

First Presbyterian Church of San Angelo

Sweet 16 of Safety

I acknowledge that no policy or procedure can replace the review and vigilance of trusted adults and leaders. However, I promise to follow the following safety rules as long as I am a volunteer at First Presbyterian Church of San Angelo (FPC).

1. **Qualified Supervision.** Every FPC activity should be supervised by a conscientious adult who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children or youth in his or her care. The supervisor should be sufficiently trained, experienced, and skilled in the activity to be confident in his or her ability to lead and teach the necessary skills and to respond effectively in the event of an emergency. Knowledge of FPC programs and a commitment to implement and follow FPC policies and procedures are essential parts of the supervisor's qualifications.
2. **Physical Fitness.** For youth participants in any potentially strenuous activity, the supervisor should receive a complete health history from a health-care professional, parent, or guardian. Adult participants and youth involved in higher risk activities (e.g., ski trips) may have to undergo professional evaluation in addition to completing the health history. The supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate potential risks associated with individual health conditions. Neither youth nor adults should participate in activities for which they are unfit. To do so would place the individual, others, and FPC at risk.
3. **Buddy System.** The buddy system has a dual purpose: You ensure your buddy's safety during activities, and your buddy ensures your safety. You are never alone and vulnerable.
4. **Safe Area or Course.** A key part of the supervisor's responsibility is to know the area or course for the activity and to determine that it is well-suited and free of hazards.
5. **Equipment Selection and Maintenance.** Any equipment used should be selected to suit the participants and the activity and to include appropriate safety and activity features. The supervisor should also check equipment to determine whether it is in good condition for the activity and make sure it is kept properly maintained while in use.
6. **Personal Safety Equipment.** The supervisor must assure that every participant has and uses the appropriate personal safety equipment. For example, some water activities require each participant wear a life jacket; bike riders, horseback riders, and kayakers need helmets for certain activities; skaters need protective gear; and all participants need to be dressed for warmth and utility as the circumstances require.
7. **Safety Procedures and Policies.** For most activities, common-sense procedures and standards can greatly reduce any risk. These should be known and appreciated by all participants.
8. **Skill Level Limits.** Every activity has a minimum skill level, and the supervisor must identify and recognize this level and be sure that participants are not put at risk by attempting any activity beyond their abilities.

9. **Weather Check.** The risks of many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. Potential weather hazards and the appropriate responses should be understood and anticipated. Weather hazard training should be made available to at least one adult on an outing.
10. **Planning.** Safe activities follow plans that have been conscientiously developed by the experienced supervisor or other competent source. Good planning minimizes risks and also anticipates contingencies that may require an emergency response or change of plan.
11. **Communications.** The supervisor needs to be able to communicate effectively with participants as needed during the activity. Emergency communications also need to be considered in advance for any foreseeable contingencies.
12. **Plans and Notices.** Registration, government or landowner authorization, and any similar formalities are the supervisor's responsibility when such are required. Appropriate notification should be directed to parents, enforcement authorities, land owners, and others as needed before and after the activity.
13. **First Aid Resources.** The supervisor should determine what first aid supplies to include among activity equipment. The level of first aid training and skills appropriate for the activity should also be considered.
14. **Applicable Laws.** The supervisor should confirm and assure compliance with all applicable regulations and statutes.
15. **CPR Resource.** Any strenuous activity or remote trek could present a cardiac emergency. Aquatic activities may involve cardiopulmonary emergencies. FPC strongly recommends that a person (preferable an adult) trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be part of the leadership for any FPC activity. This person should be available for strenuous activities.
16. **Discipline.** No supervisor is effective if he or she cannot control the activity and individual participants. Youth must respect their leaders and follow their directions.