YOUTH PREPAREDNESS
Quick Tips to Mitigate Risks

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REDUCING LIABILITY

Your youth preparedness program provides a valuable service to your community. Training children on preparedness empowers them to act confidently during an actual emergency, encourages them to spread the message of preparedness to their families and communities, and helps to develop future generations of prepared adults.

There are risks and liabilities to consider when putting together a youth preparedness program. The following five steps can be used to develop a risk management plan: (1) Get leadership support; (2) Gather information; (3) Identify risks; (4) Adopt strategies to manage risks; and (5) Maintain the momentum.[1] These steps are discussed in more detail in FEMA's *Youth Preparedness Guide to Risk Management* (available at http://www.ready.gov/kids/tools). If you do not complete the full five-step process, you should at least consider the ten actions below, which represent basic risk mitigation techniques.

Strategies to Manage Risks	Done?
Get permission slips and liability waivers signed by the parent/guardian and the minor.	
Screen adults who will have contact with youth.	
Develop protocols for how adults and minors interact in the program.	
Develop a "Code of Conduct" for everyone (youth or adult) participating in the program.	
Ensure that instructors or trainers are appropriately credentialed for the trainings they provide.	
Stock a first aid kit and keep it readily available; ensure that facilities and equipment meet safety standards; learn evacuation routes and shelter plans.	
Comply with your state laws related to volunteering and working with children.	
Get signed permission slips for activities that differ from usual program activities (e.g., different time, different location, involving transportation, etc.).	
Develop protocols for when and to whom youth can be released at the end of each session, if relevant.	
Protect sensitive information, especially the names and contact information of both youth and adults.	

RESOURCES

More information about liability and risk mitigation can be found via the sources listed below:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). *CERT Liability Guide: A Risk Management Overview for Local CERT Programs.* http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=6219
- FEMA Citizen Corps. *Citizen Corps Volunteer Liability Guide: An Overview of Legal Issues and Approaches to Address Liability for Emergency Volunteers.* http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=6529
- Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital. *Volunteer Essentials.* http://www.gscnc.org/files/pdf/pubs/volunteeressentials.pdf

- Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachians. *GSCSA Volunteer Handbook.* http://www.girlscoutcsa.org/content/dam/southern-appalachian/documents/Volunteer_Handbook_2013.pdf
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center (especially the trainings under "Web Tools"). http://www.nonprofitrisk.org
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center. *State Liability Laws for Charitable Organizations and Volunteers.* http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/downloads/state-liability.pdf
- University of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development. *Risk Management and Insurance.* http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/mgt/risk.cfm

[1]Much of the material in this document has been excerpted from the FEMA Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) document titled *CERT Liability Guide: A Risk Management Overview for Local CERT Programs.* Additional information about liability, including sample materials, can be found in the *CERT Liability Guide* at http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=6219.

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with *Youth Preparedness: Implementing a Community-Based Program* and the supplemental tools for youth preparedness programs. These materials are available at http://www.ready.gov/youth-preparedness.