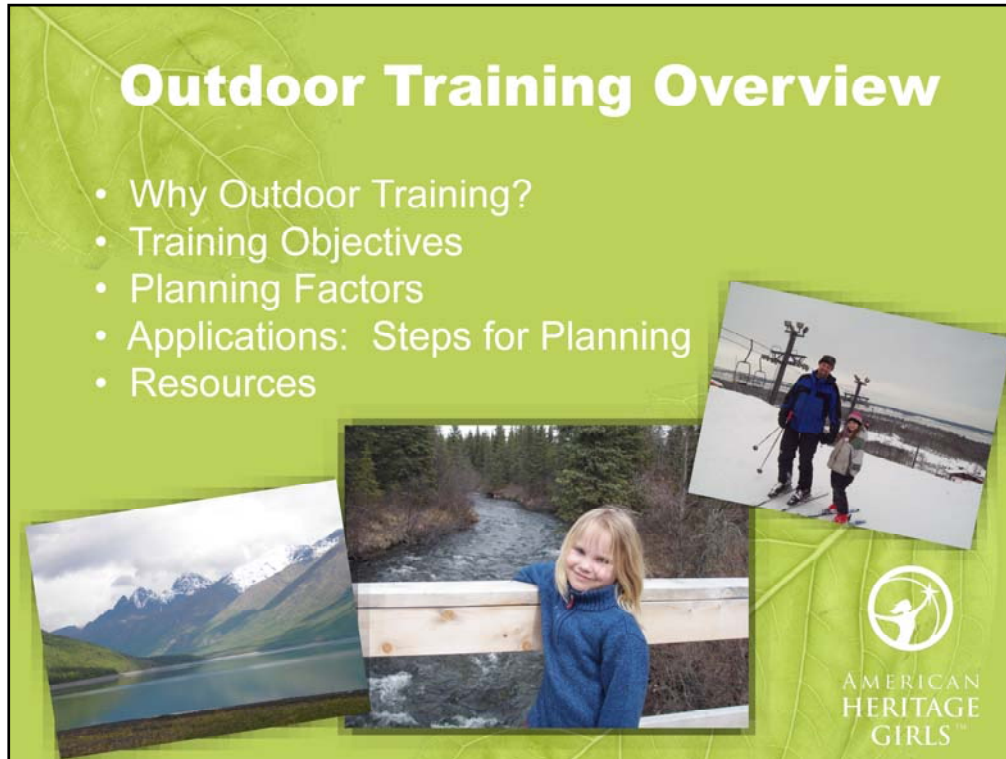




American Heritage Girls has a strong outdoor emphasis and believes that outdoor education and programming plays a significant role in healthy child development. Developing an atmosphere in which girls can explore and learn to adore the natural environment is a vehicle to sensory learning that can produce an increased sense of self-worth, courage and confidence. American Heritage Girls offers a comprehensive outdoor program for girls ages 5-18, including, but not limited to 14 outdoor-based badges and group camping opportunities. The progressive nature of the program, through outdoor skill acquisition and increasing roles in leadership, allows it to grow with a girl.

In an effort to assist Leaders in implementing outdoor programming in a safe manner, AHG's Outdoor Training Program has been developed. Many dedicated volunteers have given countless hours to gather valuable resources and information. This PowerPoint is meant to be used in conjunction with the crucial text of the Indoor Classroom Curriculum.



Outdoor Training Overview

- Why Outdoor Training?
- Training Objectives
- Planning Factors
- Applications: Steps for Planning
- Resources



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We'll first discuss the "Why" of Outdoor Training and the need for an Outdoor program.

Then, we'll cover the AHG Objectives to meet that need.



We'll address the Planning Factors to consider while developing a well-rounded outing that not only gets the girls outdoors, but addresses AHG Program Emphases and meets the girls where they are developmentally.

After covering these more conceptual ideas, we'll discuss some of the specifics of planning, including Environmental Stewardship, dealing with hazards, and AHG – specific administrative requirements.

We'll conclude with further resources to help you plan your specific outing.

Why Outdoor Training?

- Nature Deficit Disorder
 - Only 6% of kids play outdoors on their own
 - Bike riding is down 31%
 - 90% of inner-city youth don't know how to swim
- Key in development
 - Self –esteem, problem solving, spiritual development, motivation to learn
- Creating a well-rounded program
 - Incorporating Program Emphases

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Research is increasingly calling attention to children's need to spend time in the out of doors, and also the huge dichotomy between this need and the reality of their everyday lives.



Richard Louv, author of the best-selling book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*, sites the following disturbing statistics. "In a typical week, only 6 percent of children, ages nine to thirteen, play outside on their own. Studies by the National Sporting Goods Association, and American Sports Data, a research firm, show a dramatic decline in the past decade in such outdoor activities as swimming and fishing. Even bike riding is down 31 percent since 1995. In San Diego, California, according to a survey by nonprofit Aquatic Adventures, 90 percent of inner-city kids do not know how to swim; 34 percent have never been to the beach. In suburban Fort Collins, Colorado, teachers shake their heads in dismay when they describe the many students who have never been to the mountains, visible year-round on the western horizon."

American Heritage Girls has the unique opportunity to start reversing these frightening trends, the opportunity to bring girls back into nature. AHG's progressive outdoor program provides girls with an opportunity to explore the outdoors in a manner that is often not available at home or school. Outdoor programming will assist girls in developing spiritually, physically and emotionally. Activities that allow girls to get their hands dirty and their feet wet, help girls learn self reliance, teamwork, leadership skills, to take risks, set goals, the importance of conservancy and the benefits of physical activity. Outdoor experiences also assist girls in growing spiritually, allowing them to experience a sense of awe that can be translated into a deep desire to become good stewards of the amazing natural world that God has given.

Outdoor programming is key to a well-rounded AHG program.

AHG Outdoor Training Objectives and Implementation

- **Program Objectives**
 - Safety
 - Teamwork and Leadership
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Skills Development
 - Implementation of AHG program goals thru outdoor experiences
- **Indoor Classroom**
- **Outdoor Classroom**
 - BSA Trainings

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AHG's Outdoor Training program seeks to give Leaders tools to plan and implement safe, exciting outdoor experiences. The Outdoor Training will allow leaders to learn:

- *How to plan a safe outing, following AHG Health and Safety Guidelines.*
- *How to teach girls teamwork, through progressive outdoor programming.*
- *How to teach girls leadership skills, including planning and decision-making, through progressive outdoor programming.*
- *How to teach girls Environmental Stewardship and Outdoor Ethics, through progressive outdoor programming.*
- *How to increase girls' confidence through progressive Outdoor Skills Acquisition.*
- *Effective program implementation, incorporating all program emphases into a progressive outdoor experience.*
- *Effective program implementation through an understanding of the developmental stages of girls, as well as girls with special needs and how that translates into the outdoor setting.*
- *How to locate appropriate resources for continued learning.*

The Indoor Classroom curriculum of the training will provide a foundation for planning effective and safe outdoor experiences. These principles can be translated to outdoor adventures across the continuum. Whether you are planning a one-hour hike or a 10-Day paddling trip, the basic principles of the Indoor Classroom can be applied.



