



RISK MANAGEMENT FOR 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

Crisis Management and Emergency Procedures

This is one publication in the EDIS series [Risk Management for 4-H Youth Development Work](#). This series is intended to prepare UF/IFAS Extension county faculty, staff, volunteers, and youth for the important task of providing best practices in risk management strategies.

Our goal is to conduct educational events and activities that coincide with the 4-H mission and mandates while protecting the safety of participants, sponsors, property, finances, and the goodwill/reputation of the 4-H name. Planning and preparation can mitigate the inherent risk of events and activities. This risk management guide outlines ways to prepare for and deal with the specific risks associated with your program.

Early planning is key to conducting successful events and activities. A helpful tool in this process is EDIS publication [#4HFSV90.1](#), “Pre-Event Planning Guide and Matrix,” which is another part of this series. As you work through this matrix, you may have questions that are unique to a specific situation and may not be completely answered by the series. Extension faculty and staff should refer these questions to appropriate personnel. Questions that require time for research punctuate the need for early planning.

Crises Management

For any 4-H activity, do you have a complete health form for each member? Do volunteers review these annually and have forms printed and accessible at 4-H events?

Do volunteers have emergency information, including contact numbers, for each member?

Do volunteers have access to basic first aid supplies?

Do volunteers follow up with parents on all injury/health concerns? Do volunteers complete incident reports?

Do you have a communication plan in place for an emergency?

Even with the best preparation and planning, unforeseen circumstances can occur. Therefore, it is important to develop a crisis management plan and have emergency plans in place should a crisis occur. These procedures can be extremely useful in times of crisis when our ability to think and respond can easily be hindered. If you have thought ahead of time about what the best course of action is for a given situation, written out your processes and procedures, and communicated the procedure to staff as part of their training, you can take much of the confusion and stress out of a potentially overwhelming situation.

Emergency Procedures

This publication will focus on the basic overall precautions that everyone involved with 4-H should take. Another tool is EDIS publication [#4HFSV373](#), “Risk Management Checklist,” which is another part of this series that can be used as a guide when planning an activity or event. Even with risk management plans in place, emergencies still happen. Planning for emergencies is part of the risk management plan. Some emergencies include the following:

- Truancy (e.g., youth leaving the premises of an activity/event location in which adults are custodians)
- Accidents or injuries
- Lost child
- Weather-related changes
- Medical conditions (preconditions or those brought on by something at the event)

Written by Paula Davis, Dale Pracht, and Janet Psikogios. Revised by Nicole Crawson, Arielle Pierce, Bailea Scarbrough, and Candi Dierenfield.

An Equal Opportunity Institution. 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization. Over 230,000 members in the State of Florida help to make up the community of more than 6.5 million young people across America. 4-H is a non-formal, practical educational program for youth. Florida 4-H is the youth development program of Florida Cooperative Extension, a part of the University of Florida/IFAS.

In the Case of an Emergency

1. Your first priority is to provide appropriate medical attention to the injured participant. Call 911, police, or an ambulance as appropriate. Note: If it is necessary to leave the accident scene to secure emergency care, a responsible program representative should stay at the scene.
2. Contact the parent or guardian as soon as possible.
3. Contact the county Extension director (CED).
4. Contact UF/IFAS Extension (the CED will help facilitate this process). Start with the district director and then the state 4-H program office. If the incident occurs after hours or on a weekend, do not hesitate to contact the program leader or district director at home. The individual you contact will be responsible for making additional UF/IFAS Extension contacts on your behalf.
5. The county, district, and state personnel will want to coordinate media responses with local staff and, in some cases, may prefer to be the source of information for the media regarding the incident. The program leader or the district director's office can help facilitate your access to immediate support from UF staff. UF/IFAS Extension has support available (UF/IFAS Communications) to assist in the situation as appropriate. It is important to have one spokesperson for the media and a backup person if that person is unavailable.
6. After the situation is stabilized and the appropriate parties have been contacted, complete a detailed [accident/incident report](#). Contact your county insurance/risk manager to determine if your county requires the information in a specific format. If the situation involves a staff member or volunteer, follow the UF [HR workers' compensation procedure](#).

It is important that paid and volunteer staff involved in a program or event know the emergency plan. Do not attempt to work through handling the emergency alone. There is strong support available through UF/IFAS Extension. Use it.

Emergency Plan

As a volunteer leader, it is beneficial for you to have some basic medical and emergency contact information for youth whose parents might not be present. You should review these forms and flag any relevant information before a club outing or trip. Any information collected for health care reasons within a 4-H setting shall be protected and not shared. In case of an emergency, always call 911 first!

Health Information

The health information/consent for medical treatment form can be generated from 4-H Online. It is mandatory for all participants in overnight programs, including adults. Be sure the information is entered and current before you leave. For more information, refer to EDIS publication #4H342, "Protecting Youth and Volunteers by Planning Ahead, Reducing Risk."

Treat all health information confidentially, although 4-H activities are not subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. Visit the U.S. Health and Human Services website for a [summary of HIPAA information](#).



Figure 1. Emergency plan flowchart.

Credits: UF/IFAS

For More Information

For the policy information, please refer to [Florida 4-H Policies & Best Management Practices](#).

For forms and other resources, please refer to the Florida 4-H [Volunteer Resources](#) website or contact your local UF/IFAS Extension 4-H agent/UF/IFAS Extension office.

Resources

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) [Privacy Rule](#)