

# Emergency Response Plan and Safety Protocol Guidelines 2023

**Adapted from KPZ 2016—Risk Management Program Emergency  
Response Plan (ERP) and Safety Protocols  
Developed by Dr. K. Haras**

## **1. Risk Management - Overview:**

The primary goal of the “Plast **Risk Management Program**” is to provide a safe environment for the camp (tabir). Risk presents itself in many ways and we cannot predict every possibility. Our focus is on those risk factors that we are likely to encounter at Tabir based on the terrain, activities and our cumulative experience.

Our approach focuses on helping our team understand how to assess and manage risk in a systematic and consistent manner. This ensures timely and appropriate response that is critical to risk management.

This plan is a guide and leaders must use their judgement to do the following:

- Avoid unreasonable risk; risk that a prudent person would avoid.
- Put the safety of participants and instructors first.
- Assess the situation and get assistance as necessary.
- Follow current first aid procedures.
- Take care of all participants, those injured, and those who are not.

Protocols and procedures are not substitutes for common sense and sound decision making. They are not substitutes for necessary training such as Standard First Aid. These tools help us pull together knowledge and how to use it into a single, easy to use package.

We are obligated to manage risk/safety to the same standard as, for example, a school board. The only difference between risk management standards for volunteers versus paid managers is financial. Managers get paid, we don't. So far as the expected standard of care that we are expected to deliver there is no difference. For this reason, significant time and resources have been invested over the last several years to provide enhanced training to our leaders.

## **2. Emergency Situations**

### **2.1 Near miss**

Unplanned event that could have resulted in a negative outcome including serious injury, death, or property damage. An Incident Report (IR) is required.

## **2.2 Medical incident**

If first aid was provided in order for the participant to continue the trip - including blisters, minor dehydration, small cuts, etc., it is deemed a medical incident. An IR is required upon return and the first-aid kit re-stocked.

## **2.3 Behavioral incident**

A behavioral incident is defined as a psychological, emotional, or behavioral situation that compromised an individual's ability to participate in the trip; refusal to follow directions, alcohol or drug use, leaving the group without permission, bullying, harassment, etc. It must be treated no differently than a medical emergency. A behavioral incident may warrant evacuation. An IR is required.

## **2.4 Accident**

An accident is defined as an injury that requires medical follow-up care such as a visit to a hospital or clinic, physical therapy or prescription medication. Evacuation may be required if the participant is unable to continue the trip. An IR is required and the leader's first-aid kit shall be re-stocked as required.

## **3. Roles & Responsibilities**

- Confusion is the greatest risk factor in an emergency!
- Tabir team – from Camp Director to hike leader - must know the **Safety Protocols** and the **ERP**.
- Roles and responsibilities are defined to ensure effective information flow and decision making.
- Poor communication results in lost time, delayed response and escalates risk.

## **National Camps (Krajovij Tabory) – can be adapted for regional and local tabory**

### **3.1 Plast Canada Executive (Krajova Plastova Starshyna (KPS))**

Reports to KPS board/parents

Holova KPS

Zastupnik Holovi

Responsible for the overall governance & management of tabory.

- Assist Komandanti in managing parents in case of emergency/termination of participation at tabir
- Respond to media on behalf of PLAST.
- Coordinate transfer of participants home as may be required.
- Communicate with PLAST liability & emergency management teams as required.

### **3.2 Local Tabir Telephone Contact**

Work with Komandanti and Bulava

- Coordinate communications to tabir from families.
- Assist with transfer/care coordination at their location for injured participants.

- Share information about tabir with parents as may be required.
- Act as back-up to tabir Emergency Contact for designated tabir.

### **3.3 On-Site Emergency Contact**

- Tabir "go to" persons for emergencies and safety issues.
- Manage "help/emergency" communication and organize necessary response.
- Help Komandanti manage the ERP at tabir
- Coordinate delivery of necessary assistance to field as may be required.
- Manage/assist with evacuation as may be required.
- Advise Komandanti in emergency response situations.
- Coordinate incident report completion.

### **3.4 Komandanti**

Report to Holova and Zastupnik Holovi KPS

- Manage ERP/Safety at the Tabir through their bulava.
- Coordinate with Emergency Contact for ERP/Safety.
- Responsible for ensuring training/compliance with ERP among bulava team.
- Communicate with families of participants thru KPS as may be required.
- Work with Local Telephone Contact persons to receive/distribute necessary information.
- Interface with local authorities as may be required.
- Advise Holova/Zastupnik of KPS of issues and action as may be required.

