

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

* The following are American Heritage Girls' guidelines for Health and Safety and should not be considered a training module.*

The adult Leaders and members of each American Heritage Girls Troop are accountable for administering American Heritage Girls programming in a safe and responsible way. They provide direction and must adhere to AHG guidelines, to ensure the health, safety and well being of every girl and adult involved.

Health and Safety Standards include the following concepts:

- ★ Qualified Leaders/Volunteers who are willing to be health and safety role models
- ★ Planning
- ★ Communication
- ★ Safe area
- ★ Buddy system
- ★ Awareness of physical fitness and skill level of participants
- ★ Safe, maintained equipment
- ★ Weather check
- ★ First-aid and CPR resources
- ★ Discipline, control and respect



HEALTH AND SAFETY OVERVIEW

- ★ Quality supervision is necessary to ensure the health and safety of all members. Supervision must, at all times, include at least one trained American Heritage Girls Leader and adhere to AHG Girl/Leader ratios. All additional adult volunteers must be at least 21 years of age. Young women, 18-21 years of age, may assist with an AHG Troop, but may not be counted in the Girl/Leader Ratios.
- ★ Appropriate Girl/Leader ratios must be maintained at all times.
- ★ Supervision must be at least two-deep, allowing for added supervision, and ensuring no one-on-one contact between adult and child. There should always be a minimum of two registered adults for each activity.
- ★ Supervision for specialized activities should include an above average level of knowledge and understanding of skills and equipment utilized.
- ★ All adults in supervisory positions should have a working knowledge of the Health and Safety Standards.
- ★ Under no circumstances is physical punishment permitted.
- ★ The *AHG Child Abuse Prevention Policy* must be understood by all volunteers and adhered to at all times.
- ★ For each activity, event and field trip, the Troop should designate one CPR and First-Aid Certified Leader as the Health and Safety Lead. A licensed RN would be wonderful in this role. Both girls and adults know that this individual should be seen in case of injury, illness or medication distribution.
- ★ Completed permission slips and medical forms must be on file for every event, trip, camp, outing,

meeting and fundraising event.

- ★ Troops should follow the activity guidelines in the following sections.
- ★ For liability reasons, girls and volunteers **must** be registered members prior to attending Troop Meetings and activities. Only registered AHG members will be covered by AHG’s Group Insurance. Registration is crucial in protecting Leaders, Volunteers, Charter Organization and AHG, Inc.

SAFETY AWARENESS

To safeguard health and instill a sense of safety, Unit Leaders will:

- ★ Follow all AHG Health and Safety Guidelines, as well as safety checkpoints for specific program activities.
- ★ Choose appropriate activities based on girls’ ages, abilities and limitations.
- ★ Use sound judgment in taking additional precautions necessary to avoid accidents.
- ★ Work in partnership with girls in safety planning and implementation.
- ★ Promote the concept of safety consciousness at all times, in all places.

In doing her part to protect her own and others’ well being through safe, healthy attitudes and practices, each girl member should:

- ★ Work in partnership with the leader in planning for safety.
- ★ Listen to and follow instructions and suggestions.
- ★ Make safe choices.
- ★ Learn and practice safety skills.
- ★ Evaluate situations where a safety risk is involved.
- ★ Suggest additional safety guidelines and precautions.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

When beginning to understand AHG’s Health and Safety Guidelines, it may be useful to refer to the AHG Forms and Guideline Quick Reference for Outdoor Adventures available on the AHG Leader Site. This document is a quick reference guide for what forms are needed when and can serve as a great tool to use in the planning of Troop activities.

GIRL/LEADER RATIOS

There must be two registered adults in attendance for all Troop activities despite ratio numbers. Appropriate Girl/Leader Ratios are:



Pathfinder	6 girls per 1 registered Leader
Tenderheart	6 girls per 1 registered Leader
Explorers	8 girls per 1 registered Leader
Pioneers	10 girls per 1 registered Leader
Patriots	12 girls per 1 registered Leader



Remember that these are AHG's required minimum standards. There must be at least two deep leadership at all troop meetings as well as unit meetings. If this leadership is not secured, the meeting/activity must be cancelled. **During all AHG activities (Troop meetings, field trips, camping trips, etc.) there must be at least 1 CPR and First-Aid Certified Leader per Unit.**

HEALTH HISTORY

Insure annually that each girl and registered Adult Volunteer completes a new *Health and Medical History Form* and that it is on file with the appropriate Unit Leader. *Health and Medical History Form* should be duplicated and kept in a folder or binder and brought to each activity. Current photos of girl members should be attached to appropriate health history forms. It is crucial that Troop leadership is familiar with all medical conditions that exist within the Troop, both for adults and girls. Being aware of pre-existing conditions can save valuable time in an emergency. A review of forms should be held semi-annually in order to insure that information stays current. A separate list of all Troop Members (girl and adult) with allergies (food, animal, environmental, medication, etc.) should be created and brought to each meeting and event. This list will be helpful in choosing foods and activities as well as providing fast information in an emergency. Any girl or adult participating in a "*High Adventure Activity*" as defined by AHG, must also have a completed "*High Adventure Activity Medical Form*" on file.

PERMISSION SLIPS

For the safety of the girls and for your own protection, a completed "*Parent/Guardian Permission Slip*" or "*High Adventure Activity Approval Form*" should be on file with the Unit Leader for every event, field trip, Troop trip, camp outing, meeting, and fundraising activity. Girls will not be allowed to attend any activity without a signed permission slip. Each permission slip should be fully complete with parent/guardian signature and date and should include a phone number where the parent or guardian can be reached during the event.

A signed "*Troop Meeting Permission Slip*" for Troop meetings held immediately after school is necessary otherwise schools are required to put the girls on the bus for home. Also, if you are transporting the girls to another destination such as a church or home for meetings, the schools require parental/guardian permission to send them with the Leader, driver, or chaperone. It is AHG's policy that you cannot transport the girls anywhere without signed parental/guardian permission. Also, any time you transport the girls in an automobile, a current "*Troop Trip Transport*" form needs to be completed to document automobile insurance and certify the driver. It is important to retain Troop permission slips in a special file for seven years. Any trip/meeting/event that requires an "*Incident Report Form*" should have the paperwork kept at the AHG, Inc. Office for 7 years.

Appointing a Troop contact person (an individual not taking part in trip) is a necessary part of completing the girl permission slip. This person should be available in the case of an emergency or change of plans. He/She would contact Troop parents if necessary. Make sure your Troop contact person has a complete, updated Troop roster, including contact information.

TROOP MEETING PLACE

- ★ The meeting place should be easily accessible to all, taking into consideration and accommodating those girls with special needs.
- ★ Buildings should be safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated, well-lit and hazard-free.
- ★ Meeting places should allow adequate space for planned activities; have accessible toilets, hand-

washing facility and sanitary drinking facility. Troops should adhere to building capacity.

- ★ The meeting places should have accessibility to a telephone. Emergency numbers should be posted by the telephone. However, if there is not accessibility to a phone, your cell phone may be used as the emergency number. All parents must have this number and your cell phone must be turned on during Troop meetings.
- ★ Exits to the facility should be well marked and there should be at least two exits available. Exits must be easily accessible and unlocked from the inside. All Troop members should be aware of these exits, as well as a common meeting place outside.
- ★ Leaders should arrive prior to the meeting to unlock doors and ensure that no girl is waiting outside the building. Leaders must also remain at the meeting place until the last child is picked up by parent/guardian, maintaining two-deep leadership at all times.
- ★ All Troops must have a first-aid kit available at all Troop meetings and activities. At all Troop meetings and activities, one First-Aid and CPR-certified adult per Unit must be present.
- ★ Girl and Adult Health & Medical History Forms should be accessible at the meeting site.

The Release of Members Policy should be created alongside the Troop Policy Manual. These policies should be created prior to the first Troop meeting and reviewed annually.



RELEASE OF MEMBERS

All Troops must have a release procedure in place for all Troop meetings and activities. Troops are expected to utilize a parent sign-out sheet for picking up their daughter(s). This may also act as an attendance form. It is suggested that a Unit Leader or Troop Coordinator be responsible for this process. This gives Unit Leaders an opportunity to get to know parents, and therefore more able to recognize when a questionable situation arises. This sign-out sheet should be kept with the Troop records. Release procedures must be explained annually at the parent's registration meeting. A predetermined release list, giving permission to release a member to several people, is one way to ease the burden on the Unit Leader if an emergency arises. Unit Leaders must receive written permission ahead of time to release a member to an adult other than the parent/guardian. No child may be released to anyone without permission from the parent/guardian. Non-custodial parents/others must show a photo ID and sign a sign-out sheet. It is also suggested that parents give Unit Leaders a list of individuals who may not pick up their child. This list can be useful in divorce/adoption situations where custody is an issue.



CLOTHING

- ★ Clothing should be activity appropriate and help to protect from environmental hazards.
- ★ Uniforms can be useful in providing identification when traveling, as well as show a deep pride and passion to be an American Heritage Girl.
- ★ Proper shoes and socks are important in preventing fatigue, blisters and discomfort.
- ★ For warmth and partial protection from hypothermia, a hat and several light, loose layers of

clothing, are helpful in cold weather.

- ★ The type of material used in clothing construction is also important in determining when a particular garment is useful. For example: wool insulates well, even when wet; and cotton breathes and readily absorbs moisture from the skin.
- ★ Waterproof gear is always useful when there is a chance of getting wet.
- ★ Sunscreen and hats should be worn in situations where extended sun-exposure is probable.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is important in following rules and ensuring a safe environment. Discipline should be administered according to American Heritage Girls' values. Under **NO** circumstances is physical punishment to be used. All verbal comments should remain constructive and positive. Discipline should occur in the presence of an adult witness. Each Troop should develop a Troop Discipline Policy, contained in the Troop Policy Manual, and have it signed by both parents and child.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Advance emergency plans must be made to help cope with the unexpected.

Emergency plans should be specific to each activity and should include the following:

- ★ *Name of individual in charge*
- ★ *Emergency plan and alternatives:* discuss possible emergencies that may arise within the Troop setting or trip. For each possibility, determine a plan of action, assigning individuals to specific tasks. Some assignments may include: How is 911 accessed? Who calls 911? Will emergency vehicles have access to your area? If not, who can allow access, or direct vehicles to the appropriate area? Where should the girls not involved in the emergency gather? Who is supervising them? Who is responsible to call the parent(s)/guardian(s)?
- ★ *Person to notify in case of emergency*
- ★ *Emergency phone numbers including the number for the AHG, Inc. Office*
- ★ *Location/ phone numbers of local law enforcement, fire and health facilities*
- ★ *Evacuation procedures*
- ★ *Number of participants involved in event*
- ★ *Statement of any volatile health conditions among participants*
- ★ *Map of the Area, with address (if applicable).*

- ★ Emergency procedure plan should be included in the Troop Trip Packet.

