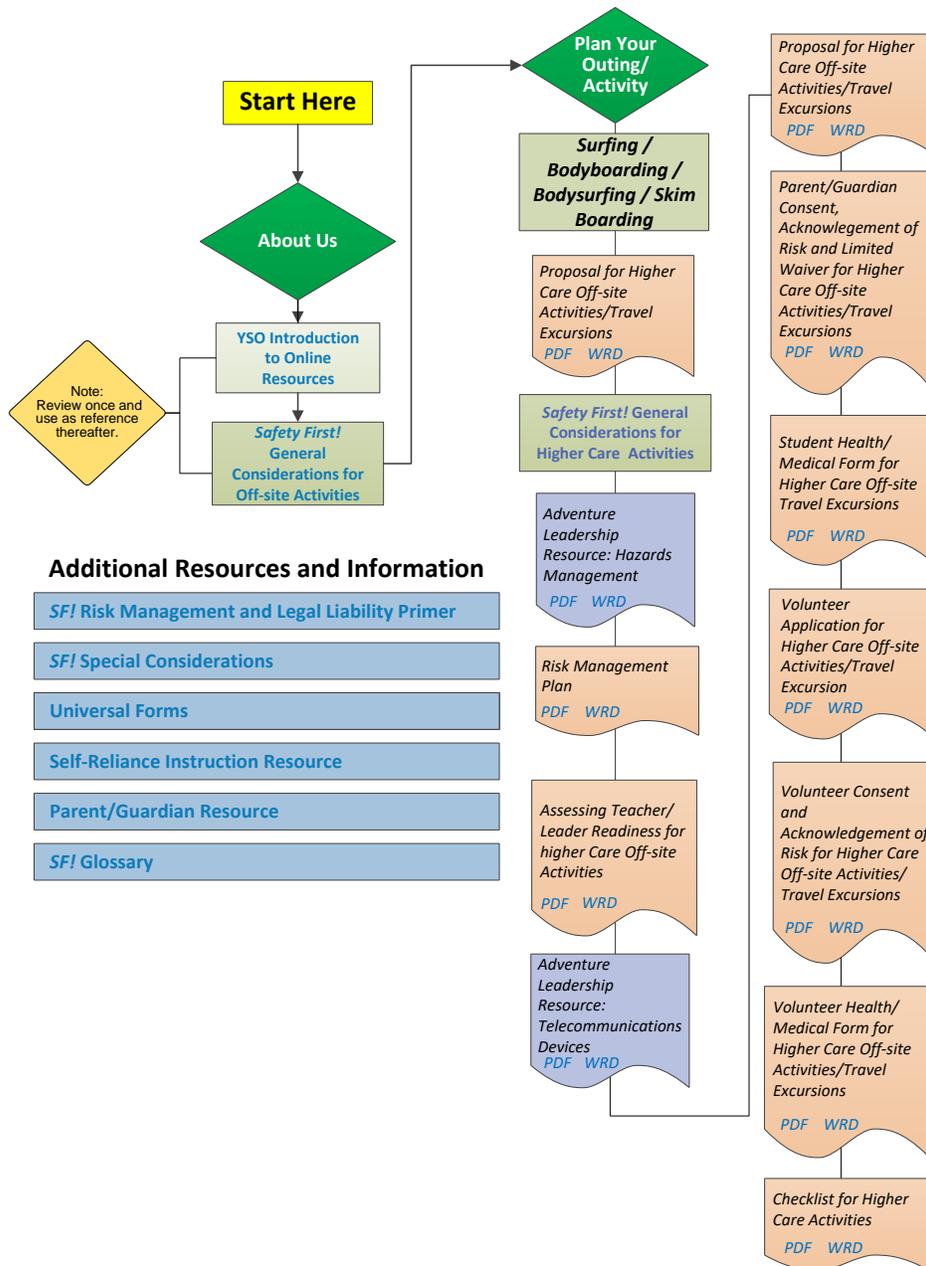


Surfing / Bodyboarding / Bodysurfing / Skim Boarding

Flow Chart, Steps to Success, and Safety Guidelines

Grade 9+



Safety Guidelines

Surfing / Bodyboarding / Bodysurfing / Skim Boarding – Higher Risk

A higher care context is assumed for these activities, with respect to the chart and table above. Where the actual activity is to be conducted in a low risk environment (e.g., local, well-defined, low-energy water, short time and distance to emergency services), it may be planned as a low risk activity. See *Aquatics (Low Risk)* for chart, table and guidelines.

Known Potential Risks

- Injuries related to motor vehicle incidents en route to and from activity area;
- Becoming lost or separated from the group or the group becoming split up;
- Injuries related to slips, trips, and falls in the program area or en-route to/from it or on the board or as a result of wearing fins;
- Injuries related to collisions – with movable objects (e.g., other boarders/boards or one’s own board) or immovable objects (e.g., rock);
- Injuries related to board capsize or falling off of board;
- Injuries related to equipment malfunction (e.g., board breaking) or becoming tangled in apparatus (e.g., tether);
- Being swept under or out to sea due to strong undertow currents or rip currents or struck by large waves.
- Injuries related to stepping on sharp objects with bare feet;
- Injuries if swimming in moving water environments due to foot entrapment in bottom hazards such as rocks;
- Environmental hazards such as murky or polluted water, wind, waves, currents, etc.;
- Injuries related to the physical demands of the activity and/or lack of activity skill;
- Injury related to ill-fitted equipment, equipment malfunction, failure to use the equipment properly or becoming tangled in apparatus;
- Blackouts or other injuries caused by excessive breath holding or hyperventilation;
- Drowning or near-drowning;
- If outdoors, weather changes creating adverse conditions;
- Hypothermia due to remaining in cool/cold water too long or due to insufficient clothing when out of the water if outdoors;
- Loss of manual dexterity of the hands when cold and wet;
- Allergic reactions to natural substances (e.g., bee or wasp stings, jellyfish stings if in the sea);

