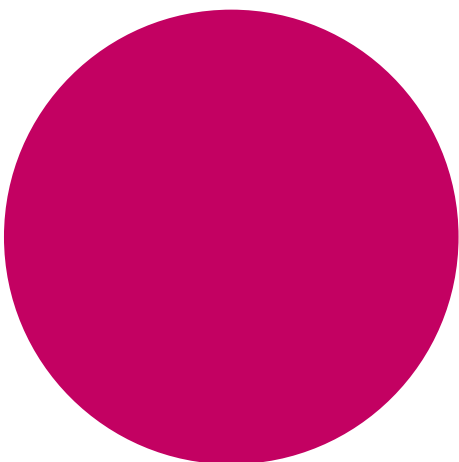


BEING PREPARED

Planning for guiding activities



INTRODUCTION



This picture shows a happy guiding scene. The Brownies and Rainbows are having fun, running around and enjoying themselves in the fresh air.

However, it could also show an accident waiting to happen. Any of the children could get hurt or hurt others. Accidents can happen at any time, and the more people involved in an activity, the greater the risk of a problem.

Girlguiding provides a safe space in which its members can have fun and develop new skills. Taking part in challenges and adventurous activities is an important part of the guiding experience - but all activities involve a degree of risk.

The ability to manage challenges and risks (emotional, physical or social) is an essential skill for the successful development of girls and young women adulthood. To acquire these skills they need to have the chance to stretch themselves, enabling them to test and understand their own limits and capabilities.

- If activities and games are insufficiently challenging, girls and young women will be bored and look for something more adventurous and quite probably more dangerous elsewhere.
- They need to learn, in a controlled environment, how to manage risk - a skill to be kept throughout life to develop decision-making processes which enable girls to say yes or no with confidence.
- Many of the games and activities that involve risk are those that keep girls and young women active and therefore fit and healthy.
- We must create an environment where girls and

young women can develop. There are essential skills, like riding a bike, which children would never learn if they weren't strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving a risk or injury.

It is feared that young people are not offered enough opportunities to participate in certain activities due to the perceived risk of injury involved.

There is currently a culture of fear of litigation which has been encouraged by exaggerated press coverage of certain incidents.

The 'pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety' means providers become disproportionately nervous and can easily become discouraged. The result is that certain activities and games are not widely provided by schools and out-of-school clubs; consequently girls and young women miss out.

However, the presence of risk does not mean an activity should not go ahead. This resource provides a step-by-step method of assessing and managing risk, in situations ranging from normal unit meetings to large-scale events. It will help you to feel confident about offering guiding experiences that are exciting, challenging - and safe.

In the following pages you will find a complete description of the risk assessment system (3-4), and several examples of ways in which it can be used in different guiding situations (8-12). Finally, there is an example of a slightly different system (SWOT analysis) which can be useful in some circumstances (13-14).

Hazards and risks

Hazards and risks exist all around us. If you sit down on the sofa with a cup of tea, there is a risk that you could spill the hot drink, scalding yourself or staining clothes or furniture. Will that stop you enjoying your tea? Probably not. It is most likely that you will assess the risk automatically and decide how to manage it: taking extra care not to drop the cup, or putting it down on a table. However, when you are responsible for a unit of girls you have to think a little more formally about risks and how you are going to manage them.

To do this, you need a system which will help you identify the hazards associated with a particular event or activity. Then you can see how to reduce and manage the risk, so that the benefits of the activity outweigh the risks.

Hazards

Hazards are sources of potential harm. Some are easy to spot, such as moving traffic, hot water, areas of water, difficult terrain, some chemicals, heights and so on. Others may be less obvious: extremes of heat or cold, very bright light, or unseen bacteria. Even simple objects such as sharpened pencils, chairs or toys can become hazardous in certain situations. However, most hazardous things also include benefits (chairs are good for sitting on), which is why you need to take a balanced view about hazards.

Risk

For a hazard to pose a threat to an individual or group, there has to be some form of human interaction. Risk is the extent of any harm or undesirable effect which could arise, taken together with the likelihood of the threat actually happening.

In terms of assessing risk it is useful to divide risk situations into three categories: high, medium and low. In everyday language, we often refer to high-risk activities as 'dangerous'. We also talk about relative risk; for example, crossing the road is more risky than crossing the meeting hall.

