



# What Should Your Pathfinder Club Know About Risk Management?

As a leader or staff member for your Pathfinder club, it is your responsibility to create a safe environment for your club members and be prepared for incidents your club may face throughout the year. By following some basic safety guidelines and implementing risk management practices, you will be able to minimize incidents and be better prepared for emergencies. Here are a few risk management practices you can begin implementing with your club today.

## Activity Planning

Every Pathfinder club will have various activities throughout the year including camping trips, community service events, and regular meetings. It is crucial to be prepared during each of these activities for issues that may arise.

While general permission and waiver forms should be signed at the beginning of the club year, specific permission must be obtained from the parents or legal guardians of each club member for any activity that takes Pathfinders away from your regular meeting location. Your conference may have a permission template for you to use. Permission forms should also include a medical waiver that allows emergency medical treatment and discloses medical conditions. Permission and waiver forms must be accurate to the activities that will be taking place. Parents/Legal Guardians must be the ones to give permission by

signing the form. The forms must be received before the scheduled activity or trip.

Contact your local conference for assistance in creating the right verbiage for the release form and medical waiver.

## Travel Issues

Each Pathfinder trip will carry its own potential risks, and it is essential to follow prevention tactics and have a protection plan in place. We may not be able to control the outcome of each trip, but we can do our part as leaders to avert preventable incidents from occurring.

Depending on the size of your Pathfinder club, it may be necessary to look into larger vehicles to transport your club members. When researching what kind of vehicle to use, make sure there are no recalls for your



chosen vehicle and that all vehicles have been serviced recently. Do not use 15-passenger vans. Please be aware that some vans advertised as 12-passenger vans are actually the same size as a 15-passenger van. You can learn more about this at “What is a 15-Passenger Van?” If renting a bus, always rent from a reputable company and make sure the vehicle is in good working order before driving it off the lot.

Travel insurance should also be secured before your trip if traveling out of your country of origin. Contact your local conference to make sure you have the right coverage needed for your trip, or if additional coverage is needed for the types of activities that will occur. Visit [AdventistRisk.org/Insurance](http://AdventistRisk.org/Insurance) for more information.

### Implementing a Child Protection Plan

Your church and your Pathfinder club should be a place where participants are safe from sexual abuse and violence. Ensure that your adult volunteers understand the churches expectations for those working with children as outlined in the Church Manual.

- a. **Two-Adult Policy**—Have two adults present in children’s classrooms or activities.
- b. **Open Door**—Discourage private or one-on-one contact and encourage an open-door policy in all situations. Where an open door is not possible, station a second adult at the door.
- c. **Volunteer Screening**—Have all volunteers complete a volunteer information form, check their references, and, if required by law, do a police background check.
- d. **Six-Month Policy**—Require a waiting period of six months for newly baptized or transferring members who have indicated a willingness to work with children.
- e. **Training**—Provide regular training for teachers and volunteers to help them understand and protect children and how to nurture their faith.

If your church does not have a child protection plan in place, reach out to your local church board to begin the process of creating a plan. ARM has created a sample Child Protection Plan for churches to use as a guide. Find it on the [Children and Youth Resources](#) Page under the “Child Protection” tab at [AdventistRisk.org](http://AdventistRisk.org).

### Health and Safety Guidelines

ARM encourages Pathfinder club leaders to receive basic training in case of a medical or health emergency with a club member. Set aside a time for your club leaders to receive training in basic first aid, CPR, and concussion awareness and prevention. Also, consider training your leaders to use automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and other health safety equipment. In a moment of crisis, this kind of training can save a life or provide relief until the injured can be taken to a medical facility.

Your club may also provide opportunities for members to be involved in sports, games, or activities. Make sure your leaders know what to do if an injury occurs, how to treat minor injuries such as light sprains and pulled muscles, and when to seek medical attention. You may also want to educate your club members on the most common sports injuries and how they can stay safe while playing.

As a leader, you hold a substantial responsibility, both in leading your counselors and keeping members safe while they are in your care. ARM understands the importance of this responsibility and wants to make sure you have the tools and resources you need to provide a safe environment for your club members. For more information on Pathfinder safety, visit [AdventistRisk.org/Safety-Resources](http://AdventistRisk.org/Safety-Resources) and click on the [Youth and Children](#) tab.



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