Planning is perhaps the most crucial part in conducting an effective, safe and enjoyable outdoor adventure for girls. Proper planning allows activities to run with ease, risk to be reduced and an effective matching of girls' needs and desires with activities. Planning can seem an overwhelming task, but work put in during the planning stage comes back 10 fold as Leaders are able to also enjoy well-planned outdoor activities.

There are a variety of factors that we must consider when beginning to plan an outdoor adventure, including:

- Desired Outcomes
- Incorporating AHG Program Emphases
- Progressive Girl Programming
- Learning Styles
- Developmental & Special Needs of Girls
- Environmental Stewardship

Planning Factors

Setting Goals:

- Will the girls earn a badge or badges?
- Will this be a family event?
- Will Service be a focus?
- Do we want the girls to return with new skills? If so, what are they?
- Do we want the girls to experience a renewed sense of God in their lives?



*So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:21*

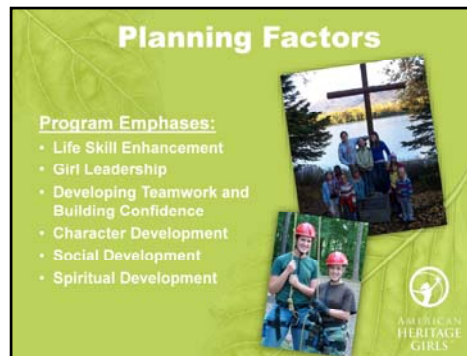


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When planning an outdoor adventure, it is important to first determine the desired outcome.

Identifying the desired outcome for an outdoor adventure will help guide the rest of the planning and implementation. Be cautious when determining outcomes, so that they remain realistic. Outcomes will be influenced by many factors, including girls' developmental stage, allotted activity time, etc.

Once goals and desired outcomes have been set, use them as a gauge against which all activities are measured. If you are thinking of planning a 5 hour biking trip, ask if this trip will meet all of your desired outcomes. Does the length of trip, destination or even activity need to be changed in order to meet your desired outcomes? Does there need to be the addition of another activity? Once you feel strongly that your activity will meet your desired outcomes, you are ready to begin planning!



In an effort to offer girls a well-rounded program, one goal for every AHG function or outing is to cover all six Program Emphases, or as many as possible. Sometimes, Program Emphases are covered without much effort, simply through the innate nature of the activity. Other times, it may require a bit more thought, creativity and planning to create a well-rounded program.

Life Skill Enhancement Completing badge requirements or simply learning new outdoor skills. Life skill enhancement is progressive by nature. As a girl grows and matures she is more capable of mastering advanced skills. Consider utilizing the Outdoor Skill Progression Chart to help with planning Life Skill Enhancement on your next outdoor adventure. Utilize Troop and community resources by inviting local “experts” to share their expertise with the girls.

Girl Leadership Outdoor adventures lend themselves well to girl leadership. Girls can test their leadership skills during the planning stages – making choices about destination, menu, equipment, etc. Girls can take on leadership and mentoring roles while teaching new skills and leading activities. Girls can also use their AHG outdoor experiences to be a leader in their home and schools, encouraging their own family and friends to become more active and enjoy God’s beautiful creation.

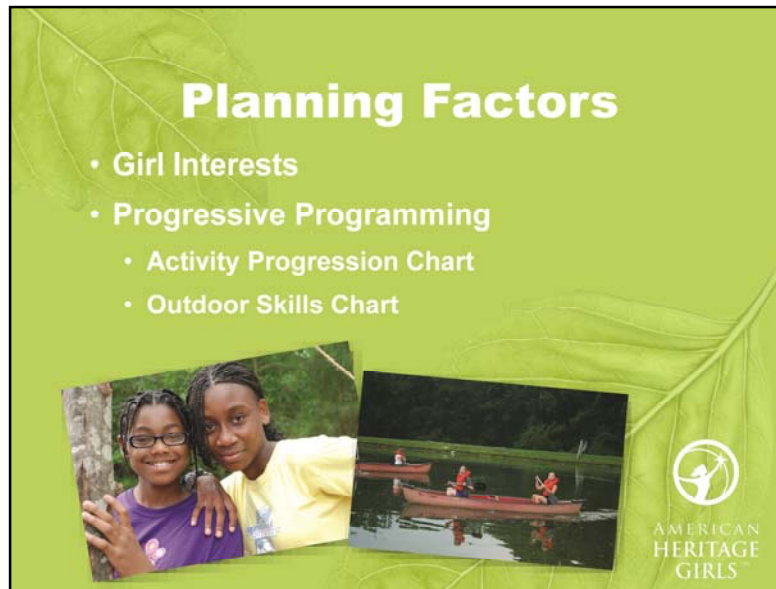
Developing Teamwork and Building Confidence The outdoors are a wonderful place for girls to spread their wings and discover new traits within themselves. Working together to set up a tent, conquer a climbing wall or build a blazing fire all help to develop a strong sense of teamwork. The outdoors have the ability to strip us of our normal defenses, making us vulnerable and therefore making relationships and accomplishments even more lasting. As a girl conquers her fear of a snake, that unknown sound in the night or as she accomplishes things she never imagined, she will also gain a strong sense of confidence.

Character Development There are a variety of ways to incorporate service into an outdoor adventure. Working with a local park or nature center, or even working in your charter partner’s gardens are a great way to get girls enjoying the outdoors, while giving back. Offering to clean up a trail at a local park is a great example of a way you can give your girls an outdoor experience while serving! Teaching girls to be good stewards of God’s creation is a great way to build up character values such as respect, responsibility and reverence.

Social Development The outdoors can be tons of fun! Troop hiking trips and regional camporees are just two ways to encourage a girl’s social development through outdoor programming. Parent-child outdoor programs and family events are great ways to build crucial relationships, while enjoying the outdoors.

Spiritual Development Outdoor experiences also assist girls in growing spiritually, allowing them to experience a sense of awe that can be translated into a deep desire to become good stewards of the amazing natural world that God has given. A mountain view and a star-filled sky can provide an awe-inspiring backdrop for transforming time with God. The outdoors can also offer girls an escape from their fast-paced, busy lives – a quiet place to spend time seeking God, getting to know Him and discerning His will for their lives. Incorporating a daily quiet time, where girls spend time praying, journaling and reading God’s Word, into a Troop camping trip is a great way to incorporate this emphasis.