### **3.5 Hike Leaders & Vykhovnyky**

Report to Komandanti

- Responsible for safe conduct of the program at hurtok level. Are the ERP/Safety program front line team.
- Know safety standards/protocols, follow them and manage compliance among participants.
- Maintain group control and discipline in emergency situations
- Apprise Komandant of non-compliance with safety standards, inappropriate behaviour, impending risks, etc.
- Assist Komandant in responding to emergency situations as may be required.
- Complete Incident Reports as may be required.
- Share knowledge of risk management/safety with participants.

## **4. Telephone Protocol**

Unmanaged telephone communication represents a potentially serious risk in an emergency, especially in remote areas. A couple of examples:

- Confused/conflicting information provided to responders.
- Calling the wrong people for the wrong reasons.
- Limited access - sat phone - tied up by too many incoming calls.
- Precious time wasted figuring out what to convey to responders.

*“Tweedsmuir School” panic situation that ensued when personal cell phone calls completely disrupted the Calgary school’s ERP system with adverse impact on all affected.*

A formal telephone protocol should be developed for Krajovij Tabory. As part of this protocol **personal cell phones for participants are prohibited at Tabir** as their use can contribute to risk escalation.

Parents, and secondly leaders, must be held accountable for ensuring compliance with this regulation.

#### **4.1 Purpose:**

- Provide an effective system of communications in ERP situations in view of limited telephone resources.
- Provide **all participants** a ready reference of essential telephone numbers for their tabir. This can be in the form of a laminated card
- Define a priority sequence for telephone communication.
- Outline required "talk track" for calls
- Instructions on how to use respective emergency phones or devices.

#### **4.2 Card Front**

Primary data:

- Designated 911 Emergency Number
- Tabir Emergency Contact
- RCMP Dispatch
- Warden's Office
- Hospital

Secondary data

- Call until you get a live response
- Leave message when prompted. Don't just hang up!
- Keep the phone line free for incoming calls
- Save the battery

#### **4.3 Card Back**

Talk track:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- My name is .....
- I am with group .....
- Location .....
- Our problem is - who, what, action taken?
- We need.....
- My emergency # is

#### **4.4 Satellite Communications Devices**

- Ensure that emergency device batteries are charged and set operational prior to leaving for hike.

- Carry device in **designated dry sack**. Moisture can kill the device!
- Sign-out device.
- Review the call protocol for the type of set you have.
- Ensure antennae are extended and you have a sight line to the sky.
- If you don't get a signal, alter location.

#### **4.5 Evacuation Required - No Emergency Service**

- Technology fails; be prepared.
- Do not split group if possible.
- If you **cannot get emergency service** and need to send a help team:
  - **Level 1 evacuation required:**  
Send 3-person team lead by Vykhovnyk 1 (V1).  
Give map + satellite communication device.  
Proceed and attempt to make contact every 30 minutes.  
Do not proceed in dangerous/night conditions.
  - **Level 2 evacuation required:**  
Send a 3- person team under lead of V1.  
Give map + satellite communication device.  
Proceed and attempt to make contact every 30 minutes.  
Proceed only in daylight conditions.
  - **Level 3 evacuation required:**  
Send a t3- person team under lead of Vykhovnyk 2 (V2).  
Give map + satellite communication device.  
V1 must remain to manage critical care.  
Proceed unless risk is critical.

### **5. Lost Person/Group Protocol**

Exposure and falls are leading causes of death in the mountains. The age of the participants, and their inexperience in mountain terrain, represents a significant risk factor. A lost person is much more likely to suffer injury or death than those in a group.

Preventing people from becoming separated/lost is our leaders' #1 priority. In the event that a person or group is lost a search protocol has been developed to help guide response.

#### **5.1 Definition:**

A **person** is lost if:

- Fails to arrive at a trail intersection ahead of the sweep (leader at end of group).
- Has not been seen by a group member for **more than 60 minutes**.
- Cannot be accounted for at head count during transport.

A **group** is lost if:

- Call and tell us so.

- Fail to call/respond and are more than **2 hours overdue** from a day hike.
- They are more than **4 hours overdue** from an overnight hike pick-up.

### 5.2 Search Strategy:

- Locating a missing person involves three increasingly complex search protocols. See “**Lost Person Search Guide**”
- If a missing group member cannot be located during the first 2 stages, **call the Designated 911 Emergency Number.**
- Depending on risk - weather, terrain, person’s age, animal signs, etc. - it may be advisable to **call the Designated 911 Emergency Number** sooner.

### 5.3 Search Procedure

- A “**Lost Person Search Guide**” is included on the back of the “**Evacuation Guide**”.
- Team must have a whistle/air horn.
- Sat phone remains with non-searching group under control of V2.
- Leaders must minimize the risk to the search team.

### Initial Search:

It is a fast and efficient search of the immediate area where the person was last seen. Search teams are dispatched quickly with specific areas to search and time limits for returning to a designated base of operations.