You can think of risk assessment as a sum:

Level of risk = Severity of threat x Likelihood of it happening

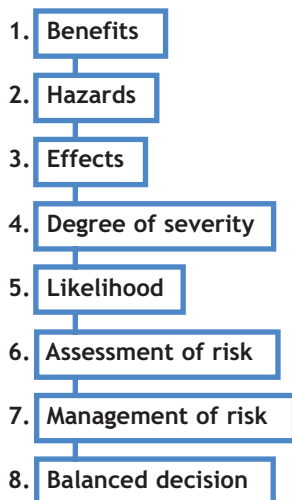
High-medium severity x Highly likely = HIGH RISK

Medium severity x Possible = MEDIUM RISK

Low-medium severity x Unlikely = LOW RISK

Risk can be created by your action or inaction, or by that of others. Similarly, the harm may be to yourself or to others. When planning any activity or event, you need to consider what level of risk is acceptable as part of your risk management. For example, if a broken bone (high severity) is highly likely to happen, this is a high risk and would need to be reduced before the activity could go ahead.

The risk assessment system



Unlike many approaches to risk assessment, this system starts positively by outlining the potential benefits to the girls in doing an activity. When you establish the benefits first, it is then possible to assess the risks in context.

1. Benefits

Most Leaders are used to considering the benefits to their girls when planning programme activities. Skill development is fairly easy to assess; mental and social benefits are less straightforward but should not be ignored. Other activities may have different sets of benefits - for example, opening a County office could increase efficiency and save money on travel or storage costs.

Remember that most girls join guiding for the adventure. It is our task to provide that in a safe environment. This task can be shared between girls and Leaders in a safe environment

2. Hazards

Physical hazards are relatively easy to spot but some other kinds need to be thought about. For example, weather, other people and the psychological impact of situations or actions may need to be considered too.

Some hazards have so little chance of happening that they can be ignored. For example, any one of us could be hit by a falling meteor, but the likelihood on a day-to-day basis is pretty remote, so this is probably something you can leave off your list of hazards! The financial hazards of an activity should always be considered, for example, when planning an event, setting the budget for a realistic number of participants, whereby income is assured.

3. Effects

The possible effects of any hazard can vary. For example, a running game can be a hazard if girls collide. The physical effect could be anything from a small bruise to a broken limb; there could also be supervision concerns and the risk of negative public relations (PR) for guiding. You may therefore want to think of a range of effects for certain hazards.

4. Degree of severity

Some hazards can cause minimal damage. For instance, bumping into a chair might cause a slight bruise, and a broken pencil will cost a few pence to replace. On the other hand, being hit by a car could be fatal while a fire in an uninsured office could ruin a County.

5. Likelihood

As mentioned previously, some things are very unlikely to happen. You may find it useful to put possible effects in order or rate them as unlikely, possible or highly likely.

6. Assessment of risk

Now you can assess the level of risk, based on the severity of harm combined with the likelihood of it happening. Is the risk significant enough to require management, or should you consider not undertaking the activity/event?

7. Management of risk

Before you make a judgement about whether the benefits of doing something outweigh the risks, you need to decide whether there is anything that could be done to minimise the risks. For instance, could you recruit more adults to accompany Rainbows to the park, or take out insurance protection for damage to equipment?

8. Balanced decision

Finally, you have to make a decision on whether the risks of an activity outweigh the benefits. Normally, the additional steps you have implemented to reduce the risk means that the activity can go ahead safely. Sometimes, however, even after considering how you could manage the risk, you may need to consider not undertaking an activity or event.

The example of driving a car is a good one to illustrate this. The risks associated with cars are considerable and sometimes fatal, but we still drive cars because of the benefits they provide.

Putting it into practice

BENEFITS

We're going to have a great meeting tonight. Let's start with a fun running-around game.

HAZARDS

We can't play a game with the room in this state. I wouldn't like the girls to hurt themselves on the furniture or the rug. And the litter is a real health hazard.

EFFECTS

That pile of chairs could easily fall over and injure them. They could bash into tables and trip over the rug! The litter could attract wasps.

SEVERITY

Yes, the chairs are above head height so they could crack their skulls! Someone could sprain an ankle if they tripped on the rug or slipped on a spilled drink. A wasp sting could cause a serious reaction.



LIKELIHOOD

And they run about so fast, an accident would be bound to happen.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

There is a high risk of an accident at the moment.

