

Youth Safety at 4-H in Canada – Frequently Asked Questions

Club Meetings and Project Work

Q: Are two trained leaders/screened volunteers required for every meeting or event?

A: Yes. At minimum one (1) trained leader/staff (A) and an additional screened volunteer (B), who are not spouses, should attend the meeting and be responsible for youth. Additional non-screened guests (C) may be required in order to meet the Programming Ratios required to safely deliver programs, depending on the number of youth members in attendance, and the activity.

While all trained leaders and screened volunteers must be screened, only trained leaders must complete the 4-H Provincial Training, Child Protection Training (Commit to Kids), Youth Safety Training, and Event/Position Trainings. A screened volunteer only needs to complete the Event/Position Training and sign the Code of Conduct.

Spouses may be part of the club leadership team, but there must always be a third trained leader/screened volunteer to ensure there is a third party that is not legally bound to the couple in case of financial or other misconduct.

Q: Am I considered a trained leader if I have not completed the Commit to Kids training?

A: No. To be considered a trained leader, you must:

- successfully complete the Child Protection Training (Commit to Kids) online course (or Put the Child First classroom training in BC); and
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- complete the Youth Safety training and other training required by 4-H in your province.

Each club must have at least one trained leader when the new club year begins in 2020. Those who have not completed the Commit to Kids training may be a screened volunteer instead.

Q: What should I do if I arrive early to a meeting and another trained leader/screened volunteer is not present?

A: If you need to prepare for an activity or clear equipment to make the space safe and ready, do so before the members arrive. For your space to be ready, there must be two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers. Here are the steps to take:

- Stay outside in plain view.
- Ask a parent to stay with you with the youth member(s) until another trained leader/screened volunteer arrives.
- Do not let any youth members into the meeting space until another trained leader/screened volunteer is present.

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An Incident Report must be completed and submitted to the appropriate 4-H administration (national, provincial, district, association) if a situation made it necessary for an adult to be alone with a youth member.

Q: Is it appropriate to meet with a youth member alone to work on their 4-H project?

A: No. The Rule of Two requires that two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers be present for sanctioned and insured project meetings, and group project work. As 4-H encourages youth to explore their unique interests, when there aren't two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers to lead a project the youth can undertake an independent project and attend the achievement day with other projects in the club. Please reach out to your provincial organization for specific details on the requirements for an independent project.

4-H insurance provides coverage for sanctioned events where two trained leaders/screened volunteers are providing supervision. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide supervision for any project work completed at home, or if the youth engages a project-related expert. There is no 4-H insurance coverage for work/activities completed outside of a sanctioned meeting/activity/event.

For example:

- If a member is housing their livestock project on a neighbour's or trained leader/screened volunteer's property, it is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide supervision for any visit.
- If a member is working on an independent sewing project and visits a local seamstress, it is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide supervision.
- If a livestock project requires a husbandry visit, the parent/guardian must provide supervision when the trained leader or screened volunteer conducts the husbandry visit.

Please note that a trained leader/screened volunteer working at home with their own children is considered independent work, and is not insured. For example, if you were also your child's 8th grade teacher, any assistance you provide outside of the classroom would be as a parent and not as their teacher.

Q: Do special guests or speakers have to be screened?

A: No, they do not need to be screened but must abide by the Code of Conduct of 4-H in Canada. There must always be two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers within eye and ear shot of guests or speakers, working with the youth members. This applies to classrooms as well as other settings, for example a clinician instructing riders in a riding arena. Unscreened parents there to watch do not count as a trained leader/screened volunteer.



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Q: Our club often meets at a livestock barn where youth members are working with their animals. How many leaders must attend?

A: Please refer to the Programming Supervision Ratios grid in the Supervision Policy. Keep in mind that no youth member should ever be isolated, especially if there are non-screened adults at the venue as well.

Have members working in a buddy system, within earshot of at least two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers. As the trained leader/screened volunteer, it is your responsibility to ensure you are creating a safe environment for the youth, and you must plan the activities accordingly. If you can't always keep an eye on the safety of the members, then you'll need support from more screened adults.