- Assign teams of **3 or more people** to search the immediate area including:
  - Camp or on-trail rest stops such as sleeping, cooking, latrine, and water gathering areas that can be checked quickly;
  - The trail, not more than 100m in both directions, looking to both sides for evidence of entry and distress signals.
- Clearly and loudly call the person’s name at 30 second intervals and remain silent in order to hear a reply. Use a whistle when voices may not be heard.
- Attempt verbal contact around obvious hazards without jeopardizing their safety.
- Establish a time for teams to return to the designated base of operations.

### Hasty Search:

Search teams are dispatched as quickly as possible after concluding the initial search to search larger areas. This requires a higher level of investigation and respect for environmental hazards. More time will be required and risk increased.

- Consider requesting emergency response support at this time.
- Assign teams of **3 or more people** with a leader. Allocate searchers on the basis of experience or some other factor that will expedite the search.
- Instruct searchers as follows:
  - Search the trail, not more than 500m in both directions;
  - Search, with caution, hazardous areas (cliffs, stream beds, slides, rock

- outcroppings etc.) that are not more than 20-25m from the trail;
- Call person's name loudly at 30 second intervals and remain silent in order to hear a reply, use a whistle when voices cannot be heard.
- Establish time to return to the designated base of operations.

### **Extensive Search:**

If the missing group member is not found during the hasty search they are in **serious danger!**

- Team leader **calls the Designate 911 Emergency Number** and the Emergency Contact Person.
- Leader makes safety and well-being of remaining participants the priority.
- Keep the group intact, and prepare to assist response team if required.
- If the person is found, contact all members involved in the search by sat phone and terminate search.

## **6. Tabir Emergency**

Emergencies occur in tabir and must be managed assertively. It is critical to have a well prepared/understood plan of response. Think of it as a school fire drill for tabir; we have a plan, everyone knows the plan and we know how to work the plan!

Danger drives fear and panic. So long as people sense that the situation/risk is being managed control can be retained and effective decisions made.

### **6.1 Purpose:**

- Get people out of danger/risk.
- Account for all participants.
- Manage necessary response and follow-up.

### **6.2 Tabir Emergencies – The Likely List**

- Fire in camp in a tent or building.
- Imminent danger from an approaching grass/forest fire.
- Bear in tabir or bear attack.
- Serious medical emergency in camp.
- Emergency declared by RCMP, Parks Canada.
- Dangerous person(s) in camp.
- Vehicular accident during transfer.
- Lost person in camp or during transfer.

### **6.3 Emergency Protocol - Base Tabir**

- Komandant/Zastupnik/styika/vykhovnyk sounds alarm: **3 three whistle/horn blasts.**
- Participants immediately proceed to meeting spot.

- Hurtok leader will account for all members and retrieve stragglers as required and **maintain control of group**.
- Komandant will review tabir head count via Zastupnik and confirm numbers.
- The nature of the emergency and response plan will be clarified.
- Emergency Contact and Komandant manage necessary response and follow-up.
- Incident Report prepared.

#### **6.4 Emergency Procedure – Overnight Hike**

- Stiyka/Vykhovnyk/Prohulkoviy sounds alarm: **3 whistle/horn blasts**.
- Participants immediately proceed to designated meeting spot.
- Leader accounts for all members and retrieve stragglers as required.
- Once all are accounted for the hike leader will deal with management of the situation.
- Leader advises Emergency Contact of the event and need for assistance.
- IR prepared upon return.

#### **6.5 Emergency Procedure - Other**

- Meeting point should be at the flagpole.
- Ensure that all participants know the protocol.
- Demonstrate alarm signal(s) and practice a response.
- Have at least 1 "fire drill" at early part of tabir. Document.
- Ensure that stiyka/vykhovnyky/Zastupnik/Komandant have appropriate air horn/whistles.

### **7. Epi Pen**

#### **7.1 Overview**

- Epi pens are a critical response tool when anaphylactic shock strikes.
- Because the contents occur naturally in the body, anyone can administer.
- **Must call the Designated 911 Emergency Number.** The injection is a temporary fix.

#### **7.2 Epi - How to**

- Epi pen is part of every leader's "**Geek Pack**".
- All participants who are prescribed Epi pens must carry them at all times.
- Detailed instructions are on every pen unit.
- An excellent manufacturer "how to" card is attached.
- Lots of pressure is required to properly administer.

#### **7.3 Epi - Other**

- Train all Vykhovnyky in use and take on every outing.
- Pens must be kept at **body temperature** to function properly.
- Keep them out of extreme heat/cold
  - Consider keeping first aid kit in sleeping bag on 2- and 3-day hikes



- Always check that dose has been delivered by looking at fluid level in syringe.
- Re-administer if first dose fails.

