

NOLS RISK SERVICES: SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL



At NOLS we believe people grow and learn by taking risks in learning environments that have real hazards and potential consequences. Rather than avoiding risk, we have a responsibility to run programs structured to recognize and manage risks.

Risk management is not a checklist; it is a culture and habit. Our training is intended to help you ask questions about your organization to foster greater awareness of your strengths and weaknesses.

It is a constant challenge to balance risk to the participant and risk to the organization. At NOLS we prioritize managing risk to the participant and believe that helps us manage risk to the organization.

Building a risk management plan is a long-term process. Our goal is to help organizations identify how to make forward progress.

This program self-assessment tool is intended to start you on a path to identify strengths and areas for improvement in your risk management systems in order to support your participants, staff, and mission.

RISK MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
We have defined our risk management goals.				
Roles and responsibilities for risk management within our organization are clearly defined.				
We regularly solicit external perspective (from peer organizations, outside experts, or others) on our risk management practices.				

CORE CURRICULUM	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
We have a mission and program goals.				
The activities we do are in alignment with our mission and goals.				
We actively assess the risks associated with each of our activities.				
We are comfortable with the activities we choose to do, given the associated risks.				
We effectively communicate with relevant stakeholders (families, staff, insurance company, etc) about the risks of our program.				

FIELD SUPPORT SERVICES	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
We have inspection and retirement/replacement procedures for critical equipment.				
We manage food allergies effectively, and we provide appropriate food for the activities we do.				
We have transportation policies and effectively manage transportation risks.				
We provide medical treatment and evacuation guidelines to our staff.				

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
Our marketing materials are truthful, realistic, current, and informative.				
Our enrollment materials help enroll the appropriate participants on the appropriate trip/course/program.				
Our participant agreement contains plain language about risks and has been reviewed by a lawyer.				
We have clear behavior expectations and expulsion policies. Staff and participants and their families understand those expectations/policies.				
Our participant health review/screening process is effective.				
We have defined roles, responsibilities, expectations, and emergency procedures with all of our subcontractors.				

STAFF TRAINING AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
We have a strong culture of risk management within our organization.				
We have accurate position descriptions for the staff we hire, and we are able to hire the right people most of time.				
We have the right number of written policies to match the expertise and training of our staff.				
Written field practices mirror what actually happens in the field.				
Our staff are well prepared to do their jobs, and they learn what we want them to learn through our training.				
We collect data on injuries, illnesses and near misses, and we use that data to inform our practices.				

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS RESPONSE	Refinement needed? (Y/N)	Urgency 1 to 5 (1 low, 5 high)	Internal steps (check if needed)	External support (check if needed)
We are prepared to manage an evacuation.				
We have emergency response plans to guide both field and administrative emergency response.				
We provide emergency response training for our staff.				
We have a plan for supporting participants and staff in the event of a serious incident.				
We have a plan for notifying the family of a seriously injured or deceased participant.				
We have an internal and external (media) communication plan in the event of a serious incident.				
We have serious incident investigation procedures in place.				

NEED SUPPORT?

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