When planning outdoor activities continually look for ways in which to incorporate the AHG Program Emphases. Girls will benefit from this thoughtful approach, as they will gain a well-rounded experience.



Girl Interests: It is important that you consider what your girls enjoy and what they are passionate about. Try to incorporate elements you know your girls will enjoy, and include them in the planning process as much as possible.

The outdoor training reflects the progressive nature of the AHG program, just as we hope your Troop outdoor adventures will.

Let's take a look at why progressive programming is key in both girl development and successful programming.

Programs should involve girls at the skill and understanding levels they are capable of handling. Giving girls just enough, without overwhelming them will assist in their overall development. Today's culture pushes young girls into being competent rather than innocent. We see it in television, fashion and even extracurricular trends. For this reason, AHG has implemented a progressive outdoor skills program, so that girls can become competent in a manner which encourages development, rather than rush it. With each AHG level girls will be introduced not only to new outdoor skills, but also the opportunity to participate in new outdoor experiences. As we assist girls in step by step reaching toward their goal of competency, we are helping to instill in them the motivation that the apostle Paul felt – *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 3:14. We can teach girls to press on, strong and steady, rather than to sprint and tire – and introducing a progressive outdoor program is one tool we can use.

When planning and implementing programming, a girl's physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual maturity must be taken into consideration. Programs should meet girls where they are developmentally in order for them to learn and mature effectively. A few suggestions from the Christian Camp and Conference Association include: "First and foremost, let them be children! Encourage situations where they can succeed. When they succeed, they gain self-confidence. Let them take initiative, and do their own projects. Support creativity. Recognize strengths. Remember, encouragement and praise will be retained much longer than criticism."

AHG has developed a model suggesting how a girl should progress through outdoor experiences. This model is based on a girl who enters the program as a Pathfinder with little to no outdoor experience. Adjustments to this model may be needed based on a girls age when entering the AHG program, as well as her history of outdoor experience. Leaders are urged to not push younger girls ahead in this progression.

Activity Progression Chart					
Pathfinder	Tenderheart	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 Camp	Multi-Troop Resident Camp	Multi-Troop Resident Camp	Multi-Troop Resident Camp
		One-Night Troop Trips (cabins, bunkhouse)	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 Camping Trips	3 + Night Camping Trips
				High Adventure Day Trips	High Adventure Day Trips
					High Adventure Multi-Nights

This model is based on a girl who enters the program as a Pathfinder with little to no outdoor experience. Adjustments to this model may be needed based on a girls age when entering the AHG program, as well as her history of outdoor experience. Leaders are urged to not push younger girls ahead in this progression.

A copy of this progression chart is included in the UL Handbook, and can also be found on AHG's Leader Site.

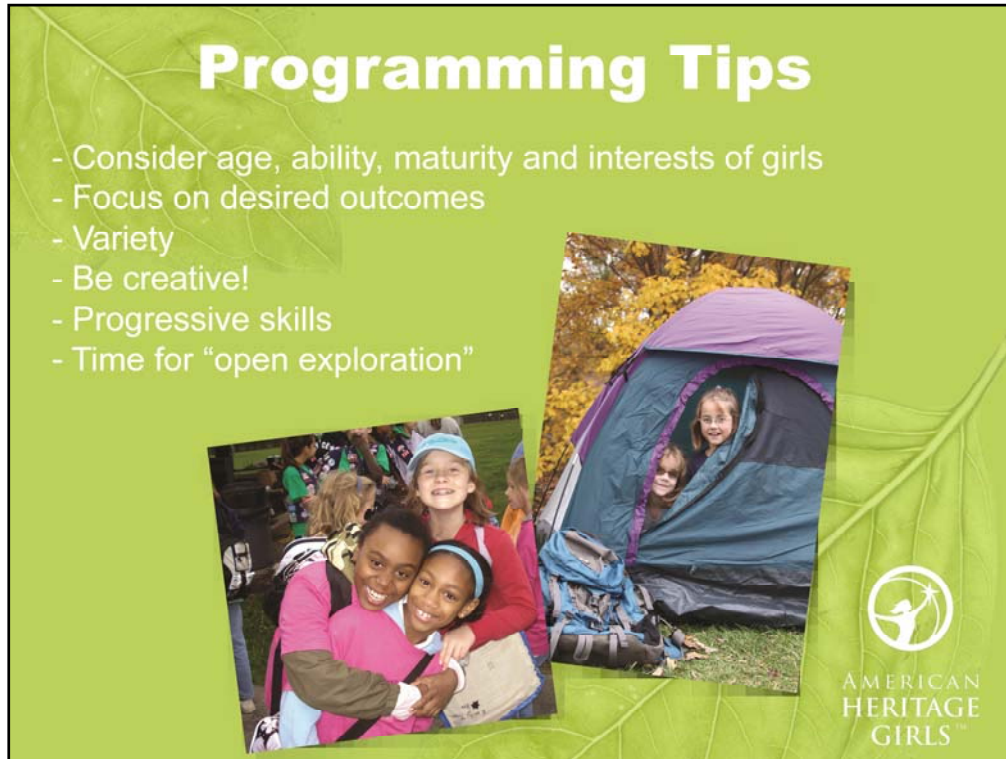
In addition to these age guidelines, AHG has age restrictions on some of its activities. Please refer to the AHG's Health & Safety Guidelines for more details. Health and Safety Guidelines can be found in the Coordinator and Unit Leader Handbooks, as well as on the AHG Leader Site. These age restrictions are for the girls' safety.

