



OUT-OF-CLASS SAFETY HANDBOOK

Appendix D

General Safety Guidelines

APPENDIX D: OUT-OF-CLASS GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

The following safety guidelines and the associated Physical Activity Safety Checklists (see Appendix E) have been provided to help the PE/HE teacher guide the student in order to reduce the risks associated with the physical activities* the student has chosen for the OUT-of-class component of physical education/health education (PE/HE) courses in Grades 9 to 12. These guidelines are to be presented and shared with students at the beginning of the course as part of their orientation to the OUT-of-class component and are intended to increase their awareness and understanding of risk management while taking part in any physical activity. The school may want to post a version of these General Safety Guidelines and the Physical Activity Safety Checklists on the school's website so that they may be viewed at home by the student and parent.

1. General Considerations

Safety is paramount when participating in any physical activity. The student and parent/guardian (or only the student if 18 years or older) will need to consider the nature and risk level of the physical activity in determining whether it is suited to the student, and, if so, the level of supervision required by the parent/guardian or another adult.

Taking responsibility for the student's safety is very important as part of the OUT-of-class component of this course. Always think **safety first!** The student and parent/guardian (or only the student if 18 years or older) can use the following checklist before the student participates in any physical activity:

- Does the student and parent/guardian (or only the student if 18 years or older) understand the safety rules related to the physical activity?
- Is the activity suitable to the student's age, ability, and physical condition?
- Is the activity suitable, given any medical conditions the student might have?
- Does the student and parent/guardian (or only the student if 18 years or older) understand the correct form or technique of the exercises or skills the student needs to practice?
- Does the student and parent/guardian (or only the student if 18 years or older) understand the risks associated with the physical activity and ways to avoid the dangers?
- Is the equipment to be used by the student suitable and in good condition?
- Is the facility or playing area to be used by the student safe?

* **Physical activity** refers to all forms of large muscle movement, including sports, dance, games, walking, and exercise for fitness and physical well-being. It may also include physical therapy or mobility training for students with special needs.

- Will there be appropriate instruction and/or supervision provided to the student in light of the danger or risk associated with the physical activity?
- Does the community organization or group show evidence of current general liability insurance for the facility and its personnel?
- Does the community organization or group require its personnel to undergo criminal record or child registry checks?
- Has the student discussed his or her choice of activities with the parent/guardian (not required if student is 18 years or older) and his or her PE/HE teacher?
- Are the activities selected by the student/parent included in their Personal Physical Activity Plan?

2. Level of Risk

All activities have an inherent level of risk and each activity has a range of risks dependent upon a number of factors. The type of activity and the level of practice or competition may also contribute to the level of risk involved. The Risk Factor Rating (RFR) which is outlined in the table below, was developed for this document to categorize each activity by the level of risk one can expect when participating in it. The level of risk, or RFR, is indicated by a rating scale from 1 to 4, where an RFR of 4 represents the highest risk. The rating is based on the prevalence of safety concerns involved in the activity as well as the recommended level of instruction and supervision. This rating appears on all the physical activity safety checklists as well as the activity inventory of suggested activities included in this document.

RFR	Level of safety concerns; recommended instruction and supervision	Examples
1	There are few safety concerns for this physical activity; little or no qualified instruction or adult supervision required.	Walking Stretching
2	There are some safety concerns for this physical activity; qualified instruction is recommended; little or no adult supervision is required.	Racquetball Ice Skating
3	There are several safety concerns for this physical activity; qualified instruction is required; adult supervision is recommended.	Snowboarding Field Hockey
4	There is a high level of safety concerns for this physical activity; qualified instruction and adult supervision is required.	Swimming Karate

3. Risk Factors

Just as school staff manages risk and plans for safety when instructing/coaching and organizing physical activities in their in-classroom and extracurricular programs, the student/parent can evaluate and manage risk according to certain risk factors for OUT-of-class activities not based in the classroom or in extracurricular school programs (non-school-based). The Physical Activity Safety Checklists provided take into consideration the following risk factors:

- Level of instruction
- Level of supervision
- Facilities
- Environment
- Equipment
- Clothing/footwear
- Personal and other considerations

3.1 Level of Instruction

With proper instruction, the level of risk involved in any activity should be reduced. The amount and level of instruction required by the student will vary according to individual circumstances such as their personal experience, skill level and physical condition. The following are instructional considerations that should be addressed when learning and practising an activity:

- The instructor/coach/program leader's qualifications/certification or abilities are appropriate for the age/ability level of the students in the group.
- The potential risks and consequences of an activity are understood by students prior to participation in the event.
- Instruction and training is current with recent trends.
- The session is conducted in a safe environment and the instructor/coach/program leader/participant's choice of activity is appropriate for the facility available.
- The activity is suitable for the abilities and level of fitness of the participants.
- Rules regarding safety, behaviour expectations, and responsibilities of participants are established, learned, and followed.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down portion is included in the activity session.
- Skills are learned in a proper progression and participants receive adequate opportunity to master the skills before moving to higher-level tasks or challenges.