MANAGEMENT OF RISK

But if we spent five minutes sorting out the room, it would be much safer.

BALANCED DECISION

When we have cleared the room it will be fun to play the game.

Right, have we finished?

Yes. Splitting the chair piles and turning them to the side means they keep the girls off the stage and won't fall forward.

The rug's rolled and hidden away.

All the notices are firmly on the board and there are no drawing pins loose.



The tables are stacked neatly and under the open windows so the girls won't run into them.

The litter's all gone.

The bin's empty and in the corner.

Great, now we're ready for the girls. I'll make a note to ring the caretaker later.

Summary of the system

1. **Benefits:** Why are you doing the activity? What are the benefits?
2. **Hazards:** What are the hazards?
3. **Effects:** What are the possible effects of those hazards?
4. **Degree of severity:** How serious would each of those effects be?
5. **Likelihood:** How likely is it that each effect will occur?
6. **Assessment of risk:** How risky does that make it (high, medium or low)?

A risk assessment is a working document that should be referred to and modified throughout the event.

7. **Management of risk:** Can you reduce the risk? If so, how? What steps can you take to help the benefits outweigh the risk by eliminating, reducing or controlling the hazards?

8. **Balanced decision:** Should you take the remaining risk or is it not worth it?

The key to using this system is to remember that the whole system should be gone through for each hazard identified. Do not lump the hazards together, because each hazard may have a different effect, likelihood and severity.

Remember that this is a system rather than a checklist because each situation will have different hazards.

How to get more help

You don't need to be an expert when deciding how to manage risks. There are plenty of people and resources available to help you. The following Girlguiding resources are available online or can be ordered via your local guiding shop, www.girlguidingshop.co.uk or 0161 941 2237.

- **The Guiding Manual:** information on all essential aspects of guiding, from membership and child protection to finance and property management. Available online at www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingmanual.
- **The A to Z of Activities:** detailed requirements for undertaking all kinds of activities, including adventurous activities. Available online at www.girlguiding.org.uk in the members' area.
- Girlguiding website members' area: information on child safety, managing risk and downloadable risk assessment form and checklist for risk assessment in the meeting place.
- **The Guiding Handbook**, an essential resource for all Leaders and volunteers with everything you need to know about making guiding safe. Order code 6052.
- **Going Away with Guiding:** all you need to know about taking young members away. Order code 6045.
- **Including All: Disabilities**, order code 6358.
- **Best Intentions: Guidance notes for those who manage Girlguiding properties and campsites**, order code 6896 (free).
- **Firm Foundations**, order code 6360.
- **Training Opportunities: Camp and Holiday Scheme**, order code 6478.
- **Training Opportunities: Climbing and Abseiling Training Scheme**, order code 6142.
- **Training Opportunities: Walking Scheme**, order code 6563.
- **Training Opportunities: Rowing Scheme**, available to download from the members' area of the website.
- **Training Opportunities: Power-cruising Scheme**, available to download from the members' area of the website.

The quarterly *guiding* magazine and monthly e-newsletters include news and tips on all aspects of guiding. The Girlguiding website address is www.girlguiding.org.uk. Check these for changes to existing resources and information about new ones.

People who can help you include:

- your local Commissioners
- County Commissioners
- County Advisers
- Girlguiding's Insurance Hotline - 0845 260 1053.

USING THE SYSTEM

Example 1: Games in the unit meeting place

Helen, a Young Leader, has been asked to plan a game for the Brownie unit's next meeting. She talks to Alice, the Unit Leader, about her plans.

Alice: Well, Helen, how's the planning going? Have you thought of a game for next week?

Helen: I thought we'd try a game called Tunnel Run. I learned it at my judo class. It's really fun with lots of running about, and the good thing is that you don't need any special equipment.

Alice: Great. Can you think of any problems we might have in playing this game?

Helen: Well... our meeting room is quite long and narrow, and there is a lot of running around involved. So maybe we'd be better playing it outside on the grass, if the weather is fine.

Alice: Anything else we need to think about in advance?

Helen: If we do play it inside, we need to check the layout of the room first and make sure all the chairs are stacked safely on one side, and that they're not piled so high that they might fall over and hurt anyone. Of course we'd need to have our first aid kit available just in case any of the girls ran into each other. And we'd need to explain the rules to the girls first, so that they know exactly what to do.