Outdoor Skills Progression Chart							
Skill Progression [Compatibility Mode] - Microsoft Excel non-commercial use							
115							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Equipment						
2	Essential Items for Activity	What items are needed for short hikes?	What items are needed for an all-day hike?	Make a list of items needed for overnight camping trip. Camping, 2; Camping, 16; Outdoor Skills, 2	Make a list of items needed for 3 day backpacking trip.	Make a list of items needed for 5 day trip.	How will your equipment list change with the activity (i.e. paddling, climbing, etc.)?
3	Clothing & Footwear Choices	How does the activity impact appropriate choice for footwear? Give examples.	What is the benefit of layering clothing?	What are different options in clothing materials? Which materials are best for which activities?	How should your clothing choices change in regards to weather conditions? Give examples.	Teach a younger girl or unit about appropriate clothing choices for outdoor adventures.	
4	Choosing a tent	Identify the parts of a tent.	What are some different types of tents?	How do you match the tent type to the conditions/activity?	When is the weight of a tent important?	What are some tent materials? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each material? In what scenario is each material best in?	Help a younger girl or unit choose an appropriate tent for their next overnight.
5	Choosing a sleeping bag	Learn how to properly roll a sleeping bag and demonstrate this skill. Outdoor Skills, 2	What are some different styles of sleeping bags?	How do you match the type of bag to the conditions/activity?	When is the weight of the sleeping bag important?	What are some sleeping bag materials? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each material? In what scenario is each material best in?	Help a younger girl or unit choose an appropriate sleeping bag for their next overnight.
6	What types of reels/rods are used for different types of fishing?	Identify the parts of a fishing pole.	Demonstrate the proper use of different rods/reels.	Match rod/reel with type of fishing.	Help a younger girl or unit choose an appropriate fishing rod and reel.		
7	What should be in a tackle box?	What is a tackle box?	What is in a tackle box?	What is the use of each item in the tackle box?	Put together a tackle box-how would it's contents change with the size of fishing?	Assist a younger girl or unit in filling a tackle box.	
8	Choosing Bait	What is bait?	What are different types of bait?	How do you choose bait, based on the type of fish you hope to catch?	Where can you find each type of bait?	Learn to be flyfishing lure.	Teach a younger girl or unit how to choose appropriate bait.
9	Layering Clothing	What is the benefit of layering clothing?	What are some guidelines for layer clothing?	Demonstrate proper layering.	How does clothing material/weather conditions affect layering techniques?	Teach a younger girl or unit how to properly layer clothing.	
10	Cooking gear needed stove & fire	What is the difference between a camp stove & campfire?	What gear is needed for a camp stove & a campfire? Fire Safety & Building, 2	How should campfire/camp stove gear be packed?	What is the proper way to handle stove fuel?	Explain potential problems with bringing "foreign" firewood into a campsite.	When would it be more advantageous to use a fire, stove?
11							Help a younger girl choose the appropriate camp stove etc.
12	Packing						
13	How to fill a daypack	What is a daypack?	When would you use a daypack?	What items should be packed in a daypack? Hiking, 8	How should you pack a daypack? What should go in first, last? Hiking, 8	Assist a younger girl or unit in packing a daypack.	
14	How to properly fit a backpack	When do you use a backpack?	What is an internal & external backpack?	What should you look for when choosing a backpack?	How do you fit a backpack? Hiking, 23	Assist a younger girl or unit in choosing a backpack.	
Color Code Planning Safety Eating Environmental Stewardship Exploring Site							

In addition, an Outdoor Skills Progression Chart has been developed to act as a guide to assist Leaders in planning outdoor activities for their Troops. Age recommendations, are simply that, recommendations.

Activities are color-coded by age and divided by section and skill. Below each outdoor skill, applicable AHG badge requirements are listed. This list is not exhaustive and should be used as a beginning point for Troop planning.

AHG Health and Safety Guidelines should be consulted prior to planning an outdoor adventure, and girls' age, abilities, experience, interests and maturity should always be taken into consideration.




A few tips for effective outdoor programming:

- Consider age, ability, maturity and interests of girls
- Ensure that programming works to achieve desired outcomes for outdoor activity
- Seek to plan a variety of programming that address all 6 AHG program emphases
- Be creative! Creative programming creates a unique experience girls aren't likely to forget.
- Ensure that activities/programming are progressive in nature, building upon previously acquired skills and leaving opportunity for future learning.
- Leave some program time for "open exploration." Allowing girls to explore nature on their own terms, in a safe, controlled manner, is crucial to truly connecting to nature and the potential for spiritual growth through the outdoors.

Activity ideas can come from a variety of sources. The Outdoor Training Site contains a number of ideas for exciting outdoor activities. Local "authorities", such as naturalists, teachers, park volunteers, hobby enthusiasts, etc. are a great resource for creative programming ideas. Depending on the planned adventure, inviting one of these "authorities" to teach an outdoor skill or lead an activity, may be appropriate. The AHG Leader and Girl websites both offer a variety of ideas and resources for outdoor programming as well. AHG badges can also serve as a foundation for a variety of outdoor activities.

Planning Factors

- **Learning Styles**
 - Beaver: Concrete, sequential learning style; needs encouragement to try new things
 - Golden Retriever: Abstract, Sequential Learning; looking for more information
 - Lion : Concrete, Random Learning, need creative communication
 - Otter: Abstract Random Learning; need verbal assurance



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When developing outdoor activities, it is important to consider learning styles. Just as girls have differing personalities, they also have different ways of learning. Understanding how each girl learns will help in the planning and implementation of an outdoor adventure in which they can most effectively accomplish the desired skill or outcome.

In their article, “Understanding the Way Campers Learn, by Cathey Prudhomme” the Christian Camp and Conference Association associate four learning styles with four different animals, as developed by Gary Smalley and John Trent.

The Beaver, a no-nonsense communicator – Concrete Sequential Learning Style

What Beavers Need: Consistency, routines. Need encouragement to take risks and try new things.

The Golden Retriever, constantly searching for more information – Abstract Sequential Learning Style

What Golden Retrievers Need: Reason, logic, complete & thorough information. Need time to process.

The Lion, natural risk taker – Concrete Random Learning Style

What Lions Need: Creative communication. Question answers to provide a challenge & help them refine.

The Otter, driven by relationships – Abstract Random Learning Style

What Otters Need: Verbal assurances. Affirm and challenge to go further. Recognizing and understanding the learning styles of girls will enable the creation of an environment conducive to learning and growing. The challenge is to not only understand different learning styles but to encourage each to thrive in the Troop setting.

Planning Factors

- **Age and Development**

- “First and foremost, let them be children! Encourage situations where they can succeed. When they succeed, they gain self-confidence. Let them take initiative, and do their own projects. Support creativity.”
- Consider physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual maturity



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It is important to take into consideration the needs of girls when planning an outdoor program. Girls needs differ, depending on their developmental stage, as well as with the presence of any special needs.

When planning and implementing programming, a girl's physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual maturity must be taken into consideration. Programs should meet girls where they are developmentally in order for them to learn and mature effectively. At the most basic level we don't want to overwhelm them on the one hand, or bore them on the other. SO we don't send our Tenderhearts down a whitewater river, but for our older girls we want to give them the opportunity to teach and lead the younger girls and make a positive difference in their lives, as well as build their outdoor skills and provide increasingly interesting outdoor adventures. AHG's Outdoor Activity Progression Chart, Developmental Cues and Outdoor Skills Progression can aid in determining age-appropriate activities.

Planning Factors



- Special Needs in the Outdoors
- Resources for inclusive programming
 - AHG's Special Needs Training
 - Support Services Coordinator
 - Local Resources



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AHG seeks to be an inclusive program, where girls of all abilities can grow spiritually, emotionally and physically. Jesus calls us to include all in our ministry. Jesus was the ultimate “includer.” He reached out to individuals of all abilities and ailments, lovingly including them into his ministry. Whenever possible, AHG seeks to involve all girls, despite their special needs, into programming. This may involve making special accommodations, or program alterations to ensure participation. Girls with special needs can, and should be whenever possible, included in all Troop outdoor activities.