NOTE

The amount and level of instruction required by the student may vary based on circumstances such as the student's personal experience, skill level, and physical condition. The use of media resources, such as an instructional DVD, may replace direct instruction if deemed appropriate and safe.

3.2 Level of Supervision

Supervision involves overseeing an activity for the purposes of regulation and/or direction. The level of risk decreases significantly with effective supervision. When a session is conducted by an instructor or coach, they assume responsibility for supervision. In some instances, an additional supervisor is required, such as when the coach/instructor is under the age of 18, when the coach/instructor is of a different gender than the participants, or when specific expertise is required, such as a lifeguard for certain aquatic activities.

For each physical activity, supervision requirements will differ according to the level of risk, the nature of the activity, and the intensity of competition/training. Furthermore, some activities require supervision regardless of age. On the other hand, many activities will require little or no supervision (e.g., many home-based, recreational, or modified activities). Without an adult supervisor present, the student(s) will be responsible for managing risk and safety while participating in the activity. However, they should know how to respond to emergencies and have a fundamental knowledge of first aid. In all instances, basic personal safety rules should be followed (e.g., road safety).

While the level of supervision can be viewed on a continuum, the three types of supervision referred to in the physical activity safety checklists are:

- *Constant visual supervision* signifies the instructor/coach/program leader is physically present, watching the activity (e.g., high jump); only one such “higher-risk” activity can be supervised by one person at a time. This level of supervision may also be required during initial instruction, especially with more difficult skills.
- *On-site supervision* requires the instructor/coach/program leader to be present but not necessarily viewing one specific activity (e.g., relay passing on the track). The activity can be observed and supervised at a distance while supervising another activity. This also applies to situations where more than one activity station or drill is occurring simultaneously.
- *In-the-area supervision* means that the instructor/coach/program leader has to be accessible but participants may at times be out of sight (e.g., distance running on school grounds).

The following guidelines related to supervision should be applied based on the nature of the activity:

- The supervision recommendations for the activity/facility are known.
- Adequate staff is present to supervise according to the number of participants and their capabilities.
- Rules are enforced regarding behaviour expectations and responsibilities of participants.
- The supervisor has an emergency action plan in place to deal with accidents/injuries as well as access to first aid materials or assistance.
- For outdoor pursuits, a “lost student plan” is in place in case someone gets separated from the group. This may be combined with head-count procedures and a buddy system.

3.3 Facilities

Indoor and outdoor facilities used for physical activity are normally designed according to stringent building codes to ensure physical activity is enjoyed in a safe environment. In other situations, participation will occur at home or in facilities that were not necessarily designed specifically for physical activity. In all cases, the following risk management strategies should be applied:

- The activity area has been checked to ensure it is free of hazards (e.g., rocks or broken glass on soccer fields) prior to use.
- Potential hazards have been removed or clear boundaries have been placed around them, or if this is not possible the activity has been moved to another location or postponed.
- Activity areas have adequate unobstructed space surrounding them (e.g., out-of-bounds area around a basketball court).
- Proper lighting and ventilation (indoors) is provided.
- An Emergency Action Plan has been developed for the facility to deal with accidents/injuries.
- A first aid kit, phone, and required emergency equipment are readily available in case of accident/injury.
- Safety rules are posted and enforced.
- Instructions for the use of the facility are posted.
- All emergency exits are clearly marked.

3.4 Environment

While the outdoor environment offers opportunities for a wide range of physical activities, many factors cannot be as controlled as in an indoor facility. In planning for participation in an outdoor activity, the following strategies should be considered:

- Local weather conditions/forecasts are checked prior to the activity, including the temperature and quality of the air (e.g., smog or smoke), the presence of wind, as well as the potential for electrical storms and precipitation.
- Dry clothing that is worn in layers protects against cold, windy, and wet conditions, which are factors contributing to the onset of hypothermia.* When temperatures drop below freezing, the risk of frostbite is added as well (see Environment Canada Chart on the following page).