- ★ For all AHG offsite trips, a copy of the group's itinerary should be left with a parent, and also faxed to the AHG, Inc. Office. The itinerary should include departure times, travel routes, daily activities and expected return time/date. This information can prove crucial in an emergency.

- ★ Reporting – In the event of an emergency, the Support Services Coordinator must be notified within 24 hours of the incident. Notification should occur via submission of an Incident Report form,



**"A place where
both my daughter
and I can be
feminine yet strong
and intelligent."**

AHG Mom



along with a follow-up phone call. Incidents that require reporting include:

- ★ *Any injury or illness that required EMS care*
- ★ *Any injury or illness that results in hospitalization*
- ★ *Any incident/occurrence of a missing AHG participant*
- ★ *Any incident/occurrence of an encounter with a suspicious or seemingly dangerous stranger*

- ★ All media inquiries regarding an incident occurring during an AHG event, must be directed to the AHG, Inc. Office. Under no circumstances should an AHG volunteer speak on behalf of AHG, Inc.

SECURITY

- ★ The Buddy System can be an efficient way of keeping count of large groups. If each girl has a buddy who she is required to stay with and buddy checks are conducted on a regular basis, girls will be able to notify leaders if a buddy is missing. This system allows for a quick response to a lost girl.
- ★ Head counts are crucial when working with large groups. Knowing how many girls are in the group, and conducting head counts will help in keeping the group together. It is important to know where girls are at all times.
- ★ Girls should be aware of what to do if they get lost. A well-lit, well-populated meeting place (preferably a security kiosk, ranger station, etc.) should be designated at the beginning of the event.
- ★ Know where the nearest telephone is located, and notify your girls of its location. Communication becomes critical in an emergency situation, planning ahead of time how to contact help will expedite assistance in an emergency.
- ★ During an event or camping trip, it is the responsibility of adult leaders to confront unfamiliar faces.
- ★ Girls should not go alone into public restrooms. Unit Leaders should first enter the restroom to make note of who is present. The Unit Leader then waits outside of the restroom for girls to exit. Leaders should be aware of any individual entering the restroom and if girls are inside for an unusual amount of time.
- ★ The “Release of Girl Members” policy should be strictly followed.

FIRST-AID

- ★ All Unit Leaders are strongly urged to become CPR and First-Aid certified. All Troops are required to have at least one adult per Unit present at each meeting and field trip with these certifications.
- ★ Troops are encouraged to designate one Adult Volunteer as the Health and Safety Lead for each AHG activity. This individual will act as the main first-aid and should also be in charge of the security and administration of medications. A registered Adult Volunteer with a medical background (such as a MD or RN) is ideal for this position.
- ★ A First-Aid kit must be present at all American Heritage Girl outings, camps, and meetings. Basic first-aid kits, used at meetings and day outings should include the following:

- Absorbent Compress
- Adhesive Bandages (variety of sizes)
- Adhesive Tape (1 in width)
- Antibiotic Ointment
- Antiseptic Wipes
- Non-Latex Gloves (2-3 pairs)
- 3-inch Roller Bandages
- Sterile Gauze Pads
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Chemical Ice Pack
- Oral Thermometer
- First-Aid Instruction Card
- 1 gal. Ziploc Plastic Bag
- Needle in empty film canister
- Blank Incident Report Form
- Hand sanitizer
- Elastic bandage
- Triangular Bandage
- Safety Pins
- Mouth Barrier for CPR
- Flashlight with batteries
- Lightweight blanket
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Permanent Marker
- Paper (kept inside plastic bag)
- Copy of Allergy List
- Copy of Medical Forms
- Waterproof Matches
- Ball Point Pen
- Moleskin
- Sunscreen



For overnight trips, or trips that require more than 75 miles of travel, these additional items should be included:

- Light Sticks (at least 3 that last 3+ hours)
- Food Bars (4,800 calories total)
- Plastic Sheet
- Whistle
- Battery powered radio
- Basic Tools (hammer, wrench, screwdriver)
- Bottled Water (at least 2 quarts)
- Rain Poncho
- Roll of Duct Tape
- Road Flares
- Water Purification Tablets
- Garbage Bags

First Aid Kits and Instruction cards can be purchased at a variety of locations. The Red Cross offers these items from their online store at www.redcross.org. An easy method for storing first-aid equipment is to purchase a large fanny pack. This pack should have room for all supplies and medical forms. These should be packed ahead of time, and ready to go for any outing or meeting. It is crucial that first-aid kits are updated on an annual basis. First aid creams, medications, etc. have expiration dates that must be heeded. In addition, it is important to replenish supplies regularly.



Troops may want to include some over-the-counter medications in their first-aid kit. These medications may only be given if the parent/guardian has signified in writing that their child may receive these medications. Some medications to include:

- Tylenol
- Ibuprofen
- Cough drops/throat lozenges
- Pepto-Bismol
- Calamine Lotion



For all medical emergencies Unit Leaders are recommended to follow the Red Cross First Aid Manual, according to their training level and contact medical personnel for further treatment.



In administering first-aid, Unit Leaders should try their best to aid victims, adhering to Universal Precautions. Universal Precautions are guidelines to protect health care providers from blood borne germs. Following these guidelines, you should treat blood, body fluids and tissue from all patients as if they were infectious. When dealing with body fluids, non-latex gloves or another sterile barrier should

be used to prevent spread of disease. When possible, a mouth-barrier device should be used when administering rescue breathing.

MEDICATION POLICY

All medical information should be considered confidential and shared only with those who are responsible for the health care of the Troop. Medication (with the exception of emergency use meds, such as epi-pens, inhalers, etc.), Medication Logs, Health Forms and Incident Reports should be kept in a locked area when not being used.

GENERAL

- ★ AHG members are discouraged from taking medication at AHG events unless absolutely necessary.
- ★ No AHG girl member is allowed to self-medicate while participating in an AHG event. Exceptions include inhalers and epi-pens, which may be kept on a girl's person for emergency use, only if she understands its proper use. Parents must indicate in writing that the girl is in possession of this medication and possesses the knowledge and ability to administer.
- ★ The AHG Unit Leader fulfilling the Troop Health and Safety Lead role can accept the responsibility of medicating or making sure an AHG member takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time. The Lead must first receive a completed medical form and *"Request for Medication Administration"* form.
- ★ AHG policy does not mandate nor encourage the Unit Leader to dispense medication. If a Leader is uncomfortable administering medications, efforts should be made to make it possible for the girl to still attend the function. If all ideas are exhausted with no resolve, in an effort to keep the AHG program available to all girls, please contact your Support Services Coordinator to further problem solve.
- ★ No AHG girl member may bring over the counter medications for self-administration. Over the counter medications may be administered by the Health and Safety Lead on an as needed basis. Parents must include these over-the-counter medications on the *"Request for Medication Administration Form."* These medications should be in original packaging, placed in a Ziploc baggie, marked with the girl's name and kept in the possession of the Health and Safety Lead for the duration of the event.
- ★ Administration of all medication will be done per the instructions provided on the *"Request for Medication Administration Form."*

PHYSICIAN-PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS

- ★ AHG requires a completed *"Request for Medication Administration"* form that provides the name of the drug, the dose, the times when the medication is to be taken, and the diagnosis or reason the medicine is needed.
- ★ Possible reactions to medications should be noted on the *"Request for Medication Administration"* form. Any necessary emergency response should be outlined by the physician, either directly on the form or as an attachment describing the appropriate treatment.
- ★ Medications must arrive in their original packaging. The name on the bottle, must match the name of the girl who is to receive the medication.
- ★ The parent or guardian should provide a written request that AHG comply with the physician's order by signing the *"Request for Medication Administration."*

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

- ★ Over the counter medications are “prescribed” by parents who desire to facilitate their children’s medical recovery. According to the Troop Sick Policy, parents and Unit Leaders should consider whether a child who is ill enough to require medication should either stay at home or see a physician who can decide whether it is safe for her to participate in AHG events.
- ★ If circumstances require that the AHG member must receive over-the counter medication at an AHG event, the parent should provide a completed “*Request for Medication Administration*” form to the Troop Health and Safety Lead specifying the medication, the amount of medication to be given, the time it may be taken, and the reason for its administration. This form also includes a statement relieving AHG of any responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the medication when it is parent-prescribed.
- ★ The AHG Troop will retain the form for at least the duration of time the medication is used. It will remain a permanent part of the member’s AHG record, for at least seven years. AHG reserves the right to limit the duration of parent-prescribed medications and/or to require a physician statement for continued use of any medication beyond a specified time period.

SECURITY AND STORAGE OF MEDICATION

- ★ All medications (prescription and over-the-counter) must be presented in the original labeled container from the pharmacy or drugstore. Pharmacists will provide additional labeled containers for prescription medications if asked.
- ★ All medications must be kept by the designated Troop Health and Safety Lead. This individual is responsible for ensuring that medications are accessed only by those approved to do so.
- ★ Medications that may have an impact on the medical outcome of an immediate medical emergency (epi-pen for treating serious allergic reactions) should be kept with an AHG adult member that is competent and trained in the use of the medication and is directly supervising the AHG member. This type of medication should be immediately available to the AHG member at all times. If the AHG girl member is trained in the proper use of a life-saving medication (such as an epi-pen or inhaler) she may keep it on her person in case of emergencies.
- ★ Answers to questions, such as where the medication will be stored, who is responsible for the medication, and who will carry the medication for field trips, should be defined in advance in order to maintain medication security and safety while ensuring timely treatment. Both girls and parents must be informed at the beginning of an event of the identity of the Health and Safety Lead.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

- ★ A CPR and First-Aid Certified adult/leader, with knowledge of medication should be deemed as the Health and Safety Lead and administer medication for girls.
- ★ The Troop Health and Safety Lead must complete the Medication Log each time medication (prescribed or over-the-counter) is administered. This log should become part of the Troop’s Records.
- ★ The Troop Health and Safety Lead should refer to the Medication Log to see when the last dose of medication was given.
- ★ The medication should always be administered according to the prescribed guidelines.
- ★ Medications should not be dispensed if contraindications are present.

- ★ Medication will only be given to the girl whose name is on the prescription bottle. Medication may not be shared, even among siblings.

