



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Risk & Safety Management Module



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About Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC)

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is the oldest and largest outdoor stewardship organization in the state. We work to connect people to Colorado's outdoors in ways that inspire them to be caretakers of the state's natural resources. This is especially important because the demands on our outdoor resources are extensive and Colorado's stewardship needs are reaching a near-crisis level. VOC is playing a leading role in addressing these challenges in three ways. First, we're fostering statewide collaboration on issues and solutions. We're also expanding stewardship efforts by helping others build and grow successful volunteer programs. Finally, we're continuing to engage 5,000 volunteers each year in on-the-ground, hands-on stewardship work.

Executive Summary

Risk and safety management helps avoid and mitigate liability threats your group or organization may face in the event of an accident during a volunteer project. This guide will help assess key risk management factors in volunteer programs. It is a tool for program management staff, as well as those who oversee the organization's risk and safety procedures and insurance policies.

- ▶ **How to Develop and Implement Risk and Safety Management Practices:**
 - ▶ **Assess potential risk and safety concerns** before the project begins.
 - *Scout the project* with the land management partner, discuss whether potential on-the-ground work will be appropriate for volunteers to undertake, and how your organization and the land manager can effectively mitigate the identified risks.
 - *Identify and record* detailed information during an on-site risk assessment. The detailed information you collect will be important for everyone working on the project to understand and follow (see [Step 1](#) of this guide for a detailed list of what to consider in your Project Risk Assessment).
 - *Identify which tools* will be used during the project and possible risk factors associated with the type of work being done and the tools being used; for example, to operate some tools, such as chainsaws, you will need to appropriately train your volunteers.
 - ▶ **Ensure volunteer leaders possess skills, experience, and temperament needed to successfully manage risk.**
 - *Staff must be well-organized*, understand the potential hazards associated with outdoor stewardship projects, possess good communication skills and, at a minimum, be certified in First Aid/CPR.
 - *Once crews are established*, ensure that all volunteers listen to a comprehensive safety talk that explains the type of work they will be undertaking and how to safely handle the various tools.
 - *Inform volunteers* of the challenges before assigning them to work crews so that they can self-select and avoid undertaking work they are not prepared to complete.
 - *Maintain a safe leaders-to-volunteers ratio* by ensuring that an adequate number of volunteer leaders are on the team.
 - ▶ **Develop an emergency action plan.**
 - *Orient Crew Leaders* to an emergency response plan during the crew leader training. Share the overall process with project teams during a risk management talk at the beginning of the work day.
 - *An emergency response plan will include* the following components at a minimum: communication, medical response, evacuation, follow-up, and chain of command (see [Step 3](#) for examples).
- ▶ **Key Takeaways:**
 - ▶ **Identify the level of physical difficulty of each project**, such as easy, moderate or difficult. Determine whether you have the necessary leadership and technical skills available for a project, and whether crew leaders will need any special training. Identify the nearest city or town with hospital or clinic facilities.
 - ▶ **Regardless of whether your organization employs staff and/or uses volunteer leaders** to manage a volunteer stewardship project, it is essential they all possess the skills, experience and temperament needed to manage risk while overseeing volunteers and projects.
 - ▶ **Ensure that Crew Leaders go through a safety talk** with their crew of volunteers at the beginning of each project. Have them inform volunteers about proper tool use and safety precautions, go over project risks and how to manage/avoid them, share an emergency response plan, and identify other emergency response individuals available on site.

Executive Summary

- ▶ **Completing legal waivers** is an additional necessary step for volunteers. Help ensure a positive experience for volunteers by making this step as efficient and streamlined as possible including using electronic waivers.

Introduction

It is good practice for every organization with a volunteer program, regardless of the size or scope of the specific program, to manage risks and implement safe practices. Risk and safety management is critical to help avoid and mitigate liability threats your group or organization may face in the event of an accident during a volunteer project.

In a nutshell, good risk management minimizes your organization's exposure to liability issues. Liability issues for most providers of outdoor volunteer programs and activities arise as a result of general negligence or unsafe or defective conditions on someone's property.