Alice: That sounds good to me. You've obviously thought about some of the risks in playing this game and how we can plan to manage them. Shall we try it out next week?

Helen: Yes, it's a really good game, I'm sure the girls will have a great time.

1. Benefits: Having fun, learning a new game and playing together in a large team.

2. Hazards: Furniture, other children, falling over.

3. Effects: Physical injury and upset children.

4. Degree of severity: Physical injury - medium to low. Upset children - low.

5. Likelihood: Very likely, dependent on number of children playing and size of room, location of furniture etc.

6. Assessment: Medium risk of slight/moderate injury.

7. Management of risk:

- Although the Young Leader will be running the game, the activity should be supervised by adult volunteers.
- Leaders should understand the rules of the game before it is played.
- Check the room - is it suitable for the game and number of the children? Is there enough space? Should any furniture or other obstructions be cleared away?
- Are the girls in the right mood to play this particular game, eg too boisterous that evening?
- Would it be better to play this game outside? If so, does there need to be an alternative activity if the weather is bad?
- How should the rules be explained to the girls the first time it is played, or if it has not been played for some time?
- Are those taking part wearing suitable footwear for the activity?
- Is there a first aid kit available in case of an accident?
- Is there enough adult supervision to help comfort a child who has had a collision and to supervise the rest of the group?

8. Balanced decision: A fun new game presents risks which have been identified and considered minimal.

Example 2: Creativity in the unit meeting place

Your Guides have chosen to take their Craft badge this term. At the Patrol Leaders' programme planning meeting, they are organising the craft sessions.

Marbling paper

1. Benefits:

- Completing a clause of the Craft badge.
- It will be really fun!
- The Guides are planning to use the paper to wrap their Christmas presents for the end-of-term party.

2/3. Hazards/effects:

- Marbling involves large amounts of water which could be spilled.
- Marbling ink/paint could cause damage to clothes or the meeting place.

4. Degree of severity:

- Slipping on spilt water - low/medium
- Damage to clothes - low

5. Likelihood:

- Slipping on spilt water - possible
- Damage to clothes - possible

6. Assessment of risk:

These risks have been identified and should be managed to reduce the possibility of them occurring.

7. Management of risk:

- Do the activity in an area with a washable floor.
- Protect the table by covering with old newspaper.
- Ask Guides to wear old clothes or bring aprons. You may be able to buy non-permanent paints/dyes for children.
- Ensure that trays used for marbling are deep enough to hold water, without splashing. Have enough trays for the Patrol to ensure that there is no overcrowding around trays.

8. Balanced Decision:

The risks of this activity can be managed. The benefits of marbling paper outweigh the risks involved.

Pottery

1. Benefits:

- Most of the girls have never done this before, so they will be learning a new skill.
- Completing a clause of the Craft badge.

2/3. Hazards/effects:

- The girls and meeting place could get messy with clay.
- Clay can be toxic.
- Glazing and firing the pottery: heat from firing could cause burns.

4. Degree of severity:

- Mess from clay - minimal
- Clay can be toxic - medium
- Burns - could be severe

5. Likelihood:

- Mess from clay - highly likely
- Clay can be toxic - dependent on clay used
- Burns - possible

6. Assessment of risk:

The risks posed from the toxicity of clay and burns, are significant enough to require management.

7. Management of risk:

- Non-toxic modelling clay can be purchased.
- Ensure that everyone covers all cuts beforehand and washes their hands after modelling. Tie long hair back and wear aprons or old clothes. Ensure that all surfaces are wiped down after use.
- Professional glazing and firing is safer and can offer the best results. The Leaders will ask a couple of local schools and colleges with pottery kilns to help them with this. If they can't help, the Leaders will find out about services at their local pottery painting shop.

8. Balanced Decision:

The risks of this activity can be managed so that the benefits of this activity outweigh the risks involved.

Example 3: Cooking in your unit

Your unit has planned a 'healthy living' theme for this half term, and as part of that the girls are very keen to spend an evening cooking healthy meals. You've never done cooking with them on this scale before, so you want to think through all the benefits and risks.

1. Benefits:

- Having fun.
- Learning new skills.
- Healthy eating.
- Inspiring girls to try other relevant programmes and badges.

2. Hazards:

- Heat from oven, hob, hot water.
- Equipment, eg sharp knives.
- Food allergies.
- Mess.
- Incorrectly cooked or unhygienically prepared food.

