

The Complete Picture of Backcountry Camp Safety

Lesson Overview

Over the course of this lesson, students will examine the risks associated with camping in the backcountry and how to mitigate them.

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) paper (or whiteboard(s))
- Markers

- Sticky dots
- Sticky notes
- **Student Resource: The Complete Picture of Backcountry Camp Safety - Exit Card**
- Tape for posting the large flip chart paper

Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

Activities

- **Camping (Backcountry)**
- **Swimming (on Watercraft and Land-based Trips)**

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 identify risks to my safety and that of others on the campsite.
- I can explain the risks and possible dangers of not using safety measures.
- I can justify my explanations with an example.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and then have them complete their *Student Resource: The Complete Picture of Backcountry Camp Safety - Exit Card*.

Collect and review the *Student Resource: The Complete Picture of Backcountry Camp Safety - 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

Provide students with the following instructions. Our class is leaving on a canoe trip in a few days. Once there, we need to establish a safe campsite. What safety concerns do we need to be aware of? What additional safety measures are important for a campsite close to water?

Action

- Have students work in groups of three or four.
- Give each group a large sheet of paper and a marker.
- Have each group draw a campsite on their paper.
- Have each group pass their paper to the group to their right.
- The next group writes three “safety concerns” on the sticky notes, and puts them on the sheet (for example, writes “Make sure the fire is put out before going to sleep” on the sticky note and stick it on the fire in the picture).
- The groups pass the sheet to the group on the right again.
- The next group adds three more sticky notes to the drawing and passes it to the right.
- The activity continues until the students are out of ideas. (Alternatively, set a timer for the activity.)
- Circulate and give hints as needed.
- Post all papers on the wall.

- Have students walk around the class, look at the sheets, and put a sticky dot on ones they think are the most complete.
- Guide students in a whole-class discussion about the activity.

Consolidation

Draw students' attention to the drawing the class chose as the best one, and compare it to this list of safety tips:

- Do not set the fire under overhanging tree branches.
- Remove any debris around the fire.
- Surround the fire with a circle of stones.
- Make sure the firewood is properly stacked.
- No horseplay around the fire.
- Look after the fire at all times.
- Put out and dampen the fire before going to bed.
- Put the camping mats on flat ground, free of debris.
- Put the food up in a tree far away from the campsite.
- Check that there are no dead branches above the tents.
- Bring a tarp for shelter in case of bad weather.
- Wash your hands after using the latrines.
- Establish the latrines far enough away from the camp water.
- Dig the latrines, if needed, at a depth of at least 30 centimeters.
- Make sure the campsite is free from any tripping hazards.
- Put any saws in the trees; do not leave them on the ground.
- Make sure the water purification system is easily accessible.
- Dump out the dishwater in a ditch far away from the campsite.

- Make sure the first aid kit is easily accessible and that the group knows where it is.
- Respect any safety requirements (for example, water-based activities requirements, supervision ratios) before swimming or bathing.

Have students compare the safety rules of this list and the safety rules on the pictures chosen by the class.

Guide a discussion on the subject of safety rules not included on the drawing chosen by the class. Invite students to explain when these rules are important and justify their explanation with an example.

Have students fill out their *Student Resource: The Complete Picture of Backcountry Camp Safety - Exit Card*.

Notes to Teachers

Each poster can be posted in the class as a reference for preparing for the class trip.

Remember to review any safety standards about swimming if applicable to the trip.

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