TRANSPORTATION

- ★ All potential drivers for Troop activities must complete a “*Troop Transport Form*,” verifying auto insurance, seatbelts and driver’s license. This form must be on file with Troop Leader and updated on a yearly basis.
- ★ It is American Heritage Girls policy that if an adult driver has any of the following violations in the last three years, they may not transport girl or adult members on any Troop activity:
 - Ages 21-70
 - *Driving under the influence
 - *Reckless operation
 - *Leaving the scene of an accident
 - *Two or more moving violations within the last 12 months
 - *More than three moving violations within the last 3 years
 - *More than two accidents in the past three years
 - *More than one accident in any one year
 - *Speeding over 80 miles per hour or 21 miles per hour over the posted speed limit
 - *Operating a motor vehicle during a time of suspension or revocation
 - *Operating a motor vehicle without a license
 - *Negligent homicide arising out of the use of a motor vehicle
 - *Aggravated assault with a motor vehiclePlease contact your Support Services Coordinator for ages 71 and over driver eligibility criteria.
- ★ Appropriate Girl/Leader ratios and “two-deep leadership” should be present during transportation. Supervision during transport should include at least one registered Adult Volunteer and one other adult.
- ★ Driver must be licensed and at least 21 years of age.
- ★ All vehicles must have at least one, charged cell phone in case of emergency.
- ★ The vehicle must be inspected and certified by its owner as being in good condition as to the brakes, steering, lights, and tires and properly registered, etc.
- ★ AHG, Inc. and or AHG Troops reserve the right to deny a driver based on automobile safety or driving record. The driver’s motor vehicle record may be randomly checked.
- ★ Cautious driving must be practiced, even on short trips.
- ★ Drivers must utilize reasonable travel speed, in accordance with local laws.
- ★ If vehicle is designed to carry 15 or more people, driver must have a commercial driver’s license (CDL).
- ★ Driving time by a single driver is limited to 8 hours in a 24 hour period, and must be interrupted by frequent rests and food stops.
- ★ Vehicle must have seatbelts for all passengers, which must be worn by all individuals during travel.

Girls under 13 years of age should be properly restrained in the **back** seat. Teenagers should wear lap and shoulder belts in every seating position in a motor vehicle. Note: Laws provide a minimum requirement, but may not always mimic best practice. See AAA's safety seat guide for more information.

- ★ All activities that distract the driver's attention are strongly discouraged (i.e. cell phone, eating).
- ★ American Heritage Girls requires drivers to adhere to the following requirements for public liability insurance on vehicles used to transport members to activities or on trips. Drivers must maintain the following coverage **unless your state requires a higher standard**:
 - Passenger Cars, Station Wagons:
 - \$100,000/\$300,000 public liability per accident
 - \$50,000 property damage
 - Passenger Bus
 - \$100,000/\$300,000 public liability per accident
 - \$50,000 property damage
- ★ The Charter Organization and AHG must approve forms of transportation other than privately insured cars or vans (i.e. buses, airplanes or other vehicles), at least four weeks prior to your activity. Troops should contact their Support Services Coordinator for approval.
- ★ Trucks may only transport girls in the cab.
- ★ Leaders should create lists of the names of girls riding in each vehicle prior to departure. These lists should be used to call girls, by name, into the vehicle for loading. Each vehicle should have a list of all girls present, as well as copies of the other vehicles' passenger lists.
- ★ Each vehicle should carry copies of the girls' and adults' health forms. Drivers should be made aware of any severe allergies or medical conditions of passengers. It may be helpful to create a quick reference list of passenger medical conditions, in case of an emergency.
- ★ Vehicles traveling more than 75 miles should each have a first-aid kit, as outlined in the First-Aid section.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

This policy should be shared with parents, and parents are encouraged to share these procedures with their daughters. Parents must sign off on receipt of Child Abuse Prevention Policy on the Girl Registration Form.

MISSION

To provide a healthy and safe environment for members of American Heritage Girls, through a program of education and prevention of emotional, physical and sexual child abuse and in compliance with state laws and federal regulations, and our guiding principals.

ISSUE

The emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children by adults and others is a widespread problem.

Abuse may be emotional, physical, and/or violent. Incidents may occur just once or be repeated many times.

Child abuse affects everyone - the victim, family/friends, all of us! We can prevent child abuse by giving children accurate information about physical and sexual abuse, teaching children how to protect themselves, encouraging children to communicate incidents, education adult members in prevention techniques and reporting incidents or suspected incidents to proper authorities.

A child abuser can be anyone - male or female, young or old, familiar or unfamiliar, or a former victim.

Child abuse can happen in familiar areas, public places, in unfamiliar or deserted areas. The abuser usually tries to control the victim by coercion, manipulation, or bribery.

Bullying can be another form of abuse and can result from adult and/or youth behaviors. Bullying can be physical, emotional or mental. Female bullying is becoming increasingly common and typically is in the form of verbal and emotional harassment. Cyberbullying (bullying via internet, email, text messaging, etc.) is also increasingly common and equally destructive.

AHG POLICY

If an adult member learns or suspects that a youth member has been emotionally, physically or sexually abused, we can help by not questioning the validity of the incident; help is needed no matter the validity of the incident. Control emotions, give support, get information about the incident, get medical assistance, and immediately contact the appropriate social service agency and police in compliance with state and local laws and regulations, parents/guardians and the designated AHG Unit Leader. You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in "good faith". It is the responsibility of the AHG Unit Leader to file an *Incident Report* with the AHG, Inc. Office.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MEMBERS

To help prevent child abuse, our members should learn and follow these common-sense rules:

- ★ Be alert of other's behavior, don't believe strangers, avoid being alone with anyone who wants to touch a child in a sexual way, and don't be overly trusting.
- ★ Avoid dangerous situations including playing alone in deserted or public areas, not opening doors or answering phones at home. Discuss problem encounters with parents, guardians, and AHG Unit Leaders. In the event of an incident, the member should not obey the abuser unless physically threatened, try to turn away, say no if someone tries to abuse them, tell abuser they'll tell someone, seek help as soon as possible, and understand that the incident was not their fault.

AHG STANDARDS FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

AHG has developed a plan to prevent child abuse and improve the environment in which our young members live. The key elements include:

- ★ Establish Adult Volunteer selection procedures to prevent individuals with a history of abuse from becoming an Adult Volunteer through effective screening of applicants. AHG advocates a seven step screening process to insure that Troops select quality volunteers to carry forth the ministry. The Charter Organization is responsible for assisting the Troop with this approval process. The process should include the following:
- ★ **Primary Troop Adult Volunteers** serving on the Troop Board or Ministry Team (Troop Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Treasurer, Shepherd, Fundraising Manager, Advancement Manager Unit and Assistant Leaders) should proceed with the following screening process:

- ★ Meet with candidate and provide Volunteer Application information.
- ★ Candidate completes the AHG Adult Volunteer Application and returns for processing.
- ★ Charter Organization/Troop completes a criminal background check. (Background checks must be completed at least once every 5 years for a volunteer to stay active).
- ★ Approve or deny Adult Volunteer Application based on criminal background check.
- ★ If Application is approved, obtain and verify reference checks. (Use AHG Reference Form or Charter Organization form)
- ★ Conduct an in-person interview. Select position based on gifts and talents of the individual.
- ★ Register as an Adult Member of American Heritage Girls (annual registration) and complete BSA Youth Protection with AHG Supplement.
- ★ Sign and understand an annual Ministry Job Agreement. (See AHG Ministry Job Agreements)

★ **Secondary Troop Adult Volunteers** (recurring adult volunteers who assist the primary adult volunteer roles listed and are being included in the adult/girl ratios for safety):

- ★ Complete the AHG Adult Volunteer Application
- ★ Complete a Criminal Background Check. (Check with charter organization to process background checks)
- ★ Process the Criminal Background Check. Approve/Disapprove Application.
- ★ Register as an Adult Member of American Heritage Girls (annual registration) and complete BSA Youth Protection with AHG Supplement.

“Being a registered leader is a privilege, not a right.” The quality of our program and safety of our youth members requires selection of leaders to be taken seriously.

- ★ Educate Leaders, volunteers, parents/guardians, and young members to aid in detection and prevention of child abuse.
- ★ Encourage girls to report improper behavior and to identify incidents and offenders promptly.
- ★ The following procedures have been established to provide additional security of members from situations in which they may be vulnerable to abuse, and to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.
 - ★ *Two-deep leadership:* No less than two registered Adult Leaders are required on all trips and activities. The Troop is responsible for ensuring sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
 - ★ *No one-on-one contact:* One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. Any meeting or discussion on private matters or sensitive issues, must be conducted in view of other adults and /or members.
 - ★ *Respect privacy:* Respect the privacy of youth members at all times, except to the extent of health and safety concerns.
 - ★ *Separate accommodations:* At outdoor and overnight activities, youth members are not permitted to sleep with an adult other than parent/guardian unless adult and youth membership join as a group with two-deep leadership. Use of separate restrooms and shower facilities is encouraged, or

scheduled times arranged for separate use of facilities for youth members and adult members. If this is not possible, two-deep leadership must be maintained in restroom and shower facilities.

- ★ *No secret organizations:* AHG does not permit secret organizations. All programs and activities are open to observation by parents and adult members. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited.
- ★ *Appropriate attire:* Proper, modest attire for all activities is required.
- ★ *Constructive discipline:* Discipline used in AHG should be constructive, positive, and reflect our values. Corporal punishment is not permitted.
- ★ *Adult supervision:* Adult Leaders must monitor and guide leadership techniques used by youth leaders.

To enhance the health and safety of all members of AHG, the following safety standards are to be followed:

Controlled Substances: Persons under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol or in possession of same are prohibited from participation in any AHG activity or program.

Firearms: Persons using or possessing firearms must comply with all local, state and federal laws during all AHG activities.

Smoking: The use of tobacco products, or products simulating smoking, where members are present is not permitted at AHG programs or activities.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

In the event an act of child abuse is witnessed, reported, or suspected the following procedures are to be followed:

- ★ Remove youth member from immediate danger and provide medical attention if needed.

In the event child abuse is witnessed, promptly remove and report offenders to the local social services department and/or police immediately in accordance with state, local, and federal laws and regulations. (Refer to your county website for reporting abuse in your area.)

- ★ If the suspected abuser is NOT the parent/guardian, notification should be made to parents/guardians and designated AHG officials as soon as possible advising them of situation and action taken.
- ★ Leaders having reason to believe a youth member(s) has suffered abuse should report or cause reports to be made to the local social services department and police as soon as possible. The report should include: name and address of youth member(s), age, parent's/guardian's name, nature and extent of abuse, and any other information which would be helpful in investigating the situation. Upon notice to the social services and police, immediate notification should be made to the AHG, Inc. officials advising them of the situation and action taken.

Adherence to these policies and procedures not only enhances the protection of our members, but also ensures the basic values of American Heritage Girls while providing a healthy and safe environment.

HANDLING NATURAL DISASTERS

Weather can prove to be a hazard in any situation, but with some planning and awareness, serious threats to health and safety can typically be avoided. It is important to be aware of local weather forecasts, especially when planning an outdoor activity. Equipment or plans may need to change depending on the forecast. It is also helpful to utilize a weather radio, especially during times of year when dangerous weather patterns are more common. Being aware of the approach of hazardous weather can allow for important emergency procedures to be implemented. It is also important to understand and obey area emergency siren systems. Early notification can be key to minimizing threats to health and safety.