When an outdoor stewardship organization (OSO) solicits or encourages volunteer participation, it assumes a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent foreseeable injuries to those who participate. If a volunteer participant is injured on a project, chances are that the project's practices will need to be examined to see if any negligence contributed to the injury; if so, liability may well be asserted.

Good risk management involves identifying key risk and safety management duties and responsibilities, documenting how they will be addressed, and monitoring compliance.

This guide will help assess key risk management planning factors in volunteer programs. It is a tool for program management staff, as well as those who oversee the organization's risk and safety procedures and insurance policies.

Please Note:

- This guide contains information to help your organization develop strategies to minimize risk on outdoor stewardship projects. Some of the content is covered in greater depth in other guides, as noted throughout this one.

- All of the Stepping Up Stewardship guides are intended to be complementary and not mutually exclusive. You may need to evaluate all the various resources to determine which offer the most appropriate fit for your specific program or project.

Recommended Steps

This guide is organized into three "steps" to help your organization develop and implement risk and safety management practices as you plan volunteer projects.

These are not "linear" steps that must be followed in a specific order. Rather, think of them as sections of information that you can choose to implement based on their relevance.

Step 1:

Offers best practices and guidelines to follow when assessing potential risk and safety concerns before a project begins.

Step 2:

Provides guidance for staff and volunteer leader oversight needed during projects, including oversight for projects that involve youth and families.

Step 3:

Covers recommendations and best practices related to contingency planning.



This Guide is accompanied by extra resources, called Supplemental Materials, that you can use in your efforts to develop risk and safety management practices. They are mentioned throughout the guide and listed at the end, but provided separately.

Step 1: Pre-Project Assessment

Before a project begins, it is important to assess what the potential risk and safety concerns might be. The best practices below offer some guidelines to assist you in this process.

- ▶ **Determining whether project risk for volunteers can be appropriately managed and mitigated.** Initial assessment about project safety begins early in the planning process when you scout the proposed project site. We highly recommend that you scout the project with the land management partner and talk together about whether specific or potential on-the-ground work will be appropriate for volunteers to undertake, and how collectively your organization and the land management partner can effectively mitigate the identified risks.

Making these decisions depends on several factors, including whether your organization has appropriately trained and qualified staff and volunteer leaders, any specialized equipment that will be required for the project, and other resources to ensure the opportunity will offer an enjoyable and safe volunteer experience. Here is a checklist of items to keep in mind during the project-scouting process:

- ▶ **Describe in detail** the scope of work of the project in terms of linear feet or miles covered, types of structures needed, number of plants required and other scope factors
- ▶ **Identify the level of physical difficulty** of the project, such as easy, moderate or difficult
- ▶ **Identify special equipment or tools** needed to complete the project and determine who will provide them
- ▶ **Determine which party** - your organization or the land management partner - will be responsible for arranging for an emergency medical technician (EMT), if the project requires this level of on-site medical assistance
- ▶ **Determine whether you have the necessary leadership** and technical skills available for this project, and whether crew leaders will need any special training
- ▶ **Identify any seasonal conditions**, physical hazards, or other safety considerations on the project site
- ▶ **Determine whether the site** is characterized by high altitude, difficult landscapes, natural hazards or other qualities that may impact volunteer safety
- ▶ **Identify the nearest city or town** with hospital or clinic facilities



Ultimately, determining whether your organization can properly manage and mitigate project risk comes down to your capabilities in planning and managing the project, and how much risk you are willing to assume. As an illustration:

- ▶ **Organizing a two-hour planting in a city park** is low-risk and generally easy to manage.
- ▶ **Conversely, a multi-day wilderness project** that will complete technical trail maintenance at a high-altitude location several miles in the backcountry would be considered higher risk in terms of volunteer safety. To properly manage the inherent risks of such a project, we advise your organization to put in place leaders who have proper medical and technical trail training, specialized equipment and other necessary infrastructure.