3. Effects:

- Burns or scalds from heat sources.
- Equipment could cause harm.
- Allergic reactions.
- Girls and meeting place will get messy.
- Food poisoning.

4. Degree of severity:

- Burns/scalds from heat sources - high.
- Injuries from equipment - high.
- Some food allergies can be life threatening - high.
- Mess - can be cleared up - low.
- Food poisoning - potentially high.

5. Likelihood:

- Burns/scalds - possible.
- Injuries - possible.
- Allergic reactions - can be avoided.
- Mess - highly likely.
- Food poisoning - possible.

6. Assessment of risk:

The severity of risks of burns, equipment injuries and illness need to be managed for the activity to go ahead.

7. Management of risk:

Burns/scalds

- Safety discussion before the cooking starts, including a demonstration or clear instructions for the girls to follow when near or using heat sources.

- Extra adult supervision throughout the activity.
- Ensure that the recipe is suitable for that particular age group.

Equipment injuries

- Safety discussion before the cooking starts, including a demonstration or clear instructions for the girls to follow when near or using equipment.
- Extra adult supervision throughout the activity.
- Ensure that the recipe is suitable for that particular age group.

Allergic reactions

- Ensure that you have up-to-date health and consent forms. Record allergies on Go! and use the Emergency Contact Details report.
- Double check all ingredients.
- Talk beforehand to girls with allergies (and their parents/carers, if appropriate) about any action you need to take.

Mess

- Ensure girls wear aprons and/or old clothes.
- Keep cleaning equipment ready to deal with spills or mess.

Food poisoning

- Make sure girls follow good food hygiene practice: tie back long hair, wash hands thoroughly before and after the activity, do not cough or sneeze over food.
- Ensure that all food is safely stored before/after cooking.
- Check that the recipe instructions are being followed.
- Ensure that the cooking area and equipment are clean to use.

8. Balanced decision:

- A cookery evening presents a variety of risks, but all can be managed to some extent. If the risks are managed, the benefits outweigh the risks of harm.

Example 4: Fundraising event

During a Pow-wow to plan the unit's next big adventure, Mia, one of the Brownies, told the others that her sister's Guide group had had a fantastic day canoeing at the local Training and Activity Centre. The Brownies and their Leaders agreed that they would love to try this too. They started to think of ideas to raise enough money to pay for their adventure.

The Brownies were all keen to do a sponsored event, but needed to come up with a suitable challenge. The favourite ideas were walking and hopping.

They thought it would be best to do a sponsored walk at the weekend, when it would be light and they would have plenty of time to complete it. They would need lots of adult helpers such as parents to act as marshals along the route, and a

first aider. As it was winter, the weather could be poor and it might mean fewer people coming to walk.

Hopping sounded like a fun activity that they could do within their unit meeting, and the Brownies were keen. Harinder, the Unit Leader, reminded the girls that they needed to be careful in case they fell over from too much hopping! She decided to contact a couple of local schools and considered the floor space and Brownies' footwear before the event. The Brownies were going to use sponsorship forms to collect names and pledges over the next few weeks, before the hop.

For more information, tips and advice for fundraising in your unit please see www.girlguiding.org.uk/runningyourunit. Please ensure that you follow Girlguiding's policies on fundraising in *The Guiding Manual*, and check the *A to Z of Activities* for regulations and guidance on activities.

Example 5: Community Clear-up Day

Some of the 1st Anytown Guides want to organise a community clear-up day for the unit, as part of their Baden-Powell Challenge. A group of Guides and Leaders visit the site and undertake a risk assessment.

1. Benefits:

- Contributes towards the Baden-Powell Challenge.
- Benefits the local community.
- Provides good local PR.
- Area could potentially be used afterwards by the unit.

2/3. Hazards/effects:

- Broken glass - cuts and grazes.
- Brambles - grazes.
- Hazardous substances or waste, used needles/condoms, unidentifiable canisters/oil drums - poisoning/disease/infection/burns.
- Rivers and streams - deep and/or fast-flowing water, steep/crumbling banks - drowning/falls.
- Electric fences - electrocution.
- Uneven ground/potholes - trips and falls.
- Traffic on roads - accidents.
- Derelict sites/buildings - trips and falls, potential for serious injury.
- Rats and mice - bites, increased risk of disease eg

Weil's disease.

