

THE BUDDY SYSTEM...especially at camp

The buddy system is a safety practice in which two or three girls are grouped to keep watch over each other. In an activity (ex. swimming, hiking), the girls grouped together should be of equal ability. Safety-Wise pg 152.

Under the buddy system, each pair/trio is responsible for: staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if it is safe to do so, calling for help or going for help when the situation warrants it.

The buddy system does NOT relieve the leader of their responsibility for knowing the whereabouts of each member of the troop, but it does serve as a means of involving everyone in the group and having them share the responsibility. To be really effective, all members of the group need to understand how the buddy system works.

As a leader preparing to take your troop on an outing, you need to be keenly aware of health and safety. Security is just part of a Girl Scout's BEING PREPARED - everywhere and anytime, including troop trips and troop camping adventures.

Safety has to do with the prevention of accidents and the prevention of injury to the individual while she is participating in an activity or while she is using facilities, supplies, equipment, and tools.

Security has to do with the protection of the lives and property of individuals and with the protection of

the site and facilities and protection from the criminal acts of other people and from attacks by animals.

For the Adults: Be sure they understand their security role:. Have them review Safety-Wise Activity Checkpoints for the activity.

- To watch over and keep track of specific groups of girls (as assigned by the leader) - conduct periodic buddy checks - upon a prearranged signal, each person finds her buddy, clasps hands and holds them up. Adults can immediately count buddy pairs/trios and spot any unattached girls.

- To assist with bed checks at night

- To become a "substitute buddy" for night trips to the latrine when it is too far from the sleeping area

- To be alert for and report any suspicious sounds, activities, autos, or people

- To intervene if a stranger approach your girls or group

Be sure the adults know their sleeping assignments will be made so that they can readily detect intruders and offer immediate assistance to girls if needed.

For the Girls: Establish a few simple security rules for everyone to follow:

- Always stay with your buddy - never walk alone

- Stay near the group - don't stray away from the designated camping area

- Avoid strangers and other groups

- Carry your flashlight at night, stay within the lighted area

- Report suspicious sounds, activities,

people to an adult in your group

- Make noise for self-protection to scare off unseen intruders
- Sound alarm when in trouble
- Run toward people an/or lights

Pre-Tip Planning helps your girls to:

- Know what safety and security problems may be encountered
- Know how to deal with these hazards and potential problems
- Develop safety-security procedures for buddies to follow:

Ex: if they get separated from the group or get lost, tell them to stay put. Decide on a signal (a whistle) to be used for emergencies ONLY,

- Decide on the best way for choosing buddies for the trip. Ex: buddies within kaper groups, special interests, ability level.

If you plan your camp security and prepare the girls and adults in your group to carry out the plan, you will have a secure camp.

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