* **Hypothermia** refers to any condition in which the temperature of a body drops below the level required for normal metabolism and/or bodily function to take place.

Wind Chill Hazards and Risk of Frostbite

Wind Chill	Risk of Frostbite	Health Concern	What to Do
0 to -9	Low	Slight increase in discomfort.	Dress warmly, with the outside temperature in mind.
-10 to -27	Low	Uncomfortable Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection.	Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Wear a hat, mittens and scarf. Keep active.
-28 to -39	Increasing risk: Exposed skin can freeze in 10 to 30 minutes.	Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears, and nose) for numbness or whiteness. Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection.	Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens, and a scarf, neck tube, or face mask. Keep active.
-40 to -47	High risk: Exposed skin can freeze in 5 to 10 minutes.*	Check face and extremities (fingers, toes, ears, and nose) for numbness or whiteness (frostbite). Risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods without adequate protection.	Dress in layers of warm clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens, and a scarf, neck tube, or face mask. Keep active.
Warning Level [†]			
-48 to -54	High risk: Exposed skin can freeze in 2 to 5 minutes.*	Check face and extremities frequently for numbness or whiteness (frostbite). Serious risk of hypothermia if outside for long periods.	Be careful. Dress very warmly in layers of clothing, with an outer layer that is wind-resistant. Cover all exposed skin: wear a hat, mittens, and a scarf, neck tube, or face mask. Be ready to cut short or cancel outdoor activities. Keep active.
-55 and colder	High risk: Exposed skin can freeze in less than 2 minutes.	DANGER! Outdoor conditions are hazardous.	Stay indoors.

* In sustained winds over 50 km/h, frostbite can occur faster than indicated.

† In parts of the country with a milder climate (such as southern Ontario and the Atlantic provinces except Labrador), a wind-chill warning is issued at about -35. Further north, people have grown more accustomed to the cold, and have adapted to the more severe conditions. Because of this, Environment Canada issues warnings at progressively colder wind-chill values as you move north. Most of Canada hears a warning at about -45. Residents of the Arctic, northern Manitoba, and northern Quebec are warned at about -50, and those of the high Arctic at about -55.

Reproduced from the Environment Canada website at <www.msc.ec.gc.ca/education/windchill/windchill_threshold_chart_e.cfm?&sb_templatePrint=true>. Used with permission.

- Protection is used against elevated temperatures, humidity, and the sun, such as adequate water consumption, light clothing, a hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses. The humidex combines temperature and humidity to reflect the perceived temperature. The following guide from Environment Canada indicates the risk associated with various humidex levels. When the humidex rises above 40, activity should be avoided or curtailed.

Range of humidex: Degree of comfort*	
Less than 29°C	No discomfort
30°C to 39°C	Some discomfort
40°C to 45°C	Great discomfort; avoid exertion
Above 45°C	Dangerous
Above 54°C	Heat stroke imminent

- Protection against insects and poisonous plants is provided by adequate clothing, proper footwear, and insect repellent. If allergies are an issue, the student/parent needs to provide the necessary information to the instructor/coach/program leader and carry the necessary medication (e.g., epi pen).
- A designated person with first aid training is present to deal with injuries and emergencies.
- A bad weather plan is in place to cancel, reschedule, or relocate an activity/event.
- In regards to electrical storms, when a thunder and lightning strike occur within five seconds of one another, the storm is very near and at a distance of about 1.6 km for each five-second count. Changes in this interval of time indicate the storm is moving away or approaching the activity area. When an electrical storm is near, everyone needs to find shelter. If this is not possible, they must move to a low-lying area, away from water and metal as well as taller objects such as trees and poles.
- Local emergency services are identified.
- Adequate drinking water is available.
- Washroom facilities are accessible.
- Only designated areas/trails are used.
- Prior to outdoor aquatic activities, water conditions are assessed.
- Prior to entering remote areas, permission is obtained, maps are carried, and fire restrictions and wildlife guidelines are checked.
- Only environmentally friendly techniques, such as low-impact camping, are used.

* Reproduced from the Environment Canada website at <www.qc.ec.gc.ca/Meteo/Documentation/Humidex_e.html>. Used with permission.