EARTHQUAKES

- ★ The greatest danger in an earthquake is from falling debris.
- ★ If outdoors, head for clear area, avoiding buildings, power lines, utility poles, etc.
- ★ If indoors, stand in a doorway, or lie under a heavy piece of furniture. Stay away from windows.

FLASH FLOODS

- ★ During heavy rains, avoid natural streambeds and narrow channels, which tend to create fast waters.
- ★ Flash floods are dangerous due to swift currents and their unpredictable nature. When warnings are posted, evacuate the area immediately.
- ★ If evacuation is not possible, seek the best route to high ground. Do not attempt to outrun the water. Climb straight up a tree, bank, hill, etc.
- ★ Never attempt to wade or drive through water higher than 6 inches.
- ★ If in a car, get out of vehicle and call for help.

LIGHTNING

Lightning is a fairly common occurrence and can be extremely dangerous. Places to avoid during a lightning storm include:

- ★ Summits, or places that are the highest location around: If found in this situation, quickly descend to a lower elevation, in the opposite direction of the approaching storm.
- ★ Beside isolated or tallest trees: If found in this situation, try to move quickly to a group of lower trees or assume the lightning position (Crouch, with your feet close together and your bottom off the ground. Do not place your hands on the ground. If you have access to insulating material (such as a sleeping pad, or backpack), crouch on it. Avoid the temptation to crouch together during a storm. Participants should spread out, 15-20 feet apart. Be sure that group members are visible and that spreading out does not put anyone into a danger zone.)
- ★ An open field, where you are the tallest object: If found in this situation, try to find a low-lying area or assume the lightning position.
- ★ On/in water: Immediately return to shore.

If a building or a car is available, immediately retreat to this shelter. Dense forests, located in a depression can be a good place to wait out a storm. If the storm is less than six miles away (or the time between thunder and lightning is less than 30 seconds), assume the lightning position.

TORNADO

- ★ If warning is issued, head for a protected area immediately.
Find a safe place; stay low, covering neck and head. Some safe places include:
 - Storm shelter/basements
 - Caves/tunnels
 - Interior corridors/hallways/bathrooms
 - Reinforced concrete buildings
- ★ Places to avoid include:
 - House trailer
 - Tents
 - Gymnasiums
 - Indoors, near windows
- ★ If shelter is unavailable move away from tornado's path at a right angle. If movement is not possible, lie flat in a ditch and protect head.



WINTER STORMS

When traveling in winter, ensure that you have sufficient supplies of food, water, sleeping bags, blankets, etc. Be sure to pack a shovel and some cat litter in your car, in case your vehicle gets stuck in deep snow or ice. Plan places along your route to stop if the weather conditions decline rapidly.

TROOP TRIPS

GUIDELINES FOR TROOP TRIPS

- ★ Troop trips provide an opportunity to establish and accomplish both long-term goals and short-term objectives for the members of the Troop. Depending on the interests of the girls, the planning of the trip may take a period of weeks, months or years. It is the responsibility of Adult Volunteers to guide girls in choosing and organizing a trip that reflects the AHG program, their experience level and planning ability of the girls.
- ★ Trips should have a purpose. The purpose should be compatible with and accomplish one or more Program Goals (Program Emphases); should be age-level appropriate; and should be planned and researched by BOTH girls and adults.
- ★ The trip should be planned over a period of time that allows GIRLS to adequately prepare for the trip. When the trip destination is identified, careful consideration should be given to developing a feasible timeline to provide opportunities for Troop money earning.
- ★ Careful consideration should be given to preparing the trip budget. Trip plans may include two-four years of money earning, depending on the trip costs.
- ★ Review safety and security guidelines, activity checkpoints, program standards (including those on money earning) and camping standards.

PROCEDURES FOR TROOP TRIPS

- ★ AHG **and** the Charter Organization must approve any trip that will exceed the 75-mile radius of your Troop meeting place. Submit your request on “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Notification Form*” (available

on the AHG Leader Site) to the AHG, Inc. Office at least 4 weeks prior to trip departure.

- ★ Those traveling to destinations outside of the United States must secure approval from AHG six months prior to your trip. Additional requirements may be necessary based on your destination. Contact AHG, Inc. Office for more details.
- ★ If you are planning a “camping trip,” you must submit the “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Notification Form*” for approval, regardless of distance. “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Notification Forms*” should be submitted to AHG, Inc. Office at least 4 weeks prior to trip departure. Camping trips must also have approval of the Charter Organization.
- ★ In the event of an emergency, the AHG, Inc. Office must be notified within 24 hours of the incident. Notification should occur via submission of an “*AHG Incident Report Form*”, along with a follow-up phone call. Incidents that require reporting include:
 - Any injury or illness that required EMS care
 - Any injury or illness that results in hospitalization
 - Any incident/occurrence of a missing AHG participant
 - Any incident/occurrence of an encounter with a suspicious or seemingly dangerous stranger
- ★ All media inquiries regarding an incident occurring during an AHG event must be directed to the AHG, Inc. Office.

TROOP TRIP PACKETS

Each Unit Leader should assemble a Troop Trip Packet for each chaperone and driver when going on a trip of any duration. It is advisable to carry these at all times in a large zip-lock type bag, preferably in a backpack. Each car should have a first-aid kit. The following items should be included in the Troop Trip Packet:

- ★ Completed current “*Health and Medical History Form*” with photo attached and current “*Request for Medication Administration Form*”, for each individual in each group, including adults. Chaperones should carry just the “*Health History*” and “*Request for Medication Administration Forms*” for the girls in their group. Drivers should carry the “*Health History*” and “*Request for Medication Administration Forms*” for their passengers. At least one Unit Leader in the group should carry copies of the “*Health History Forms*” and “*Request for Medication Administration Forms*” for the entire group, both youth and adult.
- ★ List of passengers in each car.
- ★ List of serious allergies/medical conditions of passengers in each car.
- ★ List of each person in the room, tent or cabin for overnight.
- ★ License plate number, make, model, year and color of each car traveling with the group.
- ★ “*Parent/Guardian Permission Slip*” or “*High Adventure Activity Approval Form*”, whichever is applicable for the trip.
- ★ Written directions & map for destination. Include rest stops, gas stops & meal stops.
- ★ Itinerary of events and arrival times.
- ★ For trips of 200 miles or more, it is also suggested to have a photocopy of the parent’s medical insurance cards and a signed Power-of-Attorney for emergencies.
- ★ Troop emergency contact person (individual not taking part in trip) and phone number.

- ★ Copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- ★ Copies of “AHG Incident Report Form”.

ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

AHG activities are divided into 3 categories. When planning outdoor activities, review AHG’s Outdoor Training and the *Checklist for Preparing for an Outdoor Adventure*, found on the AHG Website. If an activity is not listed, contact your Support Services Coordinator for approval and guidance.

Unrestricted Activities: These are activities that do not require any further notification to the AHG Office. Need for notification of the activities depends on the Charter Organization’s preference and/or guidelines.

Restricted High Adventure Activities: Any activity that may require a greater level of knowledge/skill or present a greater risk than usual to participants must be approved by the AHG, Inc. Office and the Charter Organization. Please refer to the list of Restricted High Adventure Activities included in this manual. Such an activity should be discussed with parents or guardians and their written approval obtained before it is included in Troop/Unit plans. If your group is planning a Restricted High Adventure Activity, use the “High Adventure Activity Approval Form” located on the Leader section of the AHG Website. Participants must also complete a “High Adventure Activity Medical Form” prior to trip. Submit the completed “High Adventure Activity Approval Form” to the AHG, Inc. Office at least four weeks prior to activity.

Unauthorized Activities: These activities are not approved by AHG and should not be a part of any AHG function.

WHEN AHG, INC. NOTIFICATION AND APPROVAL IS REQUIRED

Insurance company representatives place controls on insurance coverage of certain program activities. We ask for your cooperation. Please call or write the AHG, Inc. Office for approval under the following circumstances:

- ★ If your group is planning a Restricted High Adventure Activity (see listing of Restricted Activities). Use the “Troop Trip/High Adventure Activity Approval Form.”
- ★ If you are planning to rent or lease a vehicle (bus, van, car, boat, etc.).
- ★ If you are asked to sign a building reservation or use agreement.
- ★ If you are planning to participate in an event or activity that requires a Certificate of Insurance.

Please note that the “Troop Trip/High Adventure Activity Approval Form” must be completed for any High Adventure Activity, 75+mile trip, and/or camping trip. This is a two-part form, requiring Troop Coordinator and Charter Rep signatures. For additional information on necessary forms and notification, please refer to the *Forms and Guidelines Chart* on the AHG Leader Site.

UNRESTRICTED ACTIVITIES

(These activities require parental permission.)

ARCHERY

Age: Approved for Explorer level girls and older.

Site:

1. The shooting area and spectator area must be clearly marked.
2. The shooting must be well-lit. Archery is not permitted after dark, without adequate lighting.

Supervision:

1. Knowledgeable, skilled supervision must be present. If possible, a certified archer must be present.
2. AHG ratios apply, and a CPR and First-Aid certified adult must be present.

Equipment:

1. Girls must have finger and arm protection, as well as bows and arrows appropriate to girl's size, strength and ability. All equipment should be in good condition, free of wear and/or damage.

Activity Specifics:

1. Rules and procedures must be clear, understood by all participants and posted.
2. A system of signaling participants for starting, retrieving and emergency stopping must be in place.
3. Girls waiting to shoot must stand at least four feet behind shooters.
4. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

BICYCLE SAFETY

Age: Approved for Pathfinder level girls and older

Site:

1. Plan your route, know where you are going, and when you expect to arrive and return. Ensure that your trip will both begin and end in daylight.
2. Know where emergency services are located along your route.
3. Always be aware of your surroundings and the presence of other cyclists, pedestrians, motor vehicles and other possible hazards (rocks, glass, holes, etc).
4. Make sure all participants are familiar with and aware of the designated route. Participants should each have a map of the bike route, when applicable.
5. When approaching an intersection, slow down and stop if necessary, look left, right, back and ahead. Always stop at a railroad crossing, look both ways and proceed cautiously across the crossing, walking bicycle across railroad crossing if necessary.
6. Avoid routes that include high traffic or high speed areas. Bicycle paths are the preferred route.

Supervision:

1. Qualified supervision with knowledge of skills and equipment used in biking must be present and all AHG ratios apply. A CPR and First-Aid Certified adult must be present.
2. There must be an adult at the front and back of the group.
3. At least one adult in the group must carry a cell phone in case of emergency.
4. When going on a trip use the buddy system.

Equipment:

1. Use proper fitting helmets at all times.
2. Check equipment such as tires, brakes, chain, and gears. Adjust reflective mirrors. Clean and

adjust bicycle. Apply reflective material to bicycle if not present. Ensure that bike is the proper size for the rider.