Being aware of any special needs within the Troop is crucial to the planning process. Planning ahead to meet these needs will be critical to including all girls. Authorities from the trip location, may be able to assist in accommodating special needs. They should be aware of things such as, wheelchair accessible trails, wheelchair accessible restrooms, trail guides experienced with leading the visually impaired, written scripts for nature hikes, etc. There may also be local organizations which serve individuals with special needs. These organizations may be able to assist with not only planning accessible events, but also with securing any necessary equipment to make accommodation possible. AHG also offers a number of resources for working with girls with special needs. Contact your Support Services Coordinator to get more information on AHG's Special Needs Training, resources and ideas.



“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;” Psalm 24:1
Because the earth belongs to the Lord, we need to be good stewards of it. For this reason, AHG strives to practice Outdoor Ethics and Environmental Stewardship through all its outdoor adventures.

AHG asks all members to practice minimum-impact principles when spending time in the outdoors. Minimum-impact means making choices that leave the least possible impact on the environment. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics outlines 7 principles for minimum-impact outdoor adventures. They include:

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.



Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises

Teaching girls to be environmental stewards now, will not only teach them important principles about respecting what God has given them, but also help to preserve the opportunity for tomorrow's American Heritage Girls to explore nature! Complete Leave No Trace Principles can be found in the Indoor Curriculum, or at Int.org.

Steps to Planning

- AHG's Health & Safety Guidelines
- Research
- Transportation
- Site Selection & Food Service
- Equipment
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Involving Girls in Planning



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Though planning varies with each activity and region of the country, there are six main areas that need to be considered when planning the logistics of an outdoor adventure. Whether you are in California or Maine, addressing these areas will help ensure that you are offering your girls a well-planned trip.

- AHG's Health & Safety Guidelines
- Research
- Transportation
- Site Selection & Food Service
- Equipment
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Involving Girls in Planning

AHG has developed a *Checklist for Preparing for an Outdoor Adventure* (available on the AHG Leader Site) which outlines these steps in an easy to use format. Download this useful tool today!

Health & Safety Guidelines

- Paperwork
- Adult Supervision
- Specialty Certifications
- Necessary Reporting



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Adhering to Health & Safety Guidelines is critical to conducting a safe, enjoyable outing. These guidelines protect the girls, the Leaders, Charter Partners and AHG, Inc. Be sure to consult AHG's Health & Safety Guidelines located in the Coordinator and Unit Leader handbooks. AHG activities are divided into three categories: Unrestricted Activities, Restricted High Adventure Activities and Unauthorized Activities. With each category comes a unique set of guidelines. Be sure to consult the Health and Safety section of the Handbook to determine guidelines associated with the planned activity. Though guidelines differ with each outdoor activity, there are four main areas of Health and Safety that need to be considered when planning an outdoor event.

- Paperwork
- Adult Supervision
- Specialty Certifications
- Necessary Reporting

Health & Safety Guidelines: Paperwork



- Registration
- Permission Slips
- Medical Forms
- Troop Transport Form
- AHG, Inc. Notification



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Has all the necessary paperwork been completed? For a complete listing of AHG forms and their uses, please refer to the Unit Leader Handbook.

a. **Registration** – All girls must be registered prior to attending an AHG outdoor program.

b. **Permission Slips** - A “Parent/Guardian Permission Slip” must be completed for any field trip, Troop trip, camping trip, outing, etc.

c. **Medical Forms** – Medical forms are important in being aware of severe allergies, medical conditions, limitations and medications – all of which can impact outdoor program planning and implementation.

i. A “Health and Medical History Form” must be on file for all adult and youth participants. These forms need to be updated on an annual basis.

ii. A “High Adventure Activity Medical Form” must be on file for all adult and youth participating in an activity that last 3 or more days, or is participating in an activity AHG defines as “Restricted High Adventure Activities.” These forms must be updated on an annual basis

d. **Troop Transport Forms** – All adults driving for AHG events must have a form on file with the Troop.

e. **AHG, Inc. Notification** – depending on the activity, there may be forms required to be sent to the AHG, Inc. Office. Typically, these forms are required to arrive at the office at least 4 weeks prior to the activity, so it is important to plan ahead. Please refer to the Unit Leader Handbook for a listing of activities which require AHG, Inc. Notification.

Health & Safety Guidelines: Adult Supervision

•Adult / Girl Ratios



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Adult Supervision – AHG Girl/Leader ratios must be adhered to during all outdoor activities.

See Health and Safety Section of the Leader Handbook for ratios. Please note that some specialized activities require different ratios.

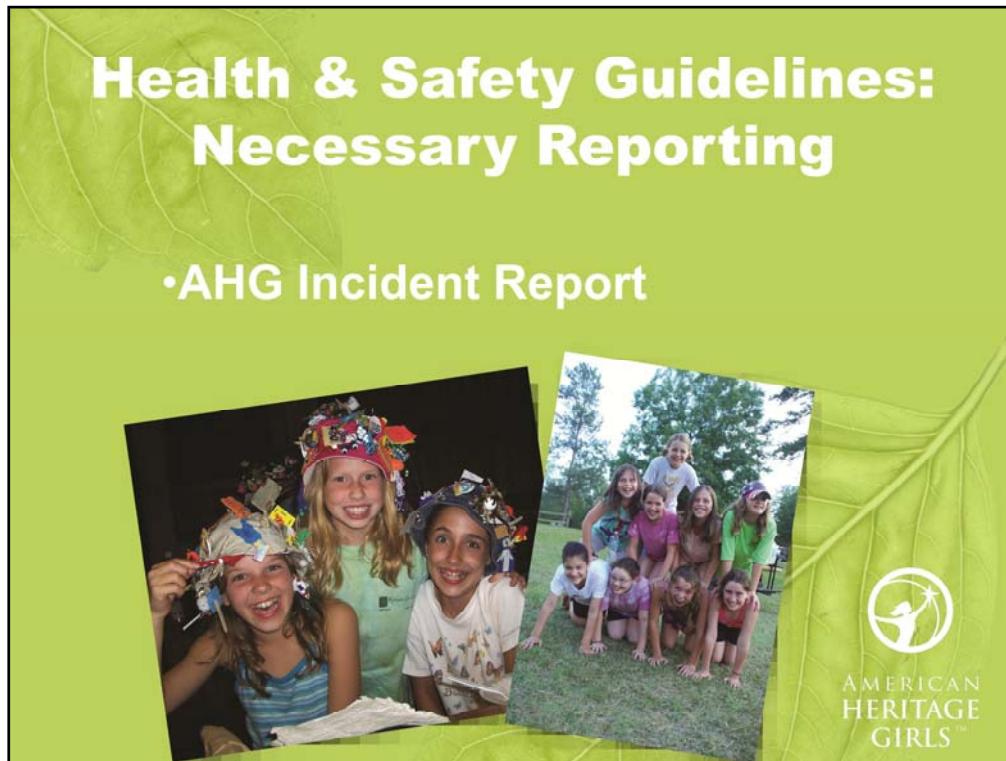
Health & Safety Guidelines: Specialty Certifications

- CPR/First- Aid
- Lifeguards, specialty instructors, etc.