When selecting volunteer projects and assessing their risks, we recommend that your organization carefully consider your capabilities and limitations. A "Pre-Project Risk Assessment Template" is available in **Supplemental Materials**.

Step 1: Continued

- ▶ **Initially defining roles and responsibilities of involved partners.** A Scope of Services Agreement (SOSA) is a document intended to provide a clear understanding about the responsibilities your organization, the land manager and any partner agencies will assume with regard to the upcoming project. The SOSA is especially necessary when working with new partners, or when there is a funding agreement in place from the partnering land manager. We recommend that your organization annually review and update a SOSA template to ensure that it is current, prior to the start of any volunteer project. A SOSA typically includes the following components.

- ▶ Financial agreement
- ▶ EMT/First-responder arrangements if the project site is too far from an emergency medical facility
- ▶ Emergency Communications plan
- ▶ Sanitation facilities (portable toilets)
- ▶ Potable water source
- ▶ Camping, if applicable
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Language for changes or cancellations as needed, for example: *"Each party agrees to a 45-day notification if significant areas of this agreement are unable to be fulfilled by either party that would result in the project being cancelled or changed in scope significantly."*

Ideally, your organization or your project partner will complete a SOSA for each project. By completing a SOSA early, your organization can revisit and amend it as the planning process evolves. Each time you amend the SOSA, ensure that all involved parties re-sign it.

- ▶ **Final identification of risks of the outdoor environment and project site.** Prior to commencing the actual project work, it is important to identify and record detailed information from an on-site risk assessment. This detailed information constitutes the "Project Risk Assessment Form" and will be important for everyone working on the project including those involved in planning and implementation as well as the volunteers themselves. This general assessment will likely be more detailed than the initial risk assessment information reflected in the project scouting process (see #1 above) and include:

- ▶ **Examines risks** associated with the project, project site, and work methods. This is the time at which your organization will identify any potential situational risks, such as geography, altitude, weather (including heat exhaustion, hypothermia, lightning, sunburn and frostbite), insects, poisonous insects, snakes or other animals.
- ▶ **Outlines details** about the nearest medical facility and procedures for contacting emergency medical assistance. If the nearest medical facility is too far and there will be an EMT or first responder on site, create details for that plan instead.
- ▶ **Clearly outlines** the evacuation plan and features a copy of your contingency plan or safety net (see [Step 3](#) for more information).

At the beginning of the project day, discuss your risk assessment document with all leading staff and volunteers on the project, and distribute a copy to each of them.

- ▶ **Identifying and mitigating risk factors associated with tools.** In addition to assessing potential risk on project sites, it is important to:

VOC Partner Spotlight

Cheyenne Mountain State Park, near Colorado Springs, Colorado, is fortunate to have a very dedicated "Friends" group – or volunteers who donate their time in a variety of meaningful ways. One group of volunteers helps the park as part of a well-trained, skilled volunteer chainsaw crew. Chainsaw work is one of the riskiest outdoor stewardship tasks that can be performed with volunteers.

The park's proximity to adjacent wildfire susceptible neighborhoods, and the need to minimize wildfire potential in the park, requires a significant amount of ongoing chainsaw work. To help meet that need, the park determined that it was willing to bear the costs necessary to train its volunteers to safely operate chainsaws by offering an S-212 class (the same level wildland firefighters receive) to its volunteer sawyers.

Cheyenne Mountain State Park is providing the necessary training and as such, is now the responsible agency that has determined the level of training required.

Step 1: Continued

- ▶ **Identify which tools** will be used during the project and possible risk factors associated with the type of work being done and the tools being used; for example, trained individuals will be required to operate some tools, such as chainsaws.
- ▶ **Identify control measures** to reduce the probability of hazards.
- ▶ **Discuss proper use, carrying, and storage** of tools with your crew leaders.
- ▶ **Implementing training to control all aspects of the pre-project assessment.** While it is imperative to assess and identify risk factors, it is equally essential to have a clear process for implementation, communication and training (as applicable) to ensure that proper controls are in place and that leaders are prepared to engage in case of an emergency. Trainings may include safety briefings, tool use training, proper modeling of tool use and other topics. See [Step 2](#) for specific guidance on roles and training processes.