- Animal faeces - disease/infection.
- Heavy lifting - back injuries.
- Giant hogweed - irritation/rash/blistering to the skin.
- Sufficient adult supervision to oversee girls and activity.
- Parents should complete a consent form.

5. Likelihood:

The likelihood of physical injury is between possible and highly likely, dependent on the type of area being cleared.

6. Assessment of risk:

The risks of this activity need to be managed, to ensure that the site is suitable, before this activity can be undertaken.

7. Management of risk:

- All participants should wear protective heavy-duty gloves.
- All cuts should be protected/covered up.
- Girls should avoid touching their faces while working.
- Everyone should wash hands thoroughly before eating/drinking.
- Hazardous substances/waste - contact the Environment Agency for removal prior to the event.
- Use secateurs for brambles/weeds.
- Syringes - note their location and contact the

local council, so they are removed prior to the event.

- Wear old protective clothing, eg trousers to protect legs from brambles.
- Mark off dangerous areas. Look out for hazard warning signs for deep water/electric fences.
- Sufficient adult supervision to oversee girls and activity.
- Parents should complete a consent form.

8. Balanced decision:

If all necessary measures are taken to manage the risks, they will be outweighed by the benefits and the activity can go ahead.

If hazardous waste and used needles are not removed from the site beforehand, it will have to be cancelled.

Example 6: Division Adventure Day

You have joined the planning team for an Adventure Day for all the units in your Division. This is an example of an event, which could be undertaken by new Leaders, completing their Leadership Qualification. The event will be held at the County campsite, and 15 units with a total of 300 girls have been invited. At a planning meeting, the event team made these notes which will be compiled into a risk assessment.

1. Benefits:

- The day will be a great opportunity for girls and Leaders to have fun away from the meeting place, meet other girls and experience different sections of guiding. Some units will use it to encourage girls to progress to the next section.
- The girls will have fun and try out new activities and skills.
- It will improve teamwork within the Division, with the event being used for elements of the Leadership Qualification.
- Some of The Senior Section are going to camp overnight, and undertake their Senior Section Camp Permit.
- A well-run large event would boost the profile of guiding locally, with PR potential in the local media.

2/3. Hazards/effects:

- Congestion in the small car park and access road on arrival/departure - frustrating for parents and local residents. In the worst scenario, there could be an accident.
- Bad weather - the event is outdoors and could be spoiled by rain. This could risk financial loss.
- Barbecue - some participants could have food allergies. A risk of food poisoning if food is not properly cooked. Volunteers who are cooking could burn or scald themselves. Barbecue fire

could get out of control.

- Children aren't collected on time - upsetting for the child and inconvenient for the Leader.
- Uninvited members of the public coming along.
- Not enough girls turn up and the event loses money.
- Games and activity equipment - unsafe equipment for playing of a game could risk harm to girls or volunteers.
- Risk of harm to volunteers who are not used to strenuous activities or games.
- Property damage to campsite or equipment borrowed from other parties.
- Accident during adventurous activities (climbing and canoeing).

4. Degree of severity:

The degree of severity for physical harm is medium. Upset from the size of the event, would cause minimal damage.

5. Likelihood:

The likelihood of physical harm is possible. The likelihood of some upset is highly likely, due to the size of the event.

6. Assessment of risk:

The risks of this activity, identified above, need to be managed, before the adventure day can go ahead.

7. Management of risks:

The consequences of some of these things could be severe, for example a child being abducted, but the likelihood is low. It's more likely that it will rain. We can reduce the likelihood that things will go wrong by careful planning and preparation.

Communication

Every girl's parent/carer should complete a consent form, which should contain emergency contact details and information about health, faith, cultural and dietary needs, including allergies. This will help

the first aider and cooks prepare for the day.

The planning team should write an information sheet for Leaders to give out to parents. This will include details of:

- drop-off and collection times and arrangements
- food that will be provided
- a kit list including spare items for those going canoeing, waterproofs in case it rains, and sun hat and sun cream in preparation for sunshine
- travel, including promotion of car-sharing, walking and cycling.

Volunteers and parents should be given clear instructions and a timetable for the day's activities in advance. Ensure that all volunteers are aware of their role on the day.

