stem more from society's attitudes and barriers than from the effects of their impairment. Focus on *ability*, and use the participant's strengths to compensate or adapt.

Respect the person's right to indicate the kind of help he or she wants. Give assistance, if asked; if the need seems obvious, offer assistance before helping. Do not give unwanted assistance and never insist. Usually a simple statement such as, "*let me know how I may help,*" opens up communication without making either party feel awkward or dependent. When someone does indicate desire for assistance, ask *how* you may help. For example:

Ask a person with a visual impairment to show you how he or she wants to be guided.

Ask a person using a wheelchair to tell you how you could assist with their transfer.

A person with a visual impairment can usually hear without difficulty, so you need not yell. An adult with an intellectual disability is not a child, so you may speak to him or her as you would any of your adult friends. A person using a wheelchair does so because his or her legs do not allow bipedal mobility, not because he or she cannot understand, hear, or see. People in wheelchairs are not confined; rather, wheelchairs liberate by allowing mobility. The wheelchair is part of his or her personal space, so do not lean on the person's "legs" without permission.

When working with a participant in an activity, always allow the person to experience as much *independence* as possible. Do not assume our participants cannot do something simply because of a disability.

## Conversing

If it comes up naturally, or if you need to know something specific, feel free to ask about the participant's disability. Let the participant, or his/her significant others, guide you. Be respectful and sensitive, and focus your questions on information that is pertinent to the activity. For example, ask "Can you describe your vision to me?" instead of "How did you lose your eyesight?"

Speak directly to a person with disability, even if they have an interpreter, companion or attendant. Explore your mutual interests and conversational topics just as you would with any new acquaintance. People with disabilities have much more to discuss than their impairments!

Common societal expressions are acceptable, for example, "Did you see that movie?" or "Let's take a walk." People with disabilities do not usually desire different treatment. Along that line, they also do not want someone to be condescending. Talk to people with disabilities just as you would to anyone their age.

People who have visual impairments use other senses to take in environmental information. Ask him/her if s/he would like you to describe the scenery, explain who else is around, or if s/he would like to hold or touch an object you are explaining. When directing him/her from a distance, use directions or your voice. For example, say "*Come over this way toward my voice*" or "*Just a little to the right.*" If you do use your voice as a guide, remember to keep talking.

Be patient with those who have difficulty speaking. Do not finish sentences or answer for participants. When you do not understand something said, ask them to repeat themselves. Try repeating what you thought you understood. They will tell you whether you are correct and repeat what you did not understand. Do this as often and as much as you need. Ask him/her to rephrase if you feel you cannot understand a word or sentence.

If the person cannot verbally communicate, it does not mean that they don't have other ways of communicating. Ask a parent or guardian how they communicate at home. They could use Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS- pictures to display feelings/tasks/needs), To-Do/Done Boards, First/Then boards and/or many more.

Before leaving their parent and guardian make sure you at least know how they communicate “yes” and “no”, and then you can use yes/no questions to communicate, while learning their unique communication system.

Slow your rate and speak calmly without yelling or exaggeration to a person with a hearing impairment. Be sure they can see your face and use gestures or other methods of communication. Ask him/her to show you commonly used gestures so you may use them also.

It is OK to say no to a person with a disability, just as you might to anyone else. You are welcome to set your comfort limits that do not interfere with others' rights. For example, if a person with a disability invades your personal space, you can tell them not to. With some people, you may have to be repetitive.

People with disabilities are not necessarily special, inspirational or courageous. They are people, making the best of their situations — just like you. They usually do not want to be patronized or put on a pedestal — just like you. They just want to be accepted, supported, encouraged, praised, and loved — just like you.

Treat a person with a disability as you would anyone you know.

Treat them as you would want to be treated by others.