Step 2: Project Oversight – Including Specific to Youth & Families

Regardless of whether your organization employs staff and/or uses volunteer leaders, to manage a volunteer stewardship project, it is essential they all possess – or are trained to acquire – the skills, experience and temperament needed to successfully manage risk while overseeing volunteers and projects.

- ▶ **Paid staff.** It is considered best practice to ensure that your staff are well organized, understand the potential hazards associated with outdoor stewardship projects, possess good communication skills and, at a minimum, be certified in First Aid/CPR. In addition:
 - ▶ **Higher levels of certification**, such as Wilderness First Responder (WFR), may be needed to lead activities such as remote wilderness and backcountry trips.
 - ▶ **Before your staff work on a volunteer project**, we recommend requiring them to review and understand all relevant risk management information and protocols.
 - ▶ **Before being allowed to manage projects** and volunteers without supervision, we recommend that all new employees successfully complete relevant project management training – including at least volunteer crew leadership – and then be mentored and observed in an on-project setting.
- ▶ **Volunteers who serve in leadership roles.** We advise that volunteer leaders undergo a similar process to that of paid staff.
 - ▶ **Before volunteer leaders serve** as crew leaders, tool managers or other important project roles (see [Skilled Volunteer Roles & Training Guide](#) in the [Leadership Development Module](#)), we recommend that they be able to demonstrate an understanding of risk-related aspects of their roles, as well as a familiarity with the mandatory risk management protocols.
 - ▶ **It is good practice** to encourage volunteer leaders to continually hone their existing skills while adding to them through the OSI and other certified training sources.
- ▶ **Information, training, and forms.** The guidelines below offer helpful tips regarding 1) what kind of information to provide to volunteers, 2) how to provide proper training, and 3) how to ensure agreements and waivers get signed.

VOC Mini Spotlight

At VOC, no volunteer leader may undertake his or her role without having successfully undergone formal training, mentorship and close supervision while serving in his or her leadership role.

Information about VOC's different volunteer leadership roles, as well as the related OSI training courses, is available at www.voc.org/vocleadership.

Step 2: Continued

- ▶ **Providing necessary information to volunteers.** It is important to develop a very specific and detailed process to communicate with volunteers. The process begins when a volunteer registers or shows interest in a project and concludes with a thank-you message once a project is complete. Critically important to include in all project communications are your organization's expectations for safety and risk management. Information about risk and safety may include:

- *Outreach/marketing materials* designed to attract volunteer interest. These

- materials are a good place to include information that helps volunteers gauge risk - such as difficulty of the project, remoteness of the location (including any hiking needed to access the site, tool transport by volunteers to the project site) and how high the altitude will be - so that they can make an informed decision about whether to sign up/ participate.

- *Registration/participation materials.* Once volunteers have expressed an interest in attending, collect their relevant contact information and require them to read and sign a volunteer waiver.

- *Project-specific materials.* As soon as a volunteer has committed to a project, send a pre-project email containing important details about the project, including information related to risk management and safety, such as:

- Weather report(s)
 - Special environmental concerns, such as high altitude
 - A comprehensive list of equipment and other items volunteers need to bring with them
 - Information to help ensure the safety of children (if children are allowed on the project)

- ▶ **Ensuring proper training for tool use and safety talks.** It is critical to assess the existing skills of staff and volunteers, and to ensure they have proper safety training so that they can successfully handle, and closely manage and supervise, volunteers' use of all tools and other equipment. On the day of a project, before actual work begins, take these volunteer safety steps:
 - *Project team planning.* Plan out all on-the-ground project work, including identifying work that may require volunteers to be in excellent physical condition and/ or already have experience with certain tools or stewardship skills. Inform volunteers of the challenges before assigning them to various work crews so that they can self-select and avoid undertaking work they are not prepared for.