Q: How does the Rule of Two apply to email and other communication apps?

A: Two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers must be included in all communications with youth. For example, a second trained leader/screened volunteer must be cc'd on any emails sent to youth members, or a group chat/messaging tool must be used. Refer to the **Guidelines for Electronic Communication and Virtual 4-H Meetings** for more examples.

Emergencies

Q: What do I do if a youth member gets sick or injured during an activity?

A: If a youth member must leave an activity for medical attention, and there are only two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers, all participants must stop the activity.

- If there are enough trained leaders/screened volunteers so that two (2) can accompany the sick/injured youth and two (2) can continue with the group, then the group can separate, and the activity can continue.
- When an ill or injured youth member needs to be examined, maintain his/her privacy to the extent possible, and always examine him/her with another adult present.
- Do not remove clothing from an injured 4-H youth member unless essential for his/her well-being. This should be done by a health professional, if possible.
- Notifying the provincial office of minor or serious incidents related to illness, injury, accidents, or safety concerns. Refer to the Safety Assessment and Management Policy your provincial organizations Safety Assessment and Management Procedures for more details.



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Driving

Q: When driving to fairs, events, on Club to Club Exchanges or during fundraisers, does there have to be two adults in each vehicle?

A: **Yes**, you must avoid any situation where you are alone with youth. Please refer to the Transportation Policy:

- Parents and guardians are responsible for transporting youth to and from 4-H meetings and events, and for ensuring two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers are present before departing. Transportation is not part of a leader's role.
- Personal travel is not considered part of the 4-H program and, as such, is not covered by 4-H insurance. Families who wish to arrange to carpool with other families do so at their own risk and should contact their insurance broker to understand their coverage.
- Travel as a club to a sanctioned event is considered to be part of the 4-H program, and is insured if the commercial transportation or carpooling is documented in an Activity Plan, is reviewed by the provincial office, and is shared with parents in advance.
- In the case of an emergency, and if a youth must be transported, ensure there is no child seated alone in the same row as an adult. There must be one (1) screened adult in the front seat, with children in the back seat.

Travel

Q: A leader from our club is traveling with a youth to an event where they will be one of the chaperones. Can a single leader travel with a youth?

A: Please refer to the Youth Travel Policy for more details:

- While youth are traveling by air/train/ bus to meet up with the larger group, youth may travel some portion on their own or with only one (1) chaperone. The chaperone must apply the Rule of Two to avoid being one-on-one in vulnerable situations. For example, if the youth becomes ill, engage another adult/travel staff for assistance.
- When the youth/group reaches the program, the club, hosting chaperones, and staff will follow the Rule of Two and Programming Supervision Ratios.
- If a travel issue arises and an emergency hotel stay is required, chaperones must ensure they have their own accommodation and must follow the Rule of Two to the best of their ability. For example, if only one (1) chaperone is present, they could engage hotel staff to assist with room checks and gather to meet and eat in public spaces.



Camp, Conferences and other Trips

Q: When doing room checks during a conference or at camp, do we need two trained leaders/chaperones?

A: Yes. Please refer to the Supervision Policy for more details:

- At minimum one (1) staff member (A) and one (1) overnight chaperone (B), who are not spouses, must attend national and provincial programs or camps, and be responsible for youth members.
- When conducting room checks, two (2) trained leaders, chaperones or camp counsellors must stand in the doorway and look in the room to ensure they see each member or have them call out to hear their voices. Adults must never enter a youth's room, cabin, or tent alone.
- Female chaperones must check female youth member rooms and male chaperones must check male youth member rooms.
- If there is only one male chaperone, a female chaperone can accompany him (or vice versa), but it is the male chaperone who must look into the male rooms (and vice versa).

Q: Can two screened leaders sleep in the same tent or hotel room as members?