### Participant Evaluation

The participant, with assistance from you and the participant's significant others, determines his/her strengths and participation considerations. You, with input from the participant as to his/her goals, develop a plan to assist him/her to participate using his/her strengths and adapting, as needed, for areas of consideration. **In all cases, strive for minimum adaptation to achieve maximum participation and fun.** Use the following method to assist you in this process:

- Obtain and read the individual's Participant Information Form (PIF) through Outdoors for All. Contact the participant, and/or significant others, before the activity for specific questions and/or information. **This is a great time to ask about his/her goals for the activity.**
- Observe the participant interacting with you and others, moving around, putting on equipment, during lessons, etc. Your observations will assist you greatly in determining how to best work with your participant. Continue to ask him/her about his/her goals as they may change.
- Let the participant guide you. Most individuals will offer reliable information and know their compensations. Exceptions may be those with cognitive or behavioral impairments; you may need to confirm information with significant others.
- Perform simple tests and ask questions with the participant. Examples are testing for basic muscle strength (offer your hand for a handshake), and asking questions to determine understanding of complex information or memory (ask what they remember about their lessons last season). If in doubt, ask your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager for assistance.
- Talk with significant others, if needed. Significant others may include family, friends or staff. They can confirm and add information.
- Talk with volunteers who know the participant. Read previous progress reports.
- Talk with Lead Volunteers. They can direct you to resources and advise you on tips, adaptive equipment and teaching methods. Ask them for any assistance you need. Their job is to help you to do your job!

### Behavior Management Suggestions

All behaviors happen for a reason – although, sometime, that reason can be difficult to determine. Determining the *why*, or the *function*, for any behavior is an important step towards positive behavior management. Most behaviors occur for one of four reasons:

- *Escape or Avoidance*: An individual might engage in self-injurious or challenging behavior to avoid a certain situation, task or person.

- *Social Attention*: An individual might engage in behavior that draws attention to them – they want someone to look at them, talk to them, laugh at them, or even scold them. They may act out to receive “bad” attention, instead of no attention at all.
- *Tangibles or Activities*: An individual might scream and cry until they get a specific item, or are allowed to engage in a specific activity.
- *Automatic or Sensory Stimulation*: An individual might engage in a self-stimulating behavior that either results in a pleasing sensation or relieves a displeasing sensation (ex: pain). In either case, this type of behavior does not rely on an external factors.

The following suggestions may be helpful when working with someone to manage difficult or inappropriate behavior. When in doubt, please work with your Lead Volunteer or Program Manager for support!

- You are the role model – model positive and appropriate behaviors. Reinforce positive behaviors, and ignore undesired attention-seeking behaviors.
- Be clear, concrete and concise about your expectations to the individual, and determine his/her expectations of you.
- Offer choices and/or use a visual schedule. Cue transitions.
- Redirect the individual to alternative, positive behaviors that have the same *function*. For example, an individual could tap the keys on a piano, instead of tapping the table.
- Be compassionate. Give ample encouragement to participate and behave appropriately. All encouragement should be age-appropriate and respectful.
- Identify an individual’s successes, and encourage appropriate self-praise.
- Be consistent.

### **Medications**

Many of our participants will be taking a variety of medications. Many medications have potential physical and/or cognitive side effects that you should know about. Be sure to consult your participant's Personal Information Form to determine if their medications have side effects that may impact the student's performance.

Not every person experiences side effects in the same way. When possible, consult the participant or participant's caretaker for more information about whether the participant has side effects that may impact performance.

During the evaluation of your participant, find out about the participant’s medication schedule. You might need to remind your participant to take their medication, but NEVER administer medication to a student!

# Additional Resources

The field of adaptive snow sports is constantly evolving. For more information about disability awareness and/or adaptive equipment and instruction, please take some time to peruse the following resources.

- Outdoors for All's online training library provides links to a variety of different resources for Alpine, Nordic and Snowboard Instructors: [www.outdoorsforall.org/get-involved/training/](http://www.outdoorsforall.org/get-involved/training/)
- PSIA-NW is the local, divisional resource for information about clinics, exams and continuing education: [www.psia-nw.org](http://www.psia-nw.org)
- The PSIA-AASI national website contains additional information about the growing field of adaptive skiing and snowboarding: [www.thesnowpros.org](http://www.thesnowpros.org)

## **Kayaking**

National Overseeing Organization- [American Canoe Association](#)

Kayaking Instructor Manual- [American Canoe Association](#)

International Governing Body- [International Canoe Federation](#)

Paralympic Kayaking/Canoeing- [U.S. Paralympics](#)

## **Rock Climbing**

ADAPTIVE CLIMBING MANUAL- [PARADOX SPORTS ADAPTIVE CLIMBING MANUAL](#)

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY- [USA CLIMBING](#)

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNING BODY- [INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SPORT CLIMBING](#)

## **Disability Awareness**

- [Disability Awareness](#)
- [Working with People with Disabilities](#)