VOC Mini Spotlight

As part of VOC's on-project risk management process, all leaders take volunteer crews through a tool safety talk. The talk introduces the tools that will be used in a logical order to allow an effective discussion of their use and safety with the crew.

While the specific order of the tool presentation is up to the crew leader, VOC always covers certain topics regarding tools. VOC refers to these topics as "CUSS":

Carrying tools: Addresses basic safety requirements for carrying tools to and from the work site.

Using tools: Covers proper and improper methods for using each tool.

Storing tools: Addresses the danger of tools when they are not stored properly at the worksite; any tool is a potential risk.

Safety with tools: Discusses carrying, using and storing tools that present potential safety concerns.

Crew leaders emphasize tool safety at all times. They learn how to teach the CUSS process through formal leadership training with the Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI), which also offers other technical trainings - including training for operating specialized equipment such as crosscut saws.

More information about the OSI training program and course opportunities is available at <http://www.voc.org/osi>. staffing and other considerations.

Step 2: Continued

- *Project teams.* Maintain a safe leaders-to-volunteers ratio by ensuring that an adequate number of volunteer leaders are on the team. Smaller ratios of leaders to volunteers may be needed as work becomes increasingly technical, as it is difficult for leaders to supervise larger crews on technical projects.
- *Safety talks.* Once crews are established, ensure that all volunteers listen to a comprehensive safety talk that explains the type of work they will be undertaking and trains them on using the various tools. We strongly advise that no work, including the carrying or use of tools, commence until the designated volunteer crew leader completes the safety talk. Here are tips for the types of information to include in the safety talk (detailed according to the level of project risk):
 - Tools: proper use, carrying safety, and storage
 - VOC's Project Safety Net (see [Step 3](#))
 - Project risks and how to manage or avoid them
 - Emergency response individuals available on-site
 - Head count
 - Notification process if a volunteer must leave the project
 - Responsibility for personal and crew-wide behavior
 - Identification of any crew member volunteers who have emergency response certifications (such as First Aid, CPR, or Wilderness First Responder)

VOC Mini Spotlight

VOC targets a ratio of at least one crew leader to no more than 10 volunteers (preferably 8).

A detailed "Crew Leader Safety Talk Checklist" is available in [Supplemental Materials](#).

- ▶ **Ensuring volunteer participant agreements and waivers.** Liability protection is a critical element of any outdoor stewardship project. Many land managers will not or may not, according to the law, allow volunteers to work on their land without proper, specific liability protection for the land management agency. In some cases, the land management partner may require volunteer service agreements to be in place in addition to your organization's agreements. Below are a few things to keep in mind specific to your organization's efforts:
 - *Appropriate liability insurance for your organization.* Most public land management agencies indemnify themselves from legal action. Therefore, you will want to be sure that your organization carries sufficient liability insurance to mitigate any legal action against your organization.
 - *Liability waivers for individual volunteers.* Working in the outdoors is accompanied by varying levels of inherent risk. To mitigate potential legal actions, we recommend that you require volunteers to sign your liability waiver before any work

VOC Mini Spotlight

VOC abides by the legal requirement to obtain signed liability waivers from all volunteers or legal guardians for youth. We streamline this requirement to make it as easy as possible for volunteers.

To keep things simple, VOC allows volunteers to sign an electronic waiver. We manage this through an online project registration database prior to the commencement of the project. Once a volunteer signs up for a project through the VOC website, he or she is required to sign a waiver electronically.

This paperless waiver is not only "green", it also saves time when volunteers are signing in at the project site. Project managers already have a list of the volunteers who have signed the electronic waiver – but still bring a few hard-copy waivers for anyone who is registering on site and for minors who cannot sign online.

Step 2: Continued

- begins. Legally, you must keep volunteer liability waivers for up to 15 years.
- *Legal review.* It is very important to have an attorney review any legal documents (such as agreements and waivers) every few years to ensure up-to-date compliance, including how long you are required to keep signed waivers on file.



Completing legal waivers are an additional step for volunteers who are eager to just start volunteering! Help ensure a positive experience for volunteers by making this step as efficient and streamlined as possible. Use electronic waivers, and, whenever possible, streamline this process with the partnering land manager.