3. Make sure equipment is brought on trips for minor repairs and adjustments including: first aid kit, small tool kit, tire repair kit, lubricant, air pump that fits on bike, locks to secure bicycle, helmets, ID tags, emergency cash, and weather appropriate gear.
4. When traveling long distances carry fluids and energy snacks. Periodically stop and rest before resuming journey. Each girl must have access to her own water.

Activity Specifics:

1. Because biking is a strenuous activity, physical fitness of participants and weather conditions must be taken into consideration.
2. When riding your bicycle follow the rules and safety laws of the local law enforcement agencies. Travel with the flow of traffic keeping in the far right lane of traffic.
3. Use proper hand signals so other cyclists and motorists know your intent.
4. Never try stunts or race on a bicycle. Only race on marked courses and designated areas.
5. Participants must know, understand, and follow the rules and procedures for safe biking and conscientiously and carefully follow the directions of the adult supervisor.
6. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

CAMPING

All camping trips require submission of the *“Troop Trip/High Adventure Notification Form”* to your Support Services Coordinator at the AHG, Inc. Office.

Age: Troop camping is approved for 2nd Grade Tenderhearts and older. Pathfinder (K) and Tenderheart (1-3) Units may participate in multi-Troop day camps, camporees or family camping. Troop overnight camping in tents by Pathfinder and first-grade Tenderheart Units, is not recommended or approved. If family camping, girls may stay in tents if desired. Parent participation in an overnight should be seriously considered with younger girls.

APPROVED OUTDOOR ACTIVITY PROGRESSION

Pathfinder	Tenderheart(1)	Tenderheart (2-3)	Explorer	Pioneer	Patriot
Meeting Time Trips	Meeting Time Trips	Meeting Time Trips	Meeting Time Trips	Meeting Time Trips	Meeting Time Trips
Multi-Troop Day Camps	Multi-Troop Day Camps	Multi-Troop Day Camps	Multi-Troop Day Camps	Multi-Troop Day Camps	Multi-Troop Day Camps
Family Camping	Family Camping	Family Camping	Family Camping	Family Camping	Family Camping
	Day Trips	Day Trips	Day Trips	Day Trips	Day Trips
		Multi-Troop Resident Camps	Multi-Troop Resident Camps	Multi-Troop Resident Camps	Multi-Troop Resident Camps
		One-night Troop Trips (cabins, bunkhouses)	Simple Troop Overnight Trips	Simple Troop Overnight Trips	Simple Troop Overnight Trips
			Multi-Night Troop Camping (tents, cabins)	Multi-Night Troop Camping (tents, cabins)	Multi-Night Troop Camping (tents, cabins)
				3 Night+ Camp-ing Trips	3 Night+ Camp-ing Trips
				High Adventure Day Trips	High Adventure Day Trips
					High Adventure Multi-Nights

Site:

1. Each camp site needs to be convenient, accessible, and properly equipped to meet safety requirements and activities of Troop.
2. Perform a pre-camp inspection to assure safety standards are met.
 - (A) When leaving camp site complete post camp inspection to make sure campsite is clean and secure.
 - (B) Identifying possible hazards (reporting if necessary), locate nearest phone, routes in and out of area, closest EMS/fire department, establish what supplies and paper work are necessary.
 - (C) Upon leaving area, check for cleanliness and condition of site. Maintaining a clean site will help to preserve the environment and the American Heritage Girl name.
3. Security is crucial when in a camping setting. Please see the “Security” section of this handbook.
4. Rules and regulations of the campgrounds and local ordinances must be obeyed at all times.
5. No food may be stored in tents or tent area. In areas where bears are present, all scented materials (food, chapstick, deodorant, etc.) must be kept in a bear box or other “bear proof” receptacle.
6. Adults and girls must apply minimum-impact principles to all camp activities.
7. There must be at least one toileting and handwashing area for every 20 campers.
8. When primitive camping, catholes/latrines must be at least 200 ft. from nearest water source, campsite and trail.
9. All garbage must be disposed of in an appropriate manner, according to local regulations and minimum-impact guidelines.
10. Perform a post-camp inspection to make sure campsite is clean and secure.

Supervision:

1. Rules established by AHG must be followed at all times as to age and ratio guidelines.
2. All AHG Rules and Child Abuse Prevention Policy must be adhered to at all times.
3. Make sure one or more adult Unit Leaders per unit are First- Aid and CPR certified and that the Troop is properly equipped with a camping first-aid kit.
4. Early release policies, procedures, and guidelines must be followed.
 - A. Appoint someone to coordinate policy.
 - B. Make sure all leaders are knowledgeable of policies.
 - C. Should youth members need to leave early, arrangements should be made in advance and in writing with Unit Leader.
 - D. When requested by an adult who appears in person, the Unit Leader must verify adult is parent or legal guardian by checking photo ID before releasing youth member.
 - E. A check-out roster must be signed by Unit Leader and parent/guardian, when youth member is released. This roster should also indicate the time and date of release. A youth member may never be released to another youth without written verification from parent/guardian.
5. In case of removal from camp in the event of illness or injury, the Unit Leader must notify parent/guardian or designated party, and indicate injury/illness, as well as what steps have been taken to aid youth member.
6. Awareness of the whereabouts of all Troop members is important and frequent checks are required.

Equipment:

1. Ensure medical releases, health, medication and insurance forms are current, properly completed and signed by guardian/parent(s)
2. Use and handling of all fireworks is prohibited at the camp or on the premises.
3. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco are not permitted at encampments or activities operated by AHG.
4. Firearms are strongly discouraged during camping events. Persons using or possessing firearms

must comply with all local, state and federal laws during all AHG activities.

5. Fire safety regulations must be adhered to at all times. Always have fire extinguisher available and buckets of water close by as a precaution.
6. Fuels used for cooking, such as propane tanks and canisters, must be properly stored in restricted areas.
7. Appropriate footwear must be worn while camping. Flip flops and barefeet are not appropriate.
8. Meal menus should include healthy food choices, appropriate to the group, activity and conditions.
9. Food prep and meal clean up must maintain proper level of sanitation, plan equipment choices accordingly.

Activity Specifics:

1. Regional Camp: A Regional Camp is a multi-Troop camping experience that includes three or more days and/or nights and is open to any AHG Troop (i.e. 3-4 daytime camps or 3-or more day/night camps). The “hosting” Troop must download and complete the “*Regional Camp Activity Form*” and submit along with the supporting materials to Support Services Coordinator for approval at least 16 weeks prior to the activity and before camp registrations are mailed to invited Troops.

Troops attending a Regional Camp must submit the “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Notification Form*” if any girls/adults are attending the Regional Camp to your Support Services Coordinator for approval. Girls attending camp must be currently registered members to attend. (For “summer” camps, currently registered girls memberships are valid until Sept. 30th annually).

Troops attending a Regional Camp must comply with all Health and Safety guidelines that apply to camping and other activities planned.

2. Troop Camping: All camping trips require the “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Activity Form*” be completed and submitted with supporting materials to your Support Services Coordinator for approval at least 3 weeks in advance.
3. Family Camping: All Family Camping requires the “*Troop Trip/High Adventure Activity Form*” be completed and submitted with supporting materials to your Support Services Coordinator for approval at least 3 weeks in advance. AHG’s group insurance covers registered girls & adults only. All other adults and siblings do not have liability coverage and will be responsible for their own liability.

During family camping, families may share the same sleeping quarters. Adults may not share the same sleeping quarters with youth, unless they are part of the same family, or if they are the same sex as the youth participants, are registered AHG Adult Members and two-deep leadership exists.

4. Plan your trip and activities with safety in mind.
5. Plan for the unexpected. Make sure emergency plans are in place to handle unexpected contingencies, including Search & Rescue. Plans must be specific as to person in charge, action to be taken, alternatives, person to notify, emergency telephone number, location of law enforcement, fire and health facilities as well as evacuation procedures.
6. Leave a trip itinerary with a parent who is not attending the trip. Be sure to include participant names, arrival and departure times, location of campsite, daily activity itinerary and emergency contact information.
7. Be aware of rabies detection and prevention and whether or not it is a concern in the activity area.
8. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

CAMP FIRES AND COOKING FIRES

Though camp fires offer great learning opportunities, they also cause a larger impact on a natural environment, so whenever possible, AHG recommends using camp stoves. If a campfire is planned, it is also important to check with local authorities to ensure that there are no fire bans or fire restrictions. These bans often change with the time of year and rainfall, so be sure to check prior to trip departure.

Age: Though campfires can be enjoyed by girls of any age, fire building and cooking over a campfire is approved for Explorer level girls and older.

Site:

1. Fires must be built in designated areas according to local fire regulations. Select site away from trees, bushes, and grasses. Check with local and state regulations to ensure no fire ban; secure permits when necessary.
2. When selecting a site, clean a circle about 10 feet across, rake away pine needles, twigs, leaves, and anything that might catch fire from flying embers.
3. Maintain materials and equipment to extinguish fires including fire extinguishers and fire buckets with water/sand in close proximity to fire.
4. Fires are not permitted in cabins or tents.
5. At no time should girls be allowed to walk across the fire circle. Coals/ashes below the surface can remain hot for days, creating potential for serious harm.
6. When the fire is extinguished, clean the fire site down to bare soil and remove flammable material from ground around it.
7. The fire must be completely out and cool before leaving the area.

Supervision:

1. At least one Unit Leader must be trained in fire safety.
2. All AHG members must be taught fire safety rules and regulations.
3. NEVER LEAVE FIRE UNATTENDED!!
4. Because of the dangers that fires bring, discipline must be maintained around the fire circle.
5. A First-Aid and CPR certified adult must be present and access to a First-Aid kit available.

Equipment:

1. The fire extinguishers must not be of the CO2 type but rather a “dry extinguisher”.
2. No firearms or fireworks are allowed on the premises.
3. Bring a rake to clear the area, and a bucket to contain water.
4. Unless you are in an emergency situation, only fallen, dead wood must be collected as firewood.
5. Check with local authorities before packing in firewood. Many areas have restrictions in an effort to stop the spread of non-native species, tree disease, insects, etc.
6. Appropriate clothing must be worn when working around the campfire. No plastic (ponchos) or overly baggy clothing may be worn near flames. Long hair must be tied back and appropriate footwear must be worn. Flip flops and barefeet are not appropriate for tending fire.
7. Gasoline must NEVER be used to start a fire.

Activity Specifics:

1. The type of fire used must match the desired purpose.
2. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.
3. When using camp stoves, follow these additional guidelines:
 - A. Store fuels such as kerosene and propane in secured areas when not in use. Make sure only designated Leader uses fuel.
 - B. Properly dispose of fuel containers.
 - C. Ensure that stoves are maintained throughout the year, getting necessary repairs, cleaning, etc.

