

Backcountry Evacuation

Lesson Overview

During this lesson, students will learn how to respond to an emergency in the backcountry and think critically about how to prevent such situations.

Overall and Specific Expectations

- PPL 10: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 20: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 30: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1
- PPL 40: 1, 1.5; A3, A3.1

Learning Goals

- I can behave responsibly and apply appropriate safety rules and procedures that maximize my safety and that of others during outdoor activities.
- I can think critically to analyze situations, evaluate my choices and make safe decisions in a variety of situations.

Materials

- Flip chart (or other large pieces of) paper
- Markers

- Projector (as needed for slides/information)
- Slide show (optional: create slide presentation of activity information in text boxes in the Action)
- **Student Resource: Backcountry Evacuation - Exit Card**
- Whiteboard and whiteboard markers

Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

Activities

- **Canoe Tripping**
- **Kayal Tripping**

Tools and Resources

- **Concussions**
- **Disability-Centred Safety**
- **First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response**
- **Outside Activity Providers**

Other

Risk Management

Assessment for Learning

At the beginning of the lesson, work with students to co-create criteria for assessing knowledge and skills needed to apply safety rules and procedures during outdoor education activities. For example, success criteria might include: I can transfer my knowledge about group and individual behaviours to a new context in an emergency situation and during an evacuation.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and then have them complete their *Student Resource: Backcountry Evacuation - Exit Card*.

Assess students' responses during the class discussions throughout the scenario and on the *Student Resource: Backcountry Evacuation - Exit Card*. Use the co-created criteria to evaluate student learning and offer feedback. If needed, provide feedback to individual students or the entire group, to clarify or reinforce their understanding of backcountry safety, and answer any remaining questions.

Minds On

Suggestion: Create a slide show (for example, a PowerPoint presentation) with each part of the following story/scenario on a separate slide. (There is one part per text box, below and in the Action.)

Have a volunteer read the following scenario aloud:

"It was a cool September day, around 15°C, and a group of students were on their third day of a canoe trip on the Magnetawan River. They ate a breakfast of oatmeal. It had rained the night before, and the group was preparing for their first portage of the day: 350 meters from Trout Lake to Beaver Pond. At 10:35 a.m., when the group arrived at the destination, Michelle slips while portaging the wanigan (kitchen box). You are behind her and see her fall and hit her head on a rock."

Ask the class: "If you were the student who saw her fall, how would you react in this situation?"

Possible answers:

- "Go get a teacher or monitor."
- "Stay with Michelle."
- "Keep Michelle still, and check that she is breathing."

Action

Continue with the scenario and story. Have volunteers read one story/scenario part at a time (one per text box). Pose the question that follows and corresponds to each box, and have students discuss it. Possible correct answers are given for each.

"One of the teachers or monitors keeps Michelle's head immobile while another asks her questions as she regains consciousness. Michelle says her fingers tingle and she cannot feel her feet. The teacher suspects a spinal injury."

Ask the class: "What could we do to help in this situation?"

Possible answers:

- "Go find a blanket or jacket."
- "Help the teachers and monitors to take notes."
- "Keep the group calm and out of the way."

"A monitor calls for help on the satellite phone and gives the coordinates of the accident. She tells the group a helicopter is on the way. The teachers and monitors need to stay with Michelle. However, the helicopter cannot land on Beaver Pond."

Ask the class: "What could we do to help at this moment in the situation?"

Possible answers:

- "Identify a location on Trout Lake where the helicopter can land."
- "Have the students spread out along the trail, making sure they are all within eyesight or sound of each other, to guide the rescuers."

"The helicopter lands on Trout Lake at 12:40 p.m. The only landing spot is 50 meters from the end of the portage. The rescuers reach Michelle and put her on a spinal board. They carry her to the lake and then put in her in a canoe to take her to the helicopter. The rescuers, Michelle, and a monitor fly to the hospital in Sudbury."

Ask the class: "What should happen next in this scenario?"

Possible answers:

- "Take care of the rest of the group."
- "Complete a review of the evacuation."

"During the review, Emile reports that he heard Michelle say she didn't have anything to eat at breakfast because she dislikes raisins. He also heard her say she felt faint when they were paddling the canoes across the lake, before the portage. Abigail reports that Michelle was feeling homesick and didn't want to be on this trip. Meanwhile, doctors at the hospital request X-rays and think Michelle may have a small spinal fracture. The X-rays show there is no injury. Her parents have been notified so they can come pick her up, and obviously she will not participate on the rest of the trip."

Ask the class: "How might Michelle's accident have been prevented? Who in this scenario had responsibility for preventing the incident?"

Possible answers:

- "The teachers and monitors could have ensured all students ate breakfast/were feeling well."
- "Michelle should have eaten breakfast."
- "Michelle should not have been carrying the box if she had been feeling faint, or at least asked for help."
- "Michelle, the people she talked to, or Emile could have mentioned to the teachers and monitors that Michelle was feeling faint."
- "Emile could have encouraged Michelle to eat a snack or something else for breakfast."

Consolidation

Answer any questions students may have. Then have students complete their *Student Resource:*

Backcountry Evacuation - Exit Card.

Notes to Teachers

Remember to check school board policies and procedures applicable to any outdoor education activity.