Specialty Certifications – All AHG functions require at least 1 CPR/First-Aid Certified Leader per Unit.

See Health and Safety Section of the Leader Handbook for additional certifications required (lifeguards, specialty instructors, etc.). Please note that required certifications vary with each activity.



Necessary 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"*, along with a follow-up phone call. Incident Report must be completed in a thorough manner, including all necessary signatures and contact information. 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. For a copy of the incident report, please visit the AHG Leader Web Site.

For an easy reference chart of necessary paperwork, certifications, etc., please refer to the Forms and Guidelines Quick Reference Chart located on the Outdoor Training Site.



It is important to investigate the area in which you are planning on visiting, prior to your arrival. Not knowing an important policy, closing, etc. can prove very disappointing to a van full of girls. Typically researching an area only takes a few phone calls or clicks of the mouse – a small price to pay for the peace of mind of knowing the area ahead of time.

Permits

Many parks require permits for particular activities. Contacting an area park ranger or Department of Natural Resources employee will inform you if you need to acquire a permit prior to camping, hiking, climbing, fishing, parking, etc. Permits serve as a way of controlling human impact on an area, funding upkeep of recreational areas, as well as ways to track arrival and departure of visitors for safety purposes – it is important that AHG Troops adhere to permit policies.

Regulations

Many camping, hiking and park areas have specific regulations that need to be known prior to Troop arrival. Some regulations may include:

Campfires: It is important to find out if campfires are allowed, and if so, where is acceptable to create one. Some areas in the nation have fire bans, especially during certain dry times of the year. If campfires are not permitted, camp stoves may be an outdoor cooking option. Be sure to check with local officials regarding the use of camp stoves or other portable cooking devices.

Firewood: Many areas, especially in the Midwest, have restrictions regarding the carrying in of firewood. Recent introductions of non-native insects have unleashed havoc on many natural areas. If you are planning on bringing in your own firewood, be sure to call ahead. Areas that do not allow “foreign” firewood will often offer the purchase of “native” firewood. Native firewood can typically also be collected on the grounds.

Garbage: Some areas require specific disposal of garbage. Knowing this information ahead of time can save a headache later.

Parking/Vehicles: Be sure to know the areas parking and vehicle guidelines. Are there limitations on the number of vehicles permitted on site? Are there specific places where you are required to park?

Group Size: Calling ahead can help ensure that there are no limits to the number of individuals permitted to camp, hike, paddle, etc together. Some areas limit group size in an effort to minimize human impact on the environment. Limited group sizes may require you to reserve multiple campsites, secure additional supervision or equipment.

Seasonal Closures: Once a date has been chosen for the outdoor adventure, it is important to check that the area you are traveling to will be open. Seasonal closures can occur for a number of reasons: High/Low water conditions, snow closures, dangerously dry conditions, Hunting season, special events, area maintenance, etc

Access to Potable Water

The availability of drinking water is crucial to any outdoor adventure. Knowing if there are drinking water facilities available will inevitably impact equipment needs and even the duration or difficulty of the trip. Ensure that drinking water will be available during the specific time of trip and always plan on packing a “backup” water source. For day and even some overnight trips, packing water may be an option. For trips where pack weight and size are an issue, water purification systems can be brought instead. Water purification systems do require a water source, so ensure that there is a body of water available for water collection.

Restrooms

Knowing what type of toileting facilities are available will determine equipment choices and may impact what aged girls should participate in the activity. If bathhouses, latrines or outhouses are available, is toilet paper provided? AHG recommends a minimum of one toileting facility per every 20 participants. If permanent toileting facilities are not available, it will be important that all participants understand the proper procedures for creating catholes and/or latrines.

Steps to Planning

- Research Cont'd

- Weather
- Topography



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Weather

It is important to anticipate possible weather patterns that may be encountered while on an outdoor adventure. Checking weather forecasts prior to trip departure can provide valuable information. During the planning stages, it may be helpful to look at area temperature averages. Overnight lows and daytime highs will impact equipment and clothing choices. If severe weather is predicted, alterations may need to be made to trip and/or activity plans. During times of year when weather can be unpredictable, it will be important to have access to a weather radio or other weather detection device - a small National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio is helpful for learning current weather forecasts. Troop participants (both adult and youth) should be familiar with emergency procedures if inclement weather should arise.

The type and likelihood of serious weather varies within each region of the United States. It is important to be aware of what types of weather may be a possibility in the activity area. Some forms of serious weather include, thunderstorms, snow storms, tornadoes, hail, flash floods, hurricanes, etc.

Topography

Whenever possible, terrain should be traversed by leadership prior to trip. If planning a hiking trip, is the inclination and depression of the land appropriate to girls age, ability and physical fitness level? Are there steep cliffs, raging rivers or other topography that would make the route unsafe? If it is impossible for Troop Leadership to visit the site prior to the trip, it is important to consult topographical maps, trail maps or local authorities (park rangers, etc.) to determine the difficulty of the terrain. For both enjoyment and safety, it is crucial that the route match girl ability.



When possible, knowing potential hazards of the activity prior to arrival will aid in planning, equipment choices, and emergency planning. Are there poisonous plants or animals that girls should be made aware of prior to the trip? Are there bears, skunks, raccoons or other animals in the area that require special procedures with food and garbage? Are there rivers prone to flooding? Knowing potential hazards ahead of time will aid in the ability to avoid these hazards. Consult local park rangers, naturalists or Department of Natural Resources employees to determine hazards specific to the activity area. Some hazards to consider include:

Hazardous Plants: The presence of hazardous plants varies with geographical region, so it is important to identify plants that may be located in the area of activity. Some plants that are harmful to the touch include, poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac, and stinging nettle. Many plants found in the wild are harmful and even fatal to ingest. Participants should never be allowed to eat wild plants, unless an edible plant expert is present.