## **8. Lightning Safety**

Adapted from the "Decision Tree for Personal Lightning Safety"  
National Lightning Safety Institute

*Several years ago, at a scouting jamboree in the U.S. mid-west, several scouts were killed when struck by lightning. Testimony during the ensuing lawsuit revealed that the leaders had no formal risk management process in place designed to adequately deal with this risk. The intimation was that the deaths could have been prevented.*

This is no different than a school not having a proper fire drill protocol in place.

### **8.1 Overview**

- Lightning in the mountains represents a significant hazard.
- Rapid weather changes, high elevations/ points and sparse cover escalate the risk.
- A good defensive strategy is key to safely enduring an electrical storm.

### **8.2 Lightning Safety Protocol**

- Komandant or hike leader manage risk assessment and response.
- If you can see lightning prepare to take precautionary measures.
- Follow 5 second rule between strike and thunder to call for activity termination.
- Get down from high outcroppings, hills, etc.
- Stay away from water and away from tall/sparse tree stands
- Stay away from tall trees in the "transition zone" where open spaces change to tree stands.
- Seek low ground, low brush, rock building, etc. for cover
- Disperse group and undertake "lightning crouch" if caught in the open.
- Follow lightning safety alert procedure until "outgoing" 5 second criterion met.
- Lightning strike survival is over 90%. CPR is essential.

## **9. Bear & Elk Safety**

Adapted from "Bow Valley Wildsmart - Living Smart with Elk, Bears"

*Just before daybreak, in May of 2009 a 15 year-old student camping in the wilderness was attacked by a black bear. What was disturbing was that he was part of a group of about **30 campers** and was **attacked while sleeping in his tent**, pulled out and mauled. He survived.*

*An interesting piece of information was reported in the media. Apparently, the same bear had approached the campsite the prior evening and had been scared off by a gunshot blast. The point is that the camp leaders were aware of the risk situation and, perhaps could have managed their response better.*

*For example; A stiyka? A fire? An extra careful review of food/scented item storage practices? A call to the warden to report the incident? The point is that **identified risks must be managed proactively.***

### **9.1 Elk - Always Avoid!**

- Elk are large, and can attack using antlers and hooves.
- Avoid startling them and provide them at least 100m of distance from yourself.
- Do not attempt to touch or feed elk; especially fawns!
- If an elk charges, seek shelter behind a tree. You cannot outrun it!

### **9.2 Bears - Always Avoid!**

- Extremely dangerous when surprised or feel their cubs are in danger.
- Most active in evening and early morning hours
- Never feed or otherwise engage bears.
- Keep food in designated bins or in tree bag.
- Travel in groups and make lots of noise.
- Be aware of recent bear activity in your travel area.
- Report bear sightings as required by Park Office
- Observe bear related warning signs and trail closures.
- If you see dead animal assume bears are nearby.
- Avoid fishing in bear habitats.
- **Carry bear spray and bangers and know how to use them.**

### **9.3 If you encounter a bear:**

- Don't run! Make noise and slowly back away. Prepare to use bear spray.
- **Keep the group under control!**
- Use a banger to scare the bear off. They really work!
- If the bear charges stand ground, shout and look "big" and pepper spray/fog.
- If bear attacks pepper spray in face, fight it off.
- If attacked by a grizzly assume "dead" position and hope that bear leaves.

### **9.4 Other Bear Safety Issues**

- Parks Canada provides an excellent bear safety overview in Jasper at the Interpretive Centre.
- Leaders will have bear kits consisting of 325ml canister of 1% bear spray, bangers and flares.
- They will be trained to use these and practice usage.
- Leaders will be provided necessary bear activity info prior to going on a hike into a Parks Canada identified risk area.
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## **10. Incident Report (IR)**

### **10.1 IR – Incident Report Purpose**

- Help drive learning from experience and is core to process improvement.
- Capture data essential for managing risks on an ongoing basis
- Drive accountability for performance to the hurtok leader level.
- Help us manage follow-up with care givers, PLAST risk managers, etc.

### **10.2 IR - Other**

- IR must be completed in the event of any type of emergency:
  - Near Miss
  - Non-Medical Incident; self managed
  - Medical incident; self managed
  - Behavioral incident
  - Accident
- Train; have each leader fill out an IR based on a hypothetical situation
- Komandant and Emergency Contact will manage compliance.
- All IRs will be compiled and remain as part of the permanent Tabir record managed by the Komandant and KPS.

## **11. Attachments:**

1. Incident Report Form
2. Evacuation Guide
3. Lost Person Search Guide
4. Emergency Numbers and Geek Pack Check List
5. ERP Telephone Directory
6. Epi Pen User Guide
7. Satellite Communication System
8. Kitchen Safety Protocol