Michigan 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Program Policies

This summary of important Outdoor Adventure Challenge program policies should be reviewed periodically. Each policy and procedure was put in place with youth safety in mind. Have a safe and enjoyable year!

Use of Name
Use of the name ‘4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge’ attached to any group requires participation of a Certified 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Leader.

Private Property
All 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge leaders must obtain the permission of the property owner when using private property.

Life Jackets
Life jackets **MUST BE WORN BY ALL OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS** (youth and adults) during canoeing, boating or other float trips and any shore-side activities.

Helmets
Helmets **MUST BE WORN BY ALL OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CHALLENGE PARTICIPANTS** (youth and adults) during caving and climbing/rappelling and white water activities. You must have the proper approved helmet for each activity.

Insurance
4-H leaders are covered by the MSU liability insurance policy when working with the 4-H clubs. (The 4-H leader’s enrollment records must be up to date.) Health/Accident Insurance for youth and adults participating in Outdoor Adventure Challenge outings **MUST BE OBTAINED.** MSU Extension has access to low cost health/accident insurance programs. 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge leaders should work with county Extension staff to obtain group health/accident insurance. Some counties cover insurance costs; others require clubs to do so.

Conduct Policy
All 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge program activities (leader training, youth group trips, etc.) must follow the 4-H Code of Conduct Policy. Provide the Conduct Policy Statement in the information you provide to your group:

**Michigan 4-H Code of Conduct for 4-H Activities** (now included on member enrollment forms): Positive behavior is a key expectation for youth and adults participating in 4-H activities – behavior that reflects trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Participants are expected to follow all program and event guidelines. Theft, vandalism, the use of illegal drugs and alcohol, inappropriate or threatening behavior that violates the rights of others, and other such offenses are strictly prohibited. Anyone involved with these offenses will immediately be sent home at his or her own expense and may be dismissed from MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development. Those engaged in illegal activities will be turned over to the proper authorities. Repair costs for damages incurred to property will be billed to those responsible.

CLUB TRIPS AND OUTINGS
A 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge outing is defined as any activity conducted by a 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge club and its certified leader away from its normal meeting location, (usually the leader’s home, a local community center, school, etc...). The 4-H Housing Policy must be followed if an overnight experience is involved.

Required Forms
The following forms are required to be provided to the appropriate MSU Extension office as part of any 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Trip or Outing: Parental/Guardian Consent Form (must include youth-adult housing policy consent section for overnight trips), Trip Notification Form, and Group Report. 4-H clubs must provide their forms to their county MSU Extension Office; State 4-H OAC training instructors must provide their forms to the State 4-H Office OAC Coordinator. More information about each form follows.
**Adult Chaperones**
A certified adult (21 years or older) 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Leader is **required** to be on all 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge outings for the **entire duration** of the outing. There must also be a ratio of 1 adult to 6 youth (ages 5-12) or 1 adult to 10 youth (ages 13 and up). These adults must have completed the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process (VSP).

**Partnerships with Non-4-H Youth and Adults**
4-H leaders acknowledge and agree to the MSU Extension “open to all” civil rights policy as part of their application process. If a 4-H club wishes to hold a joint meeting or outing with those from a different organization, the partner organization must first sign the MSU Extension civil rights compliance statement. Work with your county 4-H staff to obtain the form and proper partnership signatures.

All youth attending a 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge club trip or outing must be enrolled as 4-H participants in order to participate.

**Parental/Guardian Consent Forms**
Parental/guardian consent forms for participants for all 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge outings are **REQUIRED**. Participants **WITHOUT** signed forms **CANNOT BE ALLOWED** to go on the outing. The Michigan 4-H Overnight Housing Policy must be followed and integrated into any permission forms that include an overnight stay. A copy of the permission form must be turned in to the county 4-H office BEFORE the trip.

**Michigan 4-H Youth-Adult Housing Policy for 4-H Overnight Events**
This policy requires parent permission for youth to be housed with an unrelated adult, as well as a background check and references for any 18-20 year old individuals attending the event. **The following paragraph must be included on permission forms when an overnight stay will take place:**

I understand that my child may be sharing lodging with an unrelated adult chaperone (21 or older) who has been through the MSU Extension Child Well-Being Volunteer Selection Process and with at least one other youth. By signing this form I give my permission for my child to attend this event under these lodging conditions.

Sleeping outdoors: If your club is planning to camp during their overnight experience, you might end up with youth and adults sleeping in a variety of tents or shelters. Keep in mind that the adults must be available at all times and within hearing distance of youth. If there are adults participating who have not been through the MSU Extension Volunteer Selection Process (these would be in **addition** to the VSP chaperones required for the youth/adult ratios), you need to make arrangements for their tents or shelters to be in an area away from the youth.

**Trip Notification Form**
A Trip Notification Form must be submitted to the county 4-H office before any outings outside of the normal meeting place take place. This form can be found in the MSU Extension 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Training Manual – Forms section. The basic information needed includes:

- Number of youth attending
- Contact info of certified leaders on trip
- Person to be contacted in an emergency
- Name of senior lifesaver if applicable
- Dates of trip
- Trip Itinerary with plans and maps
- Nature of activity (e.g. climbing, backpacking, etc.)

**Group Report**
After a trip is completed, you are required to turn in a Group Report to the county 4-H office. This form can be found in the back of the MSU Extension 4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge Instructor Guide or Leader Guide. The information needed includes:

- Trip Dates
- Location
- Type of Trip (check the box)
- Who attended
- Comments such as weather conditions
- Injury/Damage Report, if needed

**Helpful Links**
4-H Outdoor Adventure Challenge web site: [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/outdoor_adventure_challenge](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/outdoor_adventure_challenge)

Michigan 4-H Youth-Adult Overnight Housing Policy: [http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/4h_housing_policy](http://4h.msue.msu.edu/4h/resources/4h_housing_policy)