- ▶ **Insurance considerations.** It is important to have proper insurance coverage. Have an insurance broker assess the types of services or projects your organization is offering, considering different types of coverage, for example:
 - ▶ Commercial General Liability or Professional Liability coverage
 - ▶ Auto Insurance
 - ▶ Directors' and Officers' liability insurance Workers Compensation
 - ▶ Sexual Abuse and Molestation (SAM) coverage
 - ▶ Volunteer Accident Policies
 - ▶ Umbrella Policies

VOC Mini Spotlight

VOC has an insured driver policy for adding approved drivers to auto insurance, which involves running Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) background checks, specifying training opportunities (depending on the type of driving required), and requiring signed policies and procedural documentation.

VOC's "Insured Drivers Policy" is included in [Supplemental Materials](#).

- ▶ **Risk management specific to youth and family project planning.** When planning for risk management operations in outdoor stewardship projects involving youth and families, consider the following special considerations:
 - ▶ **Staffing and ongoing volunteer considerations.** Background checks and proper training are necessary components of any program that involves youth and families.
 - *Background checks.* By law, background checks are required any time staff or volunteers will be engaged with youth over several instances with your organization.
 - *Mentor training.* For volunteer or staff mentors who work with youth, we recommend providing the mentors with environmental education training, ongoing guidance and supervision to equip them with the skills, materials and support they will need to effectively mentor youth. It is also good practice to proactively solicit feedback from mentors to help improve programming. Suggested topics to cover in trainings (for example, via two 2-hour trainings or one 4-hour training) include:
 - Mentor roles and expectations
 - Working with high school-aged youth
 - Communication and relationship-building skills
 - Challenges that may arise
 - Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
 - Safety
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Industry standards for environmental education
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - ▶ **Pre-project considerations.** When working with youth and families, we recommend ensuring that the following items are in place before the project begins:

Step 2: Continued

- Parents or legal guardians sign waivers
 - Parents or legal guardians complete medical forms, and program leader carries a copy the day of the program
 - Parents or legal guardians supply emergency contact information, and program leader carries a copy the day of the program
 - Parents or legal guardians approve application of sunscreen on children
 - Program leader notes and accommodates medical needs, food allergies and special dietary restrictions
 - Primary back-up contact for overnight trips has copies of the roster, the project itinerary, signed waivers, medical forms and emergency contact information
- ▶ **Day-of project considerations.** Below is a list of suggested protocols to follow the day of a project when an age-eligible youth is working on a project, unaccompanied by his/her parent or legal guardian, the following protocols may be useful:
- Participants complete sign-in/sign-out sheets for their children
 - Program leader considers location limitations
 - Program leader ensures appropriate adult-to-child ratios are met, taking into account number of parents, guardians or other adult supervisors available on the project (a good rule-of-thumb is 1:8)
 - Program leader follows proper injury protocol for adolescents. A suggested protocol follows:
 - *If the incident is serious*, the program leader notifies the parents, guardian or teacher as soon as possible, fills out an incident report and submits the report to your organization's program manager at the next available opportunity. This same protocol applies for large falls or tumbles, even if they don't appear to have resulted in injury.
 - *For smaller incidents* such as minor scrapes and bruises, the program leader notifies the parents, guardian or teacher at the next opportunity.
 - *The program leader provides proper medical care* according to the incident. Staff and mentors provide at least basic First Aid and contact 911 if needed. (Typically, projects involving youth will take place near definitive care facilities, so there should be no need to provide extended medical care to any participant.)



Step 3: Contingency Planning or “Safety Net”

It is considered a best practice to develop an emergency action plan and basic procedures for responding to an emergency that requires medical or other assistance on any project. Having this kind of a safeguard plan in place is essential. VOC refers to this as a “Safety Net”.

We recommend that your organization orient crew leaders to your emergency response plan during the crew leader training program and share the overall process with project teams during a risk management talk at the beginning of the work day.