Registration and ground rules

- Ask parents to sign their daughter in and out of the event with their Unit Leader.
- Ensure that the boundaries for the site and activities are clearly marked out with physical barriers. Produce a site map with any out-of-bounds areas clearly marked. Ensure that this is given to all volunteers.
- Volunteers will take it in turns to man the front gate with a list of authorised visitors, eg climbing instructors.

Physical safety and health of participants

- Ensure that you follow all requirements in the *Guiding Manual* and *A to Z of Activities*, including instructor qualifications and child:adult ratios.

- Check equipment before it is used. Make sure girls are adequately supervised at all times.
- Appoint an event first aider (maybe more than one) in a first aid post and ensure that there are well-stocked first aid kits and contact details for the local hospital. Check in advance if there is mobile phone reception at the site or an emergency campsite phone.
- Make sure the barbecue is run by experienced cooks who will stick to food hygiene and safety guidelines. Have fire equipment, eg buckets of water, on standby.
- Have an emergency evacuation plan, and brief all volunteers present. Explain to the children what to do in the event of a fire.

Bad weather

- Contingency plans for wet weather - hire out holiday house/hall on the site in case of wet weather. Produce wet-weather activities just in case.
- Get some quotes for event cancellation insurance and consider the need for this.

8. Balanced decision:

Sharing an event with others in a new location provides more benefits, which outweigh the hazards, when the event is properly managed.

Example 7: Finding a new meeting place

A Rainbow, a Brownie and a Guide unit are looking for a new home, as their local school is no longer able to host them.

The units are in a very rural area, with a small number of possible venues. Most of the girls live in one village, and the Leaders want to keep the meeting place as central as possible. The units would like to keep to one meeting place if possible, and currently meet on different nights of the week.

They have decided to use a SWOT analysis.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a more formal brainstorming session, which can encourage a group planning a new event or making an important decision to 'think outside the box'.

When choosing between venues for your next big adventure or deciding what type of stall to run at your community fair, it is important to consider all options and manage the risks.

This system will help you identify the positives (Strengths and Opportunities) and negatives (Weaknesses and Threats) in each scenario and will help you complete a formal risk assessment.

Meeting place	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Youth hut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good size • Cheap • Camp equipment available • Storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never cleaned • Only boys' toilets • No telephone • Not available on Mondays • No disabled access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could strengthen relationships with other youth groups • Possibility of gaining new members • Space to provide a proper home, eg room for posters and pictures of unit activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access via dark winding lane in woodland • Local boys hanging out in the surrounding area
Village hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of the village • Clean and well maintained • Plenty of toilets (boys' and girls') • Good disabled access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Available only one night a week • No storage or room for pictures/posters • Other rooms used during meeting times • Over-protective caretaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives guiding central focus in village • Easier access for village - could attract more girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a busy road • Other user groups follow meeting time, eg addiction support groups
Pub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap • Large room • Very well maintained • Available most days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No storage • Main access through bar • No disabled access to upstairs function room • No kitchen facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of guiding in village • Possibly attracting more volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord changes • Public perception of guiding activities • Girls and alcohol issue

Meeting place	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Cricket pavilion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community group rates • Available on weekdays • Some storage available • Use of outdoor space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailable during cricket season (summer) • No disabled access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District events could be hosted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public transport • Nowhere to meet at height of cricket season

After a long discussion, and consultation with the District Commissioner throughout, it was agreed that, with careful negotiation with the landlord and brewery, the function room at the pub was a strong possibility as a temporary solution. It was agreed that it was really important to continue to offer guiding to benefit girls locally. Each location had minus points ranging from physical to financial. The effects and severity varied from location to location but the most serious were the dark lane and local boys who hung around the youth hut.

Everyone agreed that it was important that guiding was accessible to members with additional needs. There is currently no disabled access to the upstairs function room. It was agreed therefore that the village hall would provide a long-term solution and that the function room would be used temporarily while the units investigated other funding sources to enable them to move to the village hall in the future.

Some District members were uncomfortable about being above the pub but it was agreed that if an alternative entrance could be used (there was an emergency exit to the car park which could perhaps be opened for the main influx of girls and then closed), it would be worth trying. During the unit meeting times, early in the evening, the pub was likely to be fairly quiet.

The County PRA would be involved in putting together a positive press statement explaining that while the function room was not ideal, it did show that guiding was flexible and as much a part of the village life as the pub itself! Sarah, the District Administrator, agreed to write a standard letter to parents explaining the changes and the reasons behind the decision.

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