- D. Ensure that Leaders and/or girls know the proper way to light and extinguish a stove. Always follow manufacturers' guidelines.
- E. Ensure that the stove is thoroughly cooled before packing it away.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Age: Girls of all ages may participate in community events and activities, though the activity must be appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of participating girls.

Site:

1. All participants must have access to restroom facilities and water.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply.
2. A Lost Plan must be developed and all girls should know what to do if they find themselves separated from the group. A meeting place should be designated prior to the start of the activity.
3. Drop Off and Pick Up procedures must be clearly defined and adhered to during community events.
4. Because many community events attract media attention, leaders are responsible for ensuring that "*Media Release Forms*" have been completed by all participants prior to photograph or film being taken.
5. A First-Aid, CPR certified adult must be present

Equipment:

1. Members must wear a uniform or spiritwear item when participating on behalf of the organization.

Activity Specifics:

1. Participation in a community event reflects on the AHG organization. Please ensure that the event is in concert with the values and mission of the American Heritage Girls, as well as providing a safe environment for the girls.
2. The AHG, Inc. Office must be notified in writing (mail or email) of participation in community events and activities to gain approval. Written notification should include event description, date, time, troop involvement and cost, if any.
3. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

FUND RAISING FOR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

An American Heritage Girl may support other organizations through service projects, but should not solicit money for other organizations while in her American Heritage Girls capacity. From time to time, AHG, Inc. may engage in national program initiatives that allow Troops to raise funds for a specific cause. Only during this type of national initiative is this type of solicitation acceptable.

HIKING/BACKPACKING

Age: AHG girls of all ages may enjoy hiking. AHG approves backpacking for Pioneer level girls and older. With both hiking and backpacking, it is important that the length, terrain and pack weight be appropriate for the age, maturity and ability of participants.

Site:

1. Hikes must be restricted to reasonable length. Routes should be based on environmental conditions, participants' age, physical condition, experience, available equipment and supplies.
2. Girls must stay on designated paths to avoid destroying surrounding wildlife.

3. The route must be traversed by supervisor prior to bringing the group. Hazards must be assessed at this time, including poisonous plants, animals, etc. Information should be shared with participants regarding potential hazards.
4. Weather conditions must be assessed before leaving and monitored during hike.
5. Check with authorities prior to trip to ensure that there are no trail closures, restrictions, etc.
6. Register with Ranger prior to starting trek, if necessary.

Supervision:

1. At least one Leader must have experience in teaching and supervising hiking/backpacking activities, and at least one Unit Leader per Unit must be First-Aid/CPR certified.
2. All AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.
3. At least one adult must carry an emergency cellphone, or other form of electronic communication.
4. The buddy system must be used while hiking. Stay together as a Troop. Do not hitchhike. Stay on the trail.
5. There must be one adult at the head of the group, and another in the rear.
6. Have a plan ready if Troop gets separated or members get lost. All participants must clearly understand this plan and their role.
7. Be alert while you are hiking. Notice the direction of the trail. Identify landmarks and locate them on your map. Take notes if necessary. Girls must be trained prior to departure on basic map reading and navigation skills.
8. Leaders must instruct groups to stay together, on well-established trails, avoid loose rock and avoid dangerous ledges, cliffs and areas where a fall might occur.
9. Adults must be familiar with signs of heat stroke, heat exhaustion and dehydration. Participants' hydration, sun exposure and exertion levels must be closely monitored.

Equipment:

1. Participants must use proper foot gear and be aware of proper foot care, including blisters and aching feet. Measures should be taken to avoid these maladies.
2. Dress appropriately for the weather including warm clothing in cool weather. Wear layers of clothes to adapt to temperature change.
3. Girls must carry packs appropriate to their height, weight, and strength. Load should not exceed 20% of the individual's ideal body weight.
4. Include in backpack: first-aid kit, extra clothing, water bottle, flashlight, trail food or snacks, sunscreen, and rain gear. Girls must each carry an appropriate amount of water for the designated hike.
5. Carry a whistle.
6. For long hikes, or overnight backpacking trips, be sure to pack a water purification system in case of emergency.

Activity Specifics:

1. Be physically fit and prepared! It may be necessary to train prior to your trek, especially if you plan on trekking a significant distance.
2. A hiking plan must be developed including:
 - a. Where are you hiking? (along with permission if necessary)
 - b. How far do you plan to hike?
 - c. When will you depart and return?
 - d. Who is going with you?
 - e. Why are you going? Plan agenda.
 - f. What is the weather forecast for your trek?
 - g. What is an alternate route in case of emergency?
 - h. How will you contact EMS if necessary?
 - i. A map of the area being traversed.
- 3) All participants must understand the hiking plan, and a copy should be left with a parent who

is not attending the trek. They should also be given a list of all participants and emergency contact information.

- 4) Search-and-rescue plan for lost hikers must be established and communicated prior to departure. These procedures should be documented.
- 5) If you become separated and become lost:
 - a) Stay in one place.
 - b) Let searchers find where you are. Use the universal distress call (three loud whistle blasts) repeating at frequent intervals.
 - c) Make yourself comfortable. Find shelter or cover, if necessary.
- 6) Take time to enjoy the sights and sounds around you. Hike at a pace that is comfortable to all members of the Troop.
- 7) The slowest walker should lead.
- 8) Respect the environment; practice "Leave No Trace" minimum-impact principles.
- 9) Any garbage created while hiking must be carried to a proper place of disposal. Littering is unacceptable. Be sure to bring garbage bags in case there are no trash receptacles.
- 10) Follow any safety rules set forth by government governing agencies.
- 11) Ensure that adequate rests are taken to replenish fluids and eat high-energy food.
- 12) Do not eat wild plants, unless expert is present to assess safety of consumption.
- 13) Participants must be aware of the importance of proper toileting procedures while hiking.
- 14) If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

ICE SKATING

Outside (lake or river)

Open water ice skating can be extremely dangerous. The strength of the ice depends on many factors and can change rapidly as the result of temperature differences, snow cover, depth of water, the presence of fish, or debris in the water. Ice must freeze to a uniform depth of four inches to support group skating. For these reasons ice skating in winter on open water, i.e., ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, private or public swimming pools, is **considered hazardous and is classified as an unauthorized activity for American Heritage Girls functions.**

Public Facilities

Age: Girls of all ages can enjoy ice skating, though skating ability should be considered prior to event. Lack of skating experience can increase likelihood of injury and may require additional adult supervision.

Site:

1. Visit the facility to be used in advance to determine if the atmosphere, equipment, etc. are adequate.
2. If possible, choose a time when the facility will not be crowded.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply.
2. At least one of the adult supervisors must be an experienced ice skater. This may include rink employees/referees.
3. A First-Aid , CPR certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.
4. Girls must utilize the buddy system.

Equipment:

1. If rental skates are needed, ensure that facility offers rentals and that they are in good condition.
2. Ensure proper fit and lacing of skates to avoid injury.

Activity Specifics:

1. Injuries may occur as the result of falls on the ice or collisions with other skaters: bruises, pulled muscles, torn ligaments, broken bones or concussion. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

PARADE FLOATS/HAYRIDES:

Age: AHG Girls of all ages may enjoy parade floats/hayrides.

Site:

1. Parade/hayride route must be safe, clear of potential hazards.

Equipment:

1. Persons riding must be able to hold onto something stationary.
2. Floats pulled by vehicles must be insured.
3. Haywagon, float, tractor, etc. must be in good, working order.

Supervision:

1. AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.
2. Adults must accompany girls on floats/hayrides.
3. A First-Aid , CPR certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.

Activity Specifics

1. No body parts, legs, arms, etc., may hang over sides of float/hayride.
2. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

1. American Heritage Girls are encouraged to become active and knowledgeable in political and governmental affairs.
2. Members may express their opinions and beliefs as individuals, but they are not permitted to speak on behalf of AHG, Inc. They may not participate in demonstrations or politically oriented gatherings or activities while wearing any AHG uniform or identifiable regalia.
3. American Heritage Girls will remain nonpartisan in all political campaigns at all levels.
4. Appropriate activities might include visits to a council meeting, legislative session, or a courtroom depending on the age of the group. Permission to visit should be secured in advance and appropriate supervision provided.

ROLLER SKATING / SKATEBOARDING/ ROLLERBLADING

Age: Girls of all ages can enjoy roller skating, skateboarding and rollerblading, though skating ability must be considered prior to event. Lack of skating experience can increase likelihood of injury and may require additional adult supervision.

Site:

1. Roller skating events may be held either at a commercial skating rink or an appropriate location such as a parking lot at a time when the lot is free of cars. Permission to use the area must be secured in advance.

2. Roller skating may not be done on sidewalks or other areas where pedestrians might be endangered.
3. Adult supervisors may evaluate the area for safety prior to the outing and to determine if the atmosphere, equipment, etc. are adequate.
4. If possible, choose a time when the facility will not be crowded.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply.
2. At least one of the adult supervisors must be an experienced skater. This may include rink employees/referees.
3. A First-Aid and CPR Certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.
4. Girls must utilize the buddy system.

Equipment:

1. Helmets are required in outdoor areas, and wrist pads and knee guards are recommended.
2. Ensure proper fit and lacing of skates to prevent injury.
3. Ensure that skates/boards are in good, working order.

Activity Specifics:

1. Teaching girls how to safely fall and get up may reduce the number of injuries.
2. Injuries may occur as the result of collisions with other skaters or falls. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

SWIMMING

Swimming Competency

1. Participants in swimming activities must demonstrate a minimum level of swimming ability.

Swimmer (May swim in all designated swim areas)	Can jump feet first into water over the head, level off, and begin swimming. Can swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: side, breast, trudgen, or crawl. Can swim 25 yards using an easy, resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. Can rest by floating...Long enough to demonstrate ability to rest when exhausted.
Beginner (May only swim in the shallow end, or areas where she can touch.)	In water that she can touch the bottom in, can jump in and fully submerge head. Can swim 25ft on the surface without considerable strain, touching the bottom, holding onto wall, lane lines, etc.
Non-Swimmer (Must stay in shallow end and utilize a Coastguard approved PFD).	Cannot complete either of above swimming tests, without considerable strain, touching the bottom, holding onto wall, lane lines, etc.

2. This competency must be documented using the “*Swim Test Classification Form*” and kept on file at the Troop level. This test must be completed before a girl can participate in activities that involve water more than ankle deep and must be conducted by a lifeguard, swim instructor or swim coach. Girls who have not demonstrated this level of swimming ability are required to wear Coastguard certified flotation devices while in the water.

SWIMMING SAFETY

Age: AHG girls of all ages may enjoy swimming, though swimming ability should be considered prior to activity. Limited swimming ability may impact supervision, site choices, etc.