Below are a few essential components we recommend featuring your organization’s Safety Net – including communications, medical response, evacuation, follow-up and chain of command:

- ▶ **Communications.** The Safety Net is activated when the crew leader (or the volunteer the crew leader has designated as messenger) informs a project team member that there is an emergency and that medical or other assistance is required. The project team is then able to respond with on-site medical personnel and/or communicate the need for assistance to outside search-and-rescue or medical response units.
- ▶ **Medical Response.** As a best practice, create a protocol to ensure that crew leaders become familiar with the project’s EMS personnel and identify these individuals to their crews during the morning safety and risk management talk. EMS personnel may request additional assistance from local or outside search and rescue or EMS units.
 - ▶ **If an injured person refuses care,** have him or her sign an incident report attesting to such refusal. The EMT or first responder will determine whether the injured party may remain at or leave the project site.
- ▶ **Evacuation.** In some emergency situations, and potentially on any project, it may be necessary to evacuate the injured party and/or all the volunteers. We recommend that your organization’s risk assessment plans include an evacuation plan that is timely and relevant to the location and terrain. Elements to feature in the evacuation plan include:
 - ▶ Means of evacuation (by foot or vehicle)
 - ▶ Evacuation route and a final assembly point
 - ▶ Instructions on the collection of tools and personal possessions to accomplish the evacuation
 - ▶ Any available EMS helicopter landing site (with latitude and longitude or UTM coordinates)
- ▶ **Follow-up.** We advise that the project team inform volunteers

VOC Mini Spotlight

VOC’s Safety Net in Action:

- a) In the initial response to a medical situation, if the crew leader is certified in First Aid and CPR, he or she should administer aid to the victim to the best of his or her ability, or a member of his or her crew or nearby crew who has the highest level of First Aid training should administer aid.
- b) The crew leader will remain with his or her crew at all times. The crew leader should instruct the remaining crew to stop working, remain in the area and wait for help to arrive. Unless appropriately trained in First Aid, the crew leader should not disturb the injured individual’s position and should provide as much comfort and assurance as possible.
- c) The crew leader should instruct up to two crew members (each in opposite directions along the trail) to find a project team member wearing a red hat, or VOC staff with a two-way radio, and/or the nearest EMS personnel. The crew member(s) should return immediately to the crew to relay that the message has been appropriately communicated.
- d) When help arrives, the crew leader should assist the EMS personnel by providing any pertinent information concerning the victim and the incident and be prepared to help if requested. With assistance from any witnesses, the VOC staff project manager or project team leader should complete an Incident Report.
- e) All injuries, regardless of size or type, should be appropriately reported and documented. No injured persons may leave for the day without notifying the Crew Leader Manager.

Step 3: Continued

of the situation and use information contained in the individual's waiver form to notify emergency contacts. If your organization's staff person is not on site, the project team leader will complete an incident report and submit it to your organization's appropriate manager. Ensure that one of your staff members contacts the injured party within a week to check on their condition.

- ▶ **Chain of Command.** Once the steps above are completed, follow your established chain of command that explains who on the project team, land management agency and organization staff you need to notify with updates, and in what order.

An "Incident/Accident Report Template" is available in [Supplemental Materials](#).



Conclusion

This guide provided practices and guidance to help your organization start or expand its strategies around risk and safety management for outdoor stewardship projects.

A list of [Supplemental Materials](#) is provided below.

- ▶ **Crew Leader Safety Talk Checklist**
A detailed list of points that VOC recommends all crew leaders, staff or volunteer, cover with volunteers before beginning any project work.
- ▶ **Pre-Project Risk Assessment Template**
VOC's template to assess potential risks during the project scouting process.
- ▶ **Incident/Accident Report Template**
A sample form for recording any incidents or accidents that may occur, regardless of severity.
- ▶ **Insured Drivers Policy**
VOC's internal policy for adding and managing approved, insured drivers including required actions prior to approval, training processes, rules, accident protocol, and more.

Check out the guides for
Project Planning

Project Selection

Project Management