Hazardous Animals: All wild animals have the potential to be hazardous, and therefore should be treated with great respect and caution. It is important to be aware of hazardous species found in the activity area, and equally important to be able to identify those species. Snakes and spiders are particularly important to recognize. Some common poisonous snakes include, rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths and coral snakes. Some common poisonous spiders include, brown recluse, black widow and wolf spiders. Some marine animals, such as jellyfish, can also be hazardous.

Rabies: According to the CDC, "Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes." While rabies is a serious disease, few humans contract it. CDC reports an average of 1-2 humans per year that contract the disease. The most common source of rabies are bats. The best way to prevent exposure to rabies is to avoid contact with wild animals. For more information on rabies visit the CDC website.

If serious hazards exist, that cannot be avoided and pose a serious danger to participants, the trip should be cancelled, rescheduled or moved to a more safe location. As with all decisions, the health and safety of the girls should come first.

Steps to Planning

- Research Cont'd
 - Recreation.gov
 - Local Sites
 - Phone Call
 - Site Visit



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Much of the needed research can be completed via the internet and/or phone calls. A site visit is always preferred, when possible.



Transportation

Transportation is an important and potentially hazardous part of any outdoor adventure. **Full transportation guidelines should be reviewed in the Health and Safety section of the Coordinator/Leader Handbook.** A few guidelines to keep in mind when planning the transportation piece of an outdoor adventure:

- All drivers must be approved by AHG, having completed a “Troop Transport Form.”
- All girls being transported must have a “Parent/Guardian Permission Slip” on file
- AHG Adult/Girl Ratios must be adhered to during transportation.
- All vehicles must have a charged cell phone in case of emergency.
- Seat belts must be worn by driver and all passengers
- Drivers must have a list of all girls in their car, as well as a list of girls being transported in other vehicles.
- Copies of girls’ medical forms must be present in the vehicle in which they are riding.
- A quick reference list should be created including any potentially hazardous medical conditions of passengers (ie. Severe allergies, epilepsy, asthma, etc.)
- A first-aid kit should be present in all vehicles used to transport girls.



Site Selection: Whenever possible, it is beneficial to visit the site prior to the planned activity. Viewing the site will allow time to plan for any necessary changes to equipment, site or activity based on what is discovered during the site visit. The internet is also a great place to go to access current information on the location you have selected. Many parks' websites include area maps, trail maps and condition alerts. In selecting an appropriate site for an outdoor activity, consider the following:

- The Use of the Site

Questions to Ask:

- Will this site be used for a specific activity?
- Will there be food service on site?
- Will tents need to be utilized on the site?
- Will canoes or other large equipment need to be stored on the site?
- Will a campfire be needed?
- Are toileting facilities available, or will they need to be created?
- How many participants will need to utilize the site?

- Characteristics of a good site

General

- Free of serious hazards
- Adequate space for all participants
- Adequate space for planned activity
- Access to toileting facilities
- Access to potable water
- Access to shelter in case of emergency
- Accessible for all participants

Camping

- All of "General"
- Access to fire ring, if necessary
- Adequate area to separate cooking from sleeping
- Level ground for tents, if necessary
- Adequate sleeping space
- Adequate area for food storage

Hiking

- All of "General"
- Trail difficulty appropriate to participant age, ability and fitness level

Paddling

- All of "General"
- Appropriate put in areas
- Areas available along route to come ashore for breaks, food, etc.
- Areas requiring portaging appropriate to participant age, ability and fitness level.
- Water conditions are appropriate to participant age, ability and fitness level.

Upon arrival to the site, set up of an efficient, organized site will aid in the success of the outdoor adventure, as well as cut down on potential safety hazards.



Food Service: The preparation and consumption of food is not only necessary for survival, but also allows for a variety of learning experiences for girls. Cooking in the outdoors can be an exciting and rewarding experience. Planning for food service is crucial to any outdoor adventure. This planning dictates the menu, rationing and equipment needs. Consider the following questions when planning for food service:

- ***What meals will need to be provided?***
- ***How many individuals will be eating each meal?***
- ***What food requirements will there be? Caloric/nutritional needs? Dietary restrictions/allergies?***

It is important to know what dietary restrictions and/or allergies exist within the group. Severe food allergies

can be life and death, so should be taken seriously when planning a menu. Caloric and nutritional needs also need to be considered, especially when there is an increase in activity. NOLS suggests the following guidelines:

- 1.5 lbs of food (or 2,500 – 3,000 calories) per person, per day for hot days and warm nights.
- 1.75-2 lbs of food (or 3,000- 3,500 calories) per person, per day for warm or cool days and nights, or when hiking with a full pack.
- 2 – 2.25 lbs of food (or 3,500 – 4,000 calories) per person, per day for hiking or skiing on cool days and cold nights
- If planning a trip that lasts 7 or more days, plan for the higher amount of suggested food, as participants tend to grow more hungry as the trip progresses. Due to this increase in food need and the sheer amount of supplies needed, it is recommended that a food drop be coordinated prior to departure to deliver supplies needed for day eight and beyond. Additional food and supplies can be dropped off by a friend, or even mailed to a specific Post Office along your route. The important part is that you plan ahead.

- ***Can perishable ingredients be taken? Will there be access to refrigeration? Are coolers a viable option?***
- ***What type of cooking heat sources will be available? Will fires (wood or charcoal), campstoves, or solar ovens be used? Based on these heat sources, what type of food options are available? Based on these heat sources, how will equipment needs change?***
- ***Are there restrictions for storing food, based on environmental or site guidelines? Are there bears in the area?***

The presence of bears requires specific food storage for the safety not only of the group, but its equipment and the bear as well. Some areas supply bear boxes for storage of food (or any other scented items, such as shampoos, chapstick, etc.). If bear boxes are not supplied, food will need to be hung.

- ***What clean up and sanitation procedures are necessary?***

Clean up and sanitation is even more critical in the outdoors where the presence of wild animals and lack of modern conveniences demand vigilance. Proper clean up of the cooking and eating areas will help avoid unwanted late night visits from animals. Proper sanitation of cooking and eating equipment will help cut down the risk of sickness, contamination and the spread of illness.

Efficient planning of cooking methods, menus and needed equipment will help cut down on the amount of time needed to be spent with food prep and clean up. Planning will ensure that all ingredients and equipment arrive and that all participants receive the sustenance that they require during their great adventure.



Packing the needed equipment for an outdoor adventure is crucial not only to its success, but also to its safety. All equipment should be in good, working order. Maintenance, thorough cleaning and proper storage are key to keeping equipment in good condition. Many troops budget to purchase troop equipment that they will use often, such a cooking pots, compasses or tents.

For equipment that is used rarely, or is too expensive for Troop purchase, check with local outfitters regarding options to rent equipment. Asking Troop parents, or Charter Partners, is another great way to collect necessary equipment. Access to equipment may alter your plans, so be sure to plan ahead in order to assure that all necessary equipment will be available.