Site:

1. A safe swimming environment is key in creating a safe swimming activity. Key characteristics of a safe swimming environment include:
 - * On-duty certified lifeguard
 - * Quality supervision
 - * Knowledge of the area and its conditions
 - * A large enough area to accommodate all participants, and avoid overcrowding
 - * Visibly defined areas for ability groups. Deep end/areas must be clearly identified using buoys, lane lines, etc.
2. Hazards such as debris, fish, and pollution must be assessed prior to swimming.
3. Avoid overcrowding.
4. Supervisors must inspect the area in advance to insure that it is appropriate for the group in terms of size, facilities (rest rooms, lifeguards, changing rooms, etc.).
5. Be aware of possible damage from overexposure to the sun and take precautions as necessary. Sunscreen must be applied to all participants, unless parents request otherwise.
6. The use of public locker rooms should be closely monitored, adhering to AHG Child Abuse Policy Guidelines. Girls should act in a manner respectful of other patrons utilizing the locker room facilities. No girl may utilize the locker room unattended or without a buddy.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.
2. Close supervision is the key to a safe swimming environment.
3. At least two qualified adults, with swimming experience, are needed to supervise swimming activities.
4. A certified lifeguard is required for all swimming activities. If the pool/lake provides a certified lifeguard, he/she may be counted into the ratio. Please refer to the Lifeguard Ratio chart below:

# of Swimmers	# of Lifeguards	# of Supervising Adults
1-10	1 +	2 + *
11-25	1 +	2 + *
26-35	2 +	3 + *
36-50	2 +	4 + *

* Unless according the AHG Girl/Leader ratios, age of girls dictates greater number of adults. In this case, adhere to the larger number.

5. Lifeguard must remain out of water, except in the case of emergencies.
6. It will be the responsibility of the adult supervisors to verify that each girl has passed the proficiency level described in the preceding section.
7. The supervisors must have a list/count of all girls in the water at any time, including each girl's swim level.
8. Use the buddy system with checks every 15 minutes to ensure that all swimmers are accounted for.

Equipment:

1. One-piece bathing suits are required.
2. Caution must be exercised with the use of equipment such as flippers and masks.

3. Non-swimmers should not rely on rafts or flotation devices. They are to use only Coastguard certified flotation devices if in the water.
4. Swimming facility must have lifesaving equipment (backboard, rescue tube, hook, etc) that are in good working order.

Activity Specifics:

1. Establish a set of guidelines (i.e., rules) to insure that the outing will be enjoyable for everyone. It is important to establish a clear set of guidelines that girls understand and follow. There must be clear guidelines for how girls should enter the swimming area. Be sure that these guidelines also adhere to facility guidelines.
2. Running in the pool area is not allowed.
3. "Dunking" other swimmers should not be allowed.
4. Dive only in areas that are approved for diving. Check the water depth before allowing the girls to dive. Diving is prohibited in water less than 10 feet in depth.
5. Never jump into the water without checking to see if you might hit another swimmer.
6. Throwing or pushing other swimmers into the water is not allowed as it may result in injury.
7. An emergency plan must be established in case of an emergency.
8. Swimming activities should cease if lightning or thunder is in the area. Participants should exit the swimming area. Swimmers are not allowed back in the water for 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.
9. Swimmers must be taught to call or wave for help if they are in trouble, i.e., cramps or fear.
10. A swim break must be taken at regular intervals. This not only helps avoid swimmer exhaustion, dehydration and excessive sun-exposure, but also gives the lifeguard a break to ensure quality guarding.
11. Be sympathetic to non-swimmers in the group. Neither the Unit Leaders nor other girls should ridicule them or try to force them into the water if they prefer not to swim.
12. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

THEME PARK ACTIVITIES

Age: AHG girls of any age may enjoy theme parks that are age appropriate.

Site:

1. Girls must be made aware of the location of restrooms, first-aid, telephone and security.
2. Park rules must be followed.

Supervision:

1. Girls must be accompanied by adults adhering to AHG Girl/Leader ratios.
2. Buddy system must be used.
3. A First-Aid and CPR Certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.

Equipment:

1. Participants must be encouraged to wear comfortable walking shoes.
2. Frequent breaks, including water, sunscreen and high energy food must be allowed in an effort to avoid dehydration, exhaustion and excessive sun exposure.

Activity Specifics:

1. A "lost plan" must be created prior to visit and understood by all.
2. A plan must be established for inclement weather.
3. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

WINTER SPORT ACTIVITIES (TOBOGGANING, SLEDDING, OR TUBING)

Age: AHG girls of all ages may participate in tobogganing, sledding or tubing.

Site:

1. Winter sport activities must be conducted at designated areas only. Check with local authorities.
2. There must be sufficient lighting for the winter activity. All activities must cease at nightfall if adequate lighting is not available.
3. Significant injury can occur to participants who collide with immobile objects. The downhill course must have no obstacles that could present an opportunity for collision. Inspect the course carefully prior to engaging in downhill activities.

Supervision:

1. Appropriate supervision must be maintained at all times, adhering to AHG Girl/Leader ratios. It is suggested that additional supervision is provided (above the minimum girl/adult ratios) to maximize the safety and protection of the girls.
2. A First-Aid and CPR Certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.
3. Periodic head counts must be done to ensure the safety of the girls.

Equipment:

1. Appropriate attire must be worn at all times, guarding against frostbite, hypothermia, etc.
2. Equipment appropriate for the activity must be inspected for any safety issues.

Activity Specifics:

1. The activity must be appropriate for the skill level of the girls.
2. Appropriate distance must be kept between the downhill participants. Running into another participant can cause serious injury.
3. The girls must receive breaks periodically to warm up and prevent frostbite.
4. Warm drinks and high energy snacks should be provided.
5. Skiing is a restricted activity that requires AHG, Inc. approval.
6. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

RESTRICTED HIGH ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

These activities require approval from the AHG, Inc. Office, Charter Organization and parents. A *“Troop Trip/High Adventure Activity Form”* must be submitted to the AHG, Inc. Office at least four weeks prior to the activity. Participants must also have a current *“High Adventure Medical Form”* on file with the Troop.

BOATING, CANOEING, SAILING AND OTHER OPEN WATER ACTIVITIES

Age: Approved for Explorer level girls and older.

Site:

1. Check the general condition of the water area. Debris, garbage, excessive current or animal life in the water may make the location unsuitable.
2. Check the weather forecast before leaving.
3. Water conditions must be checked prior to trip to ensure that participants skill level can handle currents, rapids, water level, etc.
4. All participants must know and understand the planned route.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply. At least two qualified adults must be present, one of which

must be a certified lifeguard, with CPR and First-Aid certifications. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)

# of Boaters	# of Lifeguards	# of Supervising Adults
1-10	1 +	2 + *
11-25	1 +	2 + *
26-35	2 +	3 + *
36-50	2 +	4 + *

** Unless according the AHG Girl/Leader ratios, age of girls dictates greater number of adults.
In this case, adhere to the larger number.*

- Adult/child ratio must be appropriate to boat's size and capacity, number of boats in group, girls' skill and experience, and water/weather condition.
- Supervising adults must stay with the girls when boating, canoeing, sailing or participating in other open water activities. Girls must not be allowed to travel on water unsupervised. Set up a system of tracking the girls prior to leaving the dock. A suggestion would be to have one adult in the lead boat or canoe and one adult in the rear boat or canoe.
- Instructors must stay abreast of weather conditions and cease activity if weather becomes inclement.
- All boats and participants must return to shore immediately in the event of lightning.
- When possible, an Adult Leader should run the planned course prior to the trip to ensure that difficulty matches girl ability and the absence of any serious hazards.

Equipment:

- All participants in open water activities, such as rowing, canoeing, sailing, waterskiing, sail boarding, rafting, kayaking and tubing, must wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs), commonly known as life jackets. There are to be no exceptions to this policy. Even experienced swimmers should wear a life jacket when participating in boating or other open water activities. A life jacket will keep you afloat, but it will not prevent you from drowning.
- There are various types of PFDs. Every participant must wear a PFD that is designed for her size and weight to insure a proper fit and maximum protection. Each individual should put the PFD on before entering the boat, and the adult supervisors should verify that each individual has properly secured the device. It won't be of much value if it comes off in the water. Every boat must have at least one spare PFD and a throwable flotation device (i.e., life preserver) with a rope attached to be used in the event a person falls out of the boat.
- Some states have laws regarding water safety and the use of PFD's. Federal, state or local parks may have rules regarding open water activities. Check to be sure that you are in compliance with all such regulations and policies in addition to using common sense.
- Inspect the boat, the engine and all safety equipment prior to leaving the shore. Be sure that someone on shore knows your plans and the time you expect to return. Do not exceed the passenger capacity of the boat you are using. Avoid overcrowding.
- Appropriate clothing must be worn, including nonskid water shoes. Beware of over exposure to the sun.
- Take along water and food appropriate to the time span of the activity and make provision for toilet facilities if necessary.
- Must have access to basic rescue gear and adults must have knowledge of proper towing of watercraft.

8. A First Aid kit, including a whistle, must be accessible.

Activity Specifics:

1. A float plan must be created and a copy left with an on-shore contact (Troop parent, etc.). The float plan should include the following information:
 - a. Names of all persons traveling with the group.
 - b. Description of the watercraft being used.
 - c. Where will the group put in?
 - d. Where will the group pull out?
 - e. Where will the group stop for breaks, food, etc.?
 - f. Are there any areas where portaging will be necessary?
 - g. Estimate travel time table, giving ample margins in case of fatigue, changing conditions, etc. When will the group begin, when will they head home?
 - h. Current maps and information about the waterway that will be traveled. Planned route, along with alternate route should be clearly marked.
 - i. Availability of restrooms/drinking water along the course.
 - j. Weather forecast.
 - k. List of any marine communications that could be used in case of emergency.
 - l. Person or agency that should be contacted if the group's course or time table has changed.
2. Participants must have shown at least a Beginner competence in the swimming test (see Swimming Section above). If any participant is unable to complete the Beginner swim test, then she must ride in a boat with a certified lifeguard.
3. Activities such as canoeing, rafting, kayaking and waterskiing may require special skills and additional precautions. All participants must have a basic understanding of activity skills and terms prior to the trip. The age level of the girls must also be considered for these outings.
4. Participants must practice putting on a life jacket, entering the water, righting themselves on the surface, floating and moving prior to boating activity.
5. All participants must know and understand the distress signal to be used in case of emergency.
6. Both visual and audible signals for calling in crafts must be determined prior to leaving shore.
7. If length or difficulty demands, breaks and stops must be planned into the trip.
8. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

CAVE EXPLORING

Age: Approved for Explorer level girls and older.

Site:

1. Cave exploring is an unauthorized activity unless it is a public tour.

Supervision:

1. An Adult Volunteer must be in the front and rear of the girls.
2. All AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.

