

Cardinal District Summer Safety Checklist for Scouts & Families

As we dive into summer, safety is our top priority! Use this checklist to ensure you're prepared for all your outdoor fun. Remember Baden-Powell's wisdom: *"A Scout is never taken by surprise; he knows what to do when anything unexpected happens."*

Heat & Hydration Smarts: Before heading out:

- **Pack plenty of water.** Always carry a reusable water bottle and sip frequently, even before you feel thirsty. Dehydration can sneak up on you!
 - **Check the forecast.** If it's going to be very hot, schedule strenuous activities for the cooler parts of the day (early morning or late evening).
 - **Plan for shade.** Bring a lightweight tarp or even just a large umbrella for instant shade when there's no natural cover.
 - **Prepare cooling aids.** Pack bandanas or small towels that can be wet and worn around your neck or wrist for evaporative cooling.
 - **Know your electrolytes.** If you're out of sports drinks for prolonged activity, consider making a simple rehydration solution with a pinch of salt, a teaspoon of sugar/honey, and a squeeze of lemon or orange juice in a liter of water.
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Smart Sun Protection: Before and during sun exposure:

- **Apply sunscreen generously.** Use broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30+) at least 15-30 minutes before going outside.
 - **Reapply often.** Put on more sunscreen every two hours, and more frequently after swimming or sweating.
 - **Check your shadow.** If your shadow is shorter than you are, the sun's UV rays are strongest (typically 10 AM - 4 PM). Seek maximum protection or shade during these hours.
 - **Wear protective clothing.** Opt for lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and pants, especially those with a UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) rating of 30 or higher, for a strong barrier against UV rays.
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Essential Water Safety: Before and during water activities:

- **Wear a life jacket.** Always wear a properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, or participating in any water sports.
 - **Use the buddy system.** Never swim alone. Always have a buddy, especially in open water, and ensure someone on shore knows your plans.
 - **Practice "Reach or Throw, Don't Go."** Familiarize yourselves with reaching or throwing rescue devices (like a ring buoy or throw rope bag) to someone in distress from a safe position on shore or in a boat, rather than entering the water yourself.
 - **Read the water.** Before swimming in natural bodies of water, learn to spot potential dangers like strong currents (debris moving quickly), sudden drop-offs (changes in water color), or submerged obstacles. Ask locals for advice if unsure.
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Campfire & Insect Vigilance: When building fires and enjoying nature:

- **Clear your campfire zone.** Clear a 10-foot radius around your campfire down to bare dirt, removing all flammable materials.
 - **Keep tools handy.** Always have a bucket of water and a shovel nearby as essential campfire safety tools.
 - **Master "Drown, Stir, Drown Again."** To fully extinguish a campfire, pour water on all embers until sizzling stops, stir ashes, then pour more water, repeating until no heat remains and you can safely touch the ashes.
 - **Dress to deter bugs.** When hiking in wooded or grassy areas, wear long pants and sleeves to minimize exposed skin and reduce bites.
 - **Perform thorough tick checks.** After outdoor activities, do a full-body tick check, paying close attention to hair, ears, armpits, behind knees, and the groin area.
 - **Remove ticks safely.** If you find a tick, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp it as close to the skin's surface as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure. Cleanse the area afterward.
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Stay Prepared. Stay Safe. Have a Fantastic Summer!

#ScoutSafeJune #ScoutingReady