A: No. Here are the guidelines from the Supervision Policy to use when planning accommodations for events:

- There must be separate accommodations for youth, participants over the provincial age of majority, and trained leaders, screened volunteers, or chaperones.
- There must be separate accommodations for male and female (or based on how they identify). Consider using a blank line on registration forms that allows youth to self identify. Follow-up with youth directly to plan accommodations that ensure everyone feels safe and included. Please refer to the *Inclusion Policy*.
- Camp counsellors under the provincial age of majority may share accommodations with youth provided there are two (2) counsellors in the shared accommodation.
- If necessary, a parent, guardian or older sibling may share a room with their own children or sibling only, but it is best if all youth have the same experience by sharing rooms between themselves.
- When adults are rooming together, be considerate of matching general ages and level of authority. For example, do not match a young leader with a Board member as this creates an imbalance of authority, similar to the authority a leader would have with a youth member.
- Adult leaders and chaperones who are spouses may room together. As youth see leaders and chaperones as role models and representative of 4-H values, be sure to model a healthy relationship and put the needs of the youth first. Refer to the *Code of Conduct for 4-H in Canada* for more information.

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Q: Can older members participating in camp as counselors share a cabin or tent with younger members?

A: **Yes**, but the Rule of Two must be followed. Here are the guidelines from the Supervision Policy:

- The trained leader or screened volunteers must be on site and easily reachable.
- Camp counsellors under the provincial age of majority may share accommodations with youth provided there are two (2) counsellors in the shared accommodation.
- There must be separate accommodations for youth, participants over the provincial age of majority, and trained leaders, screened volunteers, or chaperones.

In addition to the camp counselors, there must always be two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers in close enough proximity to provide supervision and support as needed. If a member needs assistance, e.g. to go to an outhouse in the night, they may take a buddy or be accompanied by two (2) counselors or leaders.

As participants over the age of majority may not share rooms with youth participants, please carefully consider your accommodation plans and the age limits for participants.

Q: Can youth members share a room with a parent at a camp or conference?

A: **Yes**. If necessary, a parent, guardian or older sibling may share a room with their own children or, sibling only, but it is best if all youth have the same experience by sharing rooms between themselves.

Q: Do we need two trained leaders or screened volunteers in each breakout room at a conference?

A: When breaking members into groups at conferences and events, you must plan for enough supervision to have two (2) trained leaders or screened volunteers with each group. If this is not possible, e.g. in venues with multiple rooms, trained leaders or screened volunteers must be circulating amongst the groups, and doors must remain open. If doors need to be closed for presentations at a conference, a trained leader or screened volunteer must be in the room with an unscreened guest and the youth members.

When breaking into smaller groups while attending a fair, public venue like a museum, or volunteering at an event, ensure there is a trained leader, screened volunteer or parent with each small group of youth. The groups must remain on site. Ensure all groups can easily contact the trained leader in charge in case of an emergency.

Q: Do we need two trained leaders or chaperones in each home during an exchange program?

A: While the Rule of Two must be followed in each home, parents of the host family are screened and count towards the Rule of Two. Parents do not have to be trained leaders, but they do go through the 4-H Canada screening and police screening.



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In the case of single parent homes, a visiting chaperone or another person over the age of 18 who has also been screened for the hosting program must also stay in the home.

Anyone in the home who is over the age of majority must be screened.

Q: How do we best supervise outdoor activities, such as canoeing?

A: Two (2) trained leaders/screened volunteers are not required in each canoe, but they must always be able to see and hear youth. Trained leaders are responsible for ensuring a safe environment for the youth and must plan the activities accordingly. If you can't keep an eye on the safety of the members at all times, then you'll need support from more screened volunteers and parents to achieve appropriate ratios.

Q: Can youth and adults share accommodations in a gymnasium?

A: It is appropriate to plan overnight accommodations in one large room. Keep the following in mind:

- The trained leader or screened volunteers must be on-site and easily reachable.
- There must be separate changing and bathroom facilities for males and females (or based on how they identify) that are divided for youth and adults.
- Designate separate sleeping areas within the gymnasium for youth participants and trained leaders, screened volunteers, or chaperones.
- Ensure sufficient supervision throughout the night. Consider stationing chaperones at the main entrances and ensure youth are not wandering into other areas of the facility

This document has been adapted from Scouts Canada's "The Two Scouter Rule and Section Ratios: Supervision for Scouting Programs" document and the Girl Guides "Adult Member Support Module 4: Girl Protection and Self Harm" document.