Equipment:

1. Proper clothing and non-skid shoes are recommended.

Activity Specifics:

1. Girls must be age and skill appropriate for the cave tour.
2. Ensure that no girl suffers from claustrophobia prior to the tour.
3. Establish a safety plan prior to the tour.
4. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

* Tours that are walking only (no crawling, climbing, etc.) on lit walking paths, do not require the "High Adventure Health and Medical History Form."

DOWNHILL SKIING

Age: Approved for 2nd Grade girls and older.

Site:

1. Never ski in unmarked or closed areas.
2. Ski slope must be chosen based on girls' abilities.
3. Girls must understand run coding system (i.e. Black Diamond, etc.)

Supervision:

1. All skiing sites must have trained staff, equipped to handle first-aid emergencies, patrolling ski areas.
2. All AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.
3. Unit Leaders must be aware of each girl's ability and regulate areas of activity accordingly.
4. Buddy System must be utilized.

Equipment:

1. Participants must wear appropriate clothing to guard against cold.
2. All equipment must be in good condition and appropriate to participants size and ability.

Activity Specifics:

1. Rests must be planned to avoid exhaustion and supply hydration and high energy foods.
2. Participants must follow all slope guidelines and courtesies.
3. Beginners must receive instruction from a qualified instructor.
4. A "lost plan" must be created and understood by all participants.
5. Refer to the guidelines on winter sports for other safety measures.
6. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

FLYING

Age: Approved for girls 13 years of age and older.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader Ratios apply.
2. An AHG member may take the controls of the aircraft, but the certified pilot must be in control of the aircraft at all times.
3. A First-Aid and CPR Certified Unit Leader must be present, and access to a First-Aid kit available.

Equipment:

1. The plane may not carry more than the stated passengers/seat belts.

Activity Specifics:

1. Approved flying activities include:
 - Flying on any scheduled commercial flight
 - Flying with a certified pilot within 50 miles of the departure airport
2. An "AHG Flying Permit" and "Parent Permission Form" are required for all AHG flying activities, except commercial flights. Please request form from the AHG, Inc. Office.
3. All standard FAA precautions must be followed.
4. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Age: Approved for 2nd Grade girls and older.

Site:

1. Riding rings/stables must be well lit and free of potential hazards.
2. Weather conditions must be suitable to the planned riding activity.
3. Trails must be marked and mapped. Public roads and highways must be avoided when possible.
4. On trail rides, appropriate distance must be maintained between horses when riding in single file.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply.
2. Riders must be supervised while in proximity of horses, whether mounted or not.
3. Instructors must be qualified, certified by an accredited horsemanship organization and over 18 years old.
4. First-Aid kit must be easily accessible, and a First-Aid and CPR certified individual must accompany girls at all times. Certified stable staff may count.

Equipment:

1. Helmets, long pants and boots/shoes with a heel must be worn.
2. Equipment must be in good condition and appropriate to size of rider.

Activity Specifics:

1. Each rider must be tested and classified according to her riding ability and assigned to a horse and area accordingly.
2. Riders must abide by stable rules.
3. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

WHITEWATER KAYAKING, RAFTING, CANOEING, ETC.


Age: Approved for Pioneer level girls and older.

Site:

1. Check the general condition of the water area. Debris, garbage, excessive current or animal life in the water may make the location unsuitable.
2. Check the weather forecast before leaving.
3. Water conditions must be checked prior to trip to ensure that participants skill level can handle currents, rapids, water level, etc.
4. All participants must know and understand the planned route.

Supervision:

1. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply. At least two qualified adults must be present, one of which must be a certified lifeguard. (An outfitter guide, who is certified, would qualify as a qualified adult.)



# of Boaters	# of Lifeguards	# of Supervising Adults
1-10	1 +	2 + *
11-25	1 +	2 + *
26-35	2 +	3 + *
36-50	2 +	4 + *

** Unless according the AHG Girl/Leader ratios, age of girls dictates greater number of adults.
In this case, adhere to the larger number.*

2. Adult/child ratio must be appropriate to boat's size and capacity, number of boats in group, girls' skill and experience, and water/weather condition.
3. At least one experienced guide, with knowledge of the waterway and International Scale of River Difficulty must be present.
4. Supervising adults must stay with the girls when boating, canoeing, sailing or participating in other open water activities. Girls must not be allowed to travel on water unsupervised. Set up a system of tracking the girls prior to leaving the dock. A suggestion would be to have one adult in the lead boat or canoe and one adult in the rear boat or canoe.
5. Instructors should stay abreast of weather conditions and cease activity if weather becomes inclement.
6. All boats and participants should return to shore immediately in the event of lightning.

Equipment:

1. All participants in open water activities, such as rowing, canoeing, sailing, waterskiing, sail boarding, rafting, kayaking and tubing, must wear Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs), commonly known as life jackets. There are to be no exceptions to this policy. Even experienced swimmers should wear a life jacket when participating in boating or other open water activities. A life jacket will keep you afloat, but it will not prevent you from drowning.
2. There are various types of PFDs. Every participant must wear a PFD that is designed for her size and weight to insure a proper fit and maximum protection. Each individual should put the PFD on before entering the boat, and the adult supervisors should verify that each individual has properly secured the device. It won't be of much value if it comes off in the water. Every boat must have at least one spare PFD and a throwable flotation device (i.e., life preserver) with a rope attached to be used in the event a person falls out of the boat.
3. Some states have laws regarding water safety and the use of PFD's. Federal, state or local parks may have rules regarding open water activities. Check to be sure that you are in compliance with all such regulations and policies in addition to using common sense.
4. Inspect the boat, the engine and all safety equipment prior to leaving the shore. Be sure that someone on shore knows your plans and the time you expect to return. Do not exceed the passenger capacity of the boat you are using. Avoid overcrowding.
5. Appropriate clothing must be worn, including nonskid shoes. Beware of over exposure to the sun.
6. Layers or wetsuits must be worn when cold weather dictates.
7. Take along water and food appropriate to the time span of the activity and make provision for toilet facilities if necessary.
8. Must have access to basic rescue gear and adults must have knowledge of proper towing of watercraft.
9. At least one spare PFD must be on board.
10. A First Aid kit, including a whistle, must be accessible.

Activity Specifics:

1. A float plan must be created and a copy left with an on-shore contact (Troop parent, etc.). The float plan should include the following information:
 - a. Names of all persons traveling with the group.
 - b. Description of the watercraft being used.
 - c. Where will the group put in?
 - d. Where will the group pull out?
 - e. Where will the group stop for breaks, food, etc?
 - f. Are there any areas where portaging will be necessary?
 - g. Estimate travel time table, giving ample margins in case of fatigue, changing conditions, etc. When will the group begin, when will they head home?



- h. Current maps and information about the waterway that will be traveled. Planned route, along with alternate route should be clearly marked.
- i. Availability of restrooms/drinking water along the course.
- j. Weather forecast.
- k. List of any marine communications that could be used in case of emergency.
- l. Person or agency that should be contacted if the group's course or time table has changed.
2. Participants must have shown at least a Beginner competence in the swimming test (see Swimming Section above). If any participant is unable to complete the Beginner swim test, then she must ride in a boat with a certified lifeguard.
3. Activities such as canoeing, rafting, kayaking and waterskiing may require special skills and additional precautions. All participants must have a basic understanding of activity skills and terms prior to the trip. The age level of the girls must also be considered for these outings.
4. Participants must practice putting on a life jacket, entering the water, righting themselves on the surface, floating and moving prior to boating activity.
5. All participants must know and understand the distress signal to be used in case of emergency.
6. Both visual and audible signals for calling in crafts must be determined prior to leaving shore.
7. If length or difficulty demands, breaks and stops must be planned into the trip.
8. AHG recommends adhering to the American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) Safety Code: available at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/safety:start>.
9. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

ROCK CLIMBING, RAPPELLING AND CHALLENGE COURSES

Age: AHG girls of all ages may enjoy rock climbing and low ropes courses, though the age, ability and maturity of the girls should be considered when choosing a site and activity. Rappelling and high ropes courses are approved for Pioneer level girls and older.

Site:

1. Climbing, rappelling, low and high rope courses are allowed at approved and certified outfitting companies.
2. Structures must be constructed and maintained by experienced individuals. All climbing towers and high ropes elements must undergo a yearly safety inspection.
3. Site must be clear of obvious hazards.
4. Rules and guidelines must be clearly posted.

Supervision:

1. At least one certified climbing/rappelling/ropes course instructor must be present at all times.
2. At least one First Aid and CPR trained Adult/Leader must be present, with access to a first-aid kit.
3. All AHG Girl/Leader ratios apply.

Equipment:

1. All participants must have proper, industry-approved equipment that is in good condition.
2. Participants must wear helmets at all times.
3. Facility should have record of rope falls. A rope that has had over 3 hard falls, or is over 4 years old should NOT be used.
4. Participants must wear clothing appropriate to the activity. Proper footwear must be worn.

Activity Specifics:

1. Participants must complete any Outfitter-required waivers. AHG members must also have submitted a "Troop Trip/High Risk Activity Form." Activity Form should indicate whether climbing will take place at an indoor facility or outdoor site.

2. Participants must utilize proper commands (on-belay, belay on etc.) during activity.
3. Participants are not permitted to belay one another, without proper training from certified instructors.
4. AHG authorizes top-rope climbing ONLY. Lead and Trad Climbing are not appropriate AHG sponsored activities.
5. If an injury occurs, determine the level of physical impairment and secure appropriate medical attention in accordance with AHG guidelines.

UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been declared unauthorized by American Heritage Girls. Under **NO** circumstance is an American Heritage Girl function to include these activities:

1. Open water (lake or river) Ice Skating
2. Bungee jumping
3. Cave exploring (except for caves with public tours)
4. "War Games" such as paintball
5. Hot-air balloon rides
6. Parasailing, hang-gliding, parachuting
7. Use of go-carts, ATV's, mopeds
8. Use of jet-skis
9. Use of snowmobiles
10. High-altitude climbing and rappelling
11. Rodeo participation
12. Use of Farm equipment
13. Exploration of abandoned mines
14. Use of powered/motorized equipment (except with proper adult supervision and safety techniques/equipment).
15. Fireworks (sale or use, unless done by a licensed certified fireworks specialist)



Activities not listed in the unrestricted, restricted or unauthorized list must be approved by the AHG, Inc. Office.

ALCOHOL, DRUG, AND TOBACCO POLICY

As the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco has been proven to be a significant health hazard, they are not permitted at any AHG function or activity. Since the Adult Leaders serve as examples for the girl members, smoking is not allowed in the presence of girls at AHG activities or events. Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco by an AHG girl member should be reported to the girl's parents. Use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco by an AHG Adult Member during an AHG event should be referred to the AHG, Inc. for consideration.

"Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task."

1 Timothy 3:1

