We know that there are individuals who desire to harm youth and are naturally drawn to youth programs of any kind. We want to stress that the odds of anything happening to our Scouts are, statistically, incredibly low. We are not discussing youth protection because we have to, but because we want to. A child is not more likely to harmed in our Scout Programs than in another youth program, in fact they are less likely to be harmed because our youth protection standards are so high.

You may not hear much about youth protection from other youth programs; that is not because it is not an issue, but because they choose not to discuss it. Unfortunately, a few even sweep allegations under the rug and

simply transfer suspected abusers from one part of the country to the other. The Scout Programs of Adventure Scouts USA operate transparently in all we do. Our number one priority is the health and safety of our Scouts. We raise this topic to shed the light of day in every corner of our Scout Programs. Our Counselors and Team Counselors are always on the alert for inappropriate behavior, making it as difficult as possible for youth to be harmed.

We have a lot of FUN in our Scout Programs, but one subject about which we are very serious is the safety and comfort of our Scouts. We recognize and appreciate that your children are the most important thing in the world; they are indeed the future of your family. We are dedicated to the safety of your child in our Scout Programs.

Screening Processes for Counselors and Team Counselors

Our youth protection standards are the highest of any youth program in the United States.

We do background checks and including fingerprinting for all who apply to be a Counselors or Team Counselors with our Scout Programs.

All of the registrant's information is analyzed within the computer registration database to catch potential variations or discrepancies when an individual is re-registering or registering initially.

Parental Screening

Before taking part in activities, parents are provided with information about youth protection. We encourage parents to agree to a background check, after which they are Assistant Counselors, and can assist Counselors and Team Counselors when Scouts are out and about, such as on camping trips.

Code of Conduct

We have a code of conduct that goes above and beyond other youth programs.

Examples of situations which are considered inappropriate are:
* being alone with a Scout,
* touching, such as hugging, unless appropriate for time, place, and manner, for example, an awards presentation

Exceptions to inappropriate contact are only in case of an emergency.

The Rule of 3

A Scout is never alone with an adult in our Scout Programs. Ever. The minimum requirement is either two adults to one Scout or two Scouts to one adult. We prefer more than one adult in any case.

Codes

Our teams pick their own "code", a word or phrase that only they, Counselors, Team Counselors, or parents know. The purpose of this is that if a Scout got lost or separated and did not know whether to trust the adult offering to help, when the adult supplies the code word or phrase, our Scouts know that person is a parent or a Counselor from another team who has been informed of the correct word or phrase.

What We Do in a Case of Inappropriate Behavior

We immediately contact the appropriate authorities and suspend the alleged perpetrator's interaction with Scouts.

If the accused individual is found guilty, the person is stripped of their membership, we send information about them to the news media and to other youth organizations.

Ways to Help Keep Your Child Safe

One obvious way is take part in our Scout Programs. Our best defense as Scout Programs is that we know our Counselors and our parents, because we are a family-oriented Scout Program. It would be rare to see an adult at our meeting, programs, and activities whom everyone did not know.

Another way to help your child be safe is to teach them that no one has the right to put their hands on them inappropriately. We have included a Scout Bill of Rights in our Youth Protection for Youth document. We recommend you go over it with your child.

Why our Policies on Youth Protection Are Stringent

We are serious about youth protection. While the chances of a child being abused are extraordinarily low, we do not advocate the position of some youth organizations which declare that nothing bad could ever happen. Parents, counselors, and youth are better informed than they have ever been, which is a tremendous step forward in youth protection. We know you are aware that are people who want to hurt children and they are particularly attracted by youth programs of any kind. That is why we go above and beyond to screen those adults who spend time with our Scouts, to educate our Counselors on how to be on the alert, and to educate our Scouts on how to take care of themselves.

Rules and Guidelines to Keep Scouts Safe

* Always try to be with a buddy
* Always try to be in groups of 3 - 2 Scouts and 1 Counselor, or 2 Counselors and 1 Scout
* Scouts are not permitted to be off the premises with adults when participating or not in an official part of the Program as a Team or as a Crew.

Examples of situations which are be considered inappropriate are:
* physical examinations which an adult suggests are necessary or appropriate,
* having Scouts undress to explain parts of their uniform,
* sleeping in the same tent with Scouts,
* sharing the same sleeping bag or tent to stay warm,
* the application of products, such as suntan or calamine lotions, insect repellents, etc.,
* the grabbing or touching of private parts while swimming,
* roughhousing with others,
* being alone with a Scout,
* being in private with a Scout,
* being in an area with a Scout out of the view of others,
* no back rubs,
* showering with Scouts, unless all are clothed,
* changing in view of Scouts,
* no touching unless appropriate for time, place, and manner, for example, an awards presentation
* There are to be no secret organizations, or hazing rituals.

No one has the right to touch you in certain places, and if someone does, you must tell someone you trust right away, such a parent, Counselor, Team Counselor, teacher, religious leader, police officer, or family friend.

KMT

Know
Minimize
Tell

Know

Know who you are with, what is happening around you, and where you are.

Should you find yourself either in an uncomfortable situation or with someone who you think is behaving inappropriately, we encourage you to remove yourself from the situation as quickly and safely as possible. Instead, we want you to use the awareness you have acquired as a result of our Know, Minimize and Tell Training.

Minimize

Minimize injury to yourself. Then make every effort to remove yourself from the situation to a safer environment. Try to get away from the person and the environment. Make noise, scream, and yell for help. Many abusers can continue what they do because they depend upon their victim's embarrassment and silence.

If you are unable to get away and help is not available, use your own common sense. Fight the abuser often works, but sometimes fighting an abuser can result in injury. Use your best judgment.

Depending on the circumstances, several things that might help to minimize personal injury are:
* if you can, first run away t o a safer environment,
* if, for whatever the reason, running away is not an option, then yell loudly,
* or react strongly and say "stop!"
* or draw attention to yourself.

Tell

Tell others so this person will not continue to harm you or harm others. Tell parents, Counselors, Team Counselors, or call our National Office. If a member of your Scout Program is not around, seek help from another adult in the area. The safest choice is a mother with children.

Youth Bill of Rights

Remember: These are actions that will give you the power to protect yourself, some of these might not be appropriate for situations where you are not threatened.

When feeling threatened, you have the right to:

* Trust your instincts or feelings
* Privacy
* Protect yourself
* Say "no" to an authority figure acting inappropriately
* Say "no" to unwanted touching or affection
* Refuse inappropriate gifts, such as expensive gifts, pornography, alcohol or drugs. Gifts are time, place, and manner appropriate such as a small token after winning an award.
* Withhold information that could jeopardize your safety
* Be rude and unhelpful if the situation warrants
* Physically fight off unwanted advances
* Scream, make noise, or be rude when you feel threatened
* Tell a parent, Counselor, or Team Counselor about an authority figure's inappropriate behavior
* Be yourself and have FUN without feeling threatened or scared