



## Risk Management: Awareness and Acceptance

### Risk Management

A good adventure with children and youth is a safe adventure. Safety at Camp Chief Hector YMCA means providing competent leadership that supports the words and the spirit of Camp Chief Hector YMCA's rules, guidelines, training, and experience. Safety means managing social, emotional, and physical risks within the YMCA's risk tolerance practice.

### Risk Management Priority Statement

Camp Chief Hector YMCA is committed to supporting the well-being of all participants and staff in our programs. We invest significant time and resources into the development and maintenance of a safe and trustworthy camp environment that enables all staff and participants to experience the benefits of our programs without exposure to unacceptable hazards. In addition, Camp Chief Hector YMCA is committed to providing quality outdoor experiences that support the healthy growth and development of our staff and participants. We accept that there are inherent risks associated with our programs and we take specific actions to reduce and control such risks. We also recognize that there are benefits to both staff and participants in engaging in the risks associated with our programs. Therefore, we strive to find a balance between the risks and benefits of our programs through our risk management policy. We manage risks so that they will be encountered at a level that is appropriate, based on the staff or participant's competency.

### Core Competencies

At the core of our risk management policy is staff. Staff at Camp Chief Hector serve as primary risk managers in the field. As such, we consider the following core competencies when we are hiring and training our staff members:

- **Knowledge:** staff understand our risk management policy and they have the knowledge necessary to employ it.
- **Experience:** staff are experienced in outdoor environments and working with youth.
- **Judgment:** staff make logical decisions that align with our risk management policy.
- **Group management:** staff manage a group of participants in a way that balances the risks and benefits.
- **Technical skills:** staff use technical skills that manage risk and reduce hazard.
- **Attitude:** staff personalities align with our risk management policy.
- **Willingness to grow:** staff are willing and able to further develop their ability to manage risk and reduce hazard.



## Goals of Risk Management Policy

There are three primary goals of Camp Chief Hector YMCA's risk management policy:

1. *To reduce harm to all staff and participants:* the unique nature of Camp Chief Hector's programs come with inherent risks that we cannot eliminate without destroying the benefits associated with them. We tolerate risk that is appropriate and beneficial for staff and participants. A risk comes with the potential of harm, but has associated benefits, whereas a hazard has the potential to cause harm without associated benefits. By tolerating risk and limiting hazards, we can effectively reduce harm to staff and participants.
2. *To empower participants to manage risk themselves:* a large part of Camp Chief Hector's risk management policy is to help participants develop a competency necessary to manage risk themselves. As staff members at Camp Chief Hector YMCA it is our job to manage risk; however, it is our goal to teach participants about the nature of risk, the benefits of risk, and how to take risks appropriately. When participants are able to understand risk and manage risk themselves, staff are far better equipped to manage risk as the leader of a group. Particularly on expeditions, ten risk managers are more effective than two. Not only do we strive to manage the inherent risks of the programs at Camp Chief Hector through participant engagement, we strive to help our participants become competent risk managers in their lives outside of the camp environment.
3. *To allow staff and participants to grow through risk:* At Camp Chief Hector, we encourage participants to try new things and step outside of their comfort zone. In doing so, we create opportunities for participants to take risks in a controlled environment. The camp environment provides unique opportunities for children, youth, and adults to challenge themselves, learn new outdoor skills, further develop interpersonal skills, connect with nature, and make new friends. If it were not for risk, these opportunities for growth would not exist.

## Risk Awareness and Acceptance

Any of the activities at Camp Chief Hector YMCA involve certain social, emotional, and physical risks; many of them include the risk of disability, death, or psychological trauma in the event of a serious incident.

Some of the potential risks at Camp Chief Hector may be familiar to us in our home communities: motor vehicle transportation, lightning, tree fall, uneven ground, inclement weather, fire, hot liquids, infectious illnesses, and equipment failure.

Some risks may be more unique to the setting at Camp Chief Hector YMCA: lake water, river water, entrapment in vegetation or equipment while in moving water, falls from a high ropes facility due to equipment failure or an error in judgment, wildlife encounters (including cougar and bear), falls from horses, bites/kicks/other encounters with horses, rock fall, uncontrolled slide on snow or rock, a fall from heights, steep terrain, and the risk of remoteness from emergency medical services.

*Building healthy communities*



The risks listed, and other risks not listed, can pose the potential of harm to even a well-trained leader. Any of Camp Chief Hector YMCA's activities can, due to an error in judgment, or to the factors of nature beyond a leader's control, become harmful and potentially life-threatening.

The safety of each individual is of the utmost importance to us. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, Camp Chief Hector YMCA reserves the right to alter the program at any time without compensation to participants, parents or guardians.

A family must weigh the risks that may be encountered at camp with the benefits of the camping experience while considering the strengths of Camp Chief Hector's Risk management policies and procedures.

### Risk Management Policy and Procedure

The following policies and procedures are part of Camp Chief Hector's larger risk management plan:

- All staff are certified with program-appropriate First Aid training.
- All staff maintain annual CPR training.
- All staff and volunteers have submitted a current Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.
- Camp Chief Hector is an accredited Alberta Camping Association facility.
- Camp Chief Hector is supported by the YMCA of Calgary's Vice President of Health, Safety, and Risk in collaboration with the Health, Safety, and Risk Committee.
- Camp Chief Hector YMCA participates in regular internal and external safety audits
- Camp Chief Hector YMCA operates in conjunction with land managers and permitting authorities
- Program practices and training at Camp Chief Hector YMCA are reviewed by leaders in the outdoor industry
- Camp Chief Hector YMCA participates in risk management research and development conferences and workshops in the outdoor industry
- Camp Chief Hector YMCA conducts regular reviews of the feedback provided by family and staff surveys.

### Questions or Concerns about this Document

If you would like to discuss or have questions about the above information, please send an email to [cchy@calgary.ymca.ca](mailto:cchy@calgary.ymca.ca)