3.5 Equipment

The level of risk involved in any activity will be affected by the equipment used by the participants while participating in the activity, and will decrease when appropriate equipment is used. Most physical activities require some form of equipment that may be integral to the activity itself or may offer protection to participants while engaging in the activity. Risk management strategies related to equipment include:

- Equipment is checked before use for defects by the instructor/coach/program leader and the student (who should be shown what to check for).
- Equipment is certified (e.g., CSA) in accordance with rules and regulations of regulating organization.
- Instructions are given regarding the proper use and maintenance of equipment.
- Defective equipment is avoided.
- Equipment that does not fit properly and/or adjusted for size (e.g., downhill ski boots) is avoided.
- Problems/defects are reported to instructor/coach/program leader.
- Equipment that does not comply with safety standards (e.g., CSA) is avoided.
- Equipment should be purchased from/built by competent individuals as per specifications as established by the governing/regulating body for a sport/activity.
- A first aid kit, phone and required emergency equipment are readily available in case of accident/injury.
- Portable music players are avoided as they reduce the student's awareness to any potential dangers in his/her surroundings.

3.6 Clothing/Footwear

The level of risk involved in any activity will be affected by the clothing worn by the participants while participating in the activity and will decrease when appropriate clothing is worn. Inappropriate/ill-fitting clothing/equipment can inhibit movement and/or be the source of potential injury (e.g., skis that are too long). Not wearing appropriate clothing/equipment may also prohibit participation in an activity (e.g., not wearing a throat protector prohibits participation in hockey team practices/games). In determining clothing and footwear to be worn during an activity, the following strategies should be applied:

- Appropriate and properly fitted clothing/footwear is worn as defined by the activity.
- Adequate clothing and protection is used based on environmental conditions.
- In cold weather, clothing is worn in layers.
- Jewelry should be removed or secured when safety is a concern.
- Clothing should permit unrestricted movement.
- Laces need to be tied and open-toed shoes are avoided.

3.7 Personal and Other Considerations

While participating in physical activity, other considerations that may contribute to the risks involved relate to the participant's personal health, physical limitations, and general behaviour during participation. The following strategies should be used:

- The student has completed a regular medical checkup and submitted a medical history prior to starting into the program; any relevant medical conditions or physical limitations are taken into account and shared with the instructor/coach/program leader.
- Students suffering injury are referred to appropriate medical personnel for treatment and rehabilitation, and should not return to training until cleared by a qualified medical professional
- The activity is suitable to the student's age, ability, mental condition, and physical condition.
- The student demonstrates self-control at all times and avoids any behaviour deemed inappropriate.

4. Eligible Activities

The purpose of the student-directed OUT-of-class component of the course is to encourage youth to take greater ownership of their physical activity and become involved in physical activities suited to their own individual interests and abilities.

These activities should be safe, ethical, and appropriate. Completion of the Physical Activity Practicum for Grades 11 and 12 requires a minimum of 55 hours of physical activity at a moderate to vigorous level of intensity that contributes to cardio-respiratory endurance (heart, lungs, circulatory system) plus one or more of the health-related fitness components (muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility).

As per departmental policy, physical activities selected for the OUT-of-class component of the course do not qualify when the activities are related to another course for which the student receives credit (e.g., school-initiated courses related to dance or sports).

Certain high-risk activities that are inherently dangerous may be prohibited by the school/division as part of the OUT-of-Class Physical Activity Practicum, and will not be eligible for credit under any circumstances according to local policy. This policy might also require that certain activities (e.g., trampolining), which are known to be associated with a higher rate of injury when unsupervised, be directly supervised by a qualified instructor or coach in order to be eligible for credit. Other risk factors, conditions, or exceptional circumstances may also need to be considered prior to acceptance.

Any activities not included in the eligible activity list will need to be approved by the school/division according to the process outlined in its policy.

5. Personal Accident Insurance

The Manitoba Association of School Trustees (MAST) provides an option to school divisions to purchase universal first-party student accident insurance. Every student within a division that chooses this option is covered without regard to fault, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, for all school activities, including OUT-of-class activities that have been approved as part of the Personal Physical Activity Plan in Grades 9 to 12 PE/HE courses. It is assumed that this coverage would not apply to other activities unless the student's Personal Physical Activity Plan is revised prior to the occurrence of an accident. This would include having any new activities accepted by the PE/HE teacher, obtaining the recommended safety guidelines for these new physical activities, and receiving the consent of the parent (students under 18 years of age) to participate in the new activities. As a precautionary measure and to prevent unnecessary revisions to the student's plan, students should be encouraged to add more activities to their original plan to avoid having to add them later. Families may also obtain first-party student accident insurance coverage (e.g., Reliable Life Insurance Company program), which provides insurance coverage for students without regard to fault for any activity, whether school-related or not, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.