- Injuries related to interactions with animals and plants in the environment;
- Psychological injury due to anxiety or embarrassment (e.g., re: body size or shape, lack of fitness or skill);
- Illness related to poor hygiene or drinking untreated water;
- Complications of injury/illness due to remoteness and time to emergency services; and
- Other risks normally associated with the activity and environment.

Common Risk Mitigation Strategies

Teacher/Leader Readiness

- The teacher/leader must be competent to organize the surfing/skim boarding activity; to demonstrate, instruct and supervise it; and to effect rescue and emergency procedures as necessary.
- If the students are to surf/board in high-energy water and/or water that is more than chest deep and are not wearing PFDs, then a certified lifeguard or a lifesaver (Bronze Medallion) with CPR and experience in relevant water rescue must be present. If the students are only to be low-energy shallow water or while wearing PFDs, then the criteria for *Aquatics (Low Risk)* should be followed.
- If the students will be in more than chest deep water, teacher/leader and assistant leaders must be capable swimmers, able to manage themselves confidently in the water in the selected environment. At a minimum they should be able to successfully complete a survival swim test (roll into the water, tread 1 min., swim 50 m. any style while wearing a PFD and no goggles).
- At least one supervisor must have first aid training, the level dependent on the time and distance to Emergency Medical Services (See *First Aid in General Considerations for Higher Care Activities*).

Location

- Guidelines related to travel by bus or walking to/from a site are covered in *Travel to/from Off-site Destinations* in the *General Considerations*. If travelling by a means other than bus or walking, see *Transportation in Special Considerations*.
- Identify a safe, allowable way to transport equipment considering the safety of the students and minimal potential for damage to the equipment.
- Surf boards must be transported safely, either on trailers or on vehicle tops (see below).
- Be particularly cautious in open areas with off-shore winds and/or subject to the effects of incoming or outgoing tides.
- If in open water, the area must be secure from motorized vehicles (e.g., power boats, personal watercraft) or a diver's flag or other means of notifying boaters must be posted.
- When selecting an appropriate site, consider:

- the temperature of air (including wind chills) and water,
 - length of time a participant(s) may spend in the water,
 - rate at which the water is moving (if a river, stream, or ocean current),
 - ease of access to/egress from site or watercourse, and
 - the skill/experience level of the students.
- Consider potential implications if the water is subject to sudden and/or significant fluctuations in water level (e.g., impact of tidal variations or a storm or dam-affected river).
 - Suspend the activity and get out of the water if a storm comes in.

Equipment

- Ensure students have equipment that is not damaged in a manner that renders it unsafe (e.g., fins, surfboards /bodyboards/skim boards).
- If the students will be venturing into water more than chest deep, all non-swimmers or very weak swimmers must wear a PFD.
- In Canada most surfing is done while wearing wetsuits or drysuits. Ensure these fit appropriately for comfort, functionality and maneuverability.
- The teacher/leader must be familiar with the surfing site from previous reconnaissance.

Instruction

- Parents/guardians should be asked to verify the level of swimming training/skill the student has.
- If the swimming ability of a student is unknown, before being permitted to participate in water above their chest height without a PFD the student should be given a survival swim test (roll in, tread 1 min., swim 50 m. any style without PFD or goggles).
- Students should be introduced to basic skills related to safe participation in the activity and environment selected. This may include:
 - equipment checks
 - swimming with fins, if relevant
 - entry and exit methods
 - techniques of “catching a wave”
 - how to avoid collisions with other surfers/skimmers
 - staying with group and dangers of not doing so
 - respecting marine life (animals, plants, corals, barnacles)
 - rescue techniques
 - “reading the water”, including knowledge about tides, current and waves for the local region.

Supervision

Ensure students are appropriately supervised (considering age, maturity and context). In addition to the guidelines in *Supervision* in the *General Considerations for Higher Care Activities*, apply the following as appropriate:

- On-site supervision.
- One supervisor is to remain out of the water for shore supervision.
- In open water, there must be at least two adult supervisors present, one of whom is the teacher/leader responsible for the group. Consider the size of the surfing/skim boarding area, presence of any currents/other hazards and maturity of students in establishing ratio; approximately 1:4 is common for surfing and 1:10 for skim boarding.
- Conduct head counts to keep track of students in the water.
- Use a buddy system.

See *Aquatics (Low Risk)* or *Aquatics (Higher Care)* for other considerations.

See *General Guidelines for Powerboats and Sailboats* where one of these craft may be used to access a site and/or provide surface support for an activity.

Notes

1. If, when reviewing the guidelines above, terms and concepts presented are unfamiliar, this is a strong indicator that additional personal leadership preparation (e.g., a training course, reading) or contracting a qualified service provider is advisable.
2. This document is not intended as an instructional guide. The teacher will need to use other references to learn how to teach students the skills (e.g., how to brake when inline skating, how to do a diagonal stride when cross-country skiing).