



PURPOSE

Safe Hiking requires that the Activity Leader has considered the following requirements and implemented these best practices in both their planning for and in the implementation of the Activity.

The provisions contained in this Practice Note, should be read together with SCOUTS South Africa's Safe Scouting Policy.

Please note that Practice Notes and any appendices associated with the Safe Scouting Policy are operational in nature and may change from time to time as required. Any changes will be communicated through the structures of SCOUTS South Africa, and the most up to date version will always be available on the national website.

PROVISIONS

1.1 General Rules

- 1.1.1 All hiking activities require an approved Activity Permit and suitably qualified and trained Activity Leader.
- 1.1.2 The Activity Leader should ideally have prior knowledge of the route to be hiked, and previous hiking experience in the type of terrain / conditions to be encountered.
- 1.1.3 The Activity Leader is responsible for assessing and implementing the relevant First Aid and Safety provisions as contained in the Safe Scouting Policy.
- 1.1.4 Every hike must have a Safety Plan, which must provide at least the following detail in the relevant sections of the Activity Permit application.
 - A brief description of the route to be followed, with identified pick-up or exit points along the way in the case of an emergency.
 - The designated Contact Person who will be the first point of contact in the event of an accident or an emergency.
- 1.1.5 Where there are any specific Regional Hiking Procedures, which require additional safety provisions to be met for certain mountainous areas – i.e. KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, these procedures must also be applied before the Activity Permit is approved.
- 1.1.6 It is the responsibility of the Activity Leader to ensure that the conditions at the commencement of the hike and foreseeable conditions are suitable for the hike to proceed and that each participant is properly prepared and equipped.

1.1.7 Activity Permits may be withdrawn by the person responsible for approving the permit up to and including the day of the hike should any of the prevailing conditions, including current and predicted weather, state of rivers etc. merit it.

1.2 Meerkat Hiking

1.2.1 Meerkats may only take part in short hikes of approximately 3 – 4 kilometres with at least one parent / legal guardian or authorised responsible family member with each Meerkat.

1.3 Cub Hiking

1.3.1 Cubs may only take part in day hikes of approximately 5 – 10 kilometres in distance.

1.3.2 Cubs are not permitted to take part in overnight hikes, except in exceptional circumstances where this is considered to be beneficial to those Cubs participating. This must be motivated to and approved by the RTC Cub Programme.

1.4 Scout Day Hiking

1.4.1 The minimum size for a Scout hiking party is four (4) Scouts. Depending on the route proposed and the difficulties of the terrain / conditions, the approver of the Activity Permit has the discretion to increase the minimum size of the party to six (6) Scouts.

1.4.2 A Patrol Hike requires the Activity Leader to have at least completed the Traveller Advancement Level and the First Aid Scoutcraft badge requirements.

1.5 Scout Overnight Hiking

1.5.1 An overnight hike, for the purposes of completing Scout advancements requires the Activity Leader to have the following qualifications;

Level	Minimum Requirements
First Class	Discoverer Advancement Level and First Aid Scoutcraft Badge.
Springbok	First Class Advancement Level and the First Aid Interest Badge.

1.5.2 The Activity Leader should ideally have the means for contacting assistance and emergency transport should this be required.

1.5.3 In addition to the requirements contained in General Rules above, the hike plan for any overnight hikes must also include;

- Options for alternative routes which may be required due to any hazardous conditions which are encountered along the route

- The precautions to be taken when crossing flowing rivers
 - Escape routes and evacuation plans covering the whole route
- 1.5.4 It is also recommended that a designated 'deputy to the Activity Leader' be appointed, who is familiar with the Hike Plan and the Emergency Procedures to be followed. They will then be able to take over in the event of an accident or injury to the Activity Leader.
- 1.5.5 Where the hiking party includes members of more than one gender, the parent / legal guardian of each participant must be made aware of this and must give their consent for the hike to take place.
- 1.5.6 Ideally, separate accommodation in tents is to be provided for each gender, unless the circumstances make this impossible.
- 1.5.7 Adult members participating in overnight hiking, may not share tents with Youth Members.
- 1.5.8 The menu planning for overnight hikes should take account of the welfare of the participants, their dietary or cultural needs as well as the equipment required to prepare the proposed menu items safely and hygienically.
- 1.5.9 The Activity Leader must also ensure that all the necessary equipment is available and in working order, to ensure the safety of all participants in the hike.