Equipment needs vary with a number of factors, including:

- **Planned activities:** Is there specialized equipment needed for the activities planned?
- **Age and ability of girls:** Will girls be able to carry a large amount of gear? Are girls old enough to be cooking over a campfire?
- **Number in group:** The more people attending the event, the more equipment needed.
- **Duration of trip:** Will this be a 2-hour hike, or a 2-week backpacking trip?
- **Terrain & Site:** Will equipment weight impact the ability to traverse terrain? Does the site limit the size/ number of tents?
- **Weather:** Is it forecasted to be cold at night? Does it often rain unexpectedly during this time of year?
- **Access to toileting facilities:** Are toileting facilities available, or will they have to be created? Is toilet paper provided?
- **Access to potable water:** Will water be available? Will water or a water purification system need to be carried in?
- **Menu choices:** How many meals will be needed? What type of heat source will be used? Based on planned activities, how many calories will each participant require?
- **Area regulations/guidelines:** Does the area require certain equipment be used? Are there specific forms of garbage disposal, or food storage that require additional equipment?

A few pieces of Troop equipment that are crucial to any outdoor adventure include:

- Girl Health History Forms
- Emergency Contact Information
- First Aid Kit (See Health & Safety section of Chairperson/Leader Handbook for contents)
- Electronic Communication Device (such as a cell phone) in case of emergency

In addition to Troop equipment, there will be some equipment that girls will have to provide and pack for themselves. It is important to provide girls (and parents) with a detailed packing list, to ensure that all girls arrive to the activity with all they need to have a great time!

It is crucial that girls arrive with appropriate clothing and footwear. Being too cold, too hot or having feet covered in blisters can quickly ruin a girl's outdoor experience. Encourage girls to dress utilizing layers. Layers help keep the body warm and dry, and also allow for the removal of some layers as heat dictates.

Additional information on layering techniques, packing tips, tips for fitting a backpack, and much more can be found in the Indoor Classroom Curriculum, located on the AHG Leader Site.

A sample packing list is available on the AHG Leader Site.



Whether you are planning a day trip or 2-week outdoor adventure, developing an emergency preparedness plan is critical in response to a crisis. Risk can be reduced significantly by simply being prepared. It is important that emergency procedures are clearly communicated with all trip leadership, and that each individual understands his/her role in an emergency. By following the planning steps outlined earlier, most potential hazards, and therefore emergencies will be planned for, and therefore can be avoided.

Step One: Make a list of all the man-made and natural hazards that you identified during previous planning steps. Be sure to include weather, dangerous plants/animals, known medical conditions, injury, missing participant and uninvited strangers.

Step Two: Discuss each scenario and what steps would need to be followed. Scenarios will depend on the activity and area. Some scenarios to consider include:

Inclement weather: Lightning, Tornado, Flood, Snow Storm

Injury: Plan for minor and serious scenarios

Illness: Allergic reaction, medical condition, minor sickness

Snake, Spider or Animal Bites

Missing Participant

Uninvited Stranger

Decide who does what, when. For instance, who calls 911? If the emergency is out on the trail or lake, how is 911 accessed? Will emergency vehicles have access to your area? If not, who can allow access, or direct vehicles to the appropriate area? Where do the girls go who are not involved in the emergency? Who is supervising them? Who leaves to be sure 911 is called? Who is responsible to call the parent(s)/guardian(s)? Assign responsibilities to each adult leader, and girl participants (if necessary).

Step Three: Gather all necessary information (such as emergency numbers, location of activity, number and names of participants, Troop communication liaison, AHG, Inc. contact, area map, etc.) and make copies of this information available to all adult participants.

Step Four: Leave a copy of your emergency preparedness plan with a Troop Parent who is not attending the event, as well as with your Support Services Coordinator. In addition to your Emergency Prep Plan, be sure to leave a detailed itinerary of Troop activities, locations and timeframes. Establish a communication system to notify all parents in the event of an emergency. A phone tree is an effective method of notification.

Reporting an Emergency Event

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, 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. For a copy of the incident report, please visit the AHG Leader Web Site.

A great resource to aid you in creating an EPP is Boy Scouts' "Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety." A copy of this great tool is available on the AHG Leader Site, or visit <http://www.bsa.scouting.org/scoutsources/HealthandSafety/Resources/sweet16.aspx>.

Involving the Girls

Involving girls in the planning of your outdoor adventure will not only help to make it memorable, it will also teach valuable leadership, planning and safety skills.



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Involving girls in the planning of your outdoor adventure will not only help to make it memorable, it will also teach valuable leadership, planning and safety skills. Girls of all ages can take part and the Patrol System is especially effective for planning these types of activities.

When girls help with the planning, they also have a better understanding of what will be happening on their adventure, which can often help decrease the fear factor. It is imperative that girls are told about the expectations of the event prior to the event! Not only will this assist the girls, but it will cut down on behavior problems significantly. It is also helpful to have the girls come up with the rules for the event (with adult guidance of course). Not only will this help them understand expectations, but also help them feel a sense ownership and buy in. Be sure to talk about why each rule is important as you work through them. With adult oversight, older girls can plan an entire camping trip from beginning to end!



There is an abundance of resources available for planning outdoor activities!

* **Quarterly Leader Resource Guide** – Each quarter features a number of great activities, perfect for your next outdoor adventure

* **AHG Girls' Site** – Outdoor cooking recipes, fun activities, etc.

* **Outdoor Training Site** (link from www.ahgonline.org/training) – tons of resources, including:

- List of great outdoor resources (books, websites, etc.)
- Outdoor Activity and Sensory Activity Ideas
- Bible verses pertaining to the outdoors
- Tips for using the Squad System and Kaper Charts during Outdoor Adventures
- Forms & Guidelines Quick Reference: chart of what forms to use when
- EPP Worksheet
- and Much More!

* **Online resources**

REI.com

Meritbadge.com

Child and Nature Network

* **Books, books, books** – there is no shortage of great books on bringing kids into the outdoors. Visit the Outdoor Training Site for a list to get you started.

* **AHG Support Services Coordinator** – when in doubt, contact your SSC.

In addition to these you may also have Troop parents or members of your Charter Partners that possess a wealth of information.

Outdoor programming is a wonderful way to expose girls to our beautiful world, teach them new skills and keep the AHG program fresh and exciting. Thoughtful, thorough planning is crucial to a fun and safe event!

Psalm 95:1-7

- ¹ Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.
- ³ For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
- ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
- ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
- ⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
- ⁷ for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.



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Please close in prayer, or by reading this scripture.

Now its time to take what you've learned and put together a safe and exciting outdoor adventure for your Troop! If you have additional questions, please consult with your Support Services Coordinator.