

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning the Annual Health and Medical Record

Q. Why does the Boy Scouts of America require all participants to have an Annual Health and Medical Record?

- A. The Annual Health and Medical Record (AHMR) serves many purposes. Completing a health history promotes health and awareness, communicates health status, and provides medical professionals critical information needed to treat a patient in the event of an illness or injury. It also provides emergency contact information.

Poor health and/or lack of awareness of risk factors has led to disabling injuries, illnesses, and even fatalities. Because we care about our participants' health and safety, the Boy Scouts of America has produced and required use of standardized annual health and medical information since at least the 1930s.

The medical record is used to prepare for high-adventure activities and increased physical activity. In some cases, it is used to review participants' readiness for gatherings like the national Scout jamboree and other specialized activities.

Because many states regulate the camping industry, the AHMR also serves as a tool that enables councils to operate day and resident camps and adhere to Boy Scouts of America and state requirements. The Boy Scouts of America's AHMR provides a standardized mechanism that can be used by members in all 50 states.

Q. Why has the Annual Health and Medical Record form changed? What are the changes?

- A. Over the last five years we have compiled and reviewed your comments, as well as those of camp health officers, council health supervisors, and the medical community. Updates to the AHMR form include a new user-friendly format and minor changes to the medical questions.

Q. Isn't the Annual Health and Medical Record covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act?

- A. No. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was enacted to regulate how personal health information is shared with health care and health care insurance entities.

Neither the Boy Scouts of America nor the AHMR are subject to HIPAA. A Scout is trustworthy: Records and sensitive information should be maintained in a private manner.

Q. Where can I find the Annual Health and Medical Record?

- A. The only way to assure you have the proper documents is to access them from this website: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr. This is the only source for the Boy Scouts of America's AHMR.

Q. Who needs to complete an Annual Health and Medical Record?

- A. For any and all Scouting activities, all participants must complete **Part A and Part B (both pages)**. "All participants" includes parents, guardians, siblings, youth, staff, and unit leaders. Though **Part C** is only *required* for participation in events lasting longer than 72 hours, all Boy Scouts of America participants are encouraged to complete this pre-participation physical during an annual exam performed by a licensed health-care provider.

Q. What is meant by "Annual"?

- A. An AHMR is valid through the end of the 12th month from the date it was administered by your medical provider. For example, a physical administered December 3, 2019, would be valid until December 31, 2020.

Q. What do adult leaders do with the Annual Health and Medical Records they collect?

- A. In all cases, the information gathered is for use in conducting a safe Scouting program. Information in the AHMR must be maintained and shared in a confidential and discreet manner. Some conditions may require communication to ensure the safety of participants. This information should only be shared on a "need-to-know" basis.

Following are some of the best practices for using and storing the records.

- The AHMR is secured to maintain the confidentiality of the information, yet at the same time, the forms should be accessible by adult leaders in an emergency. The following guidance will assist leaders in achieving this goal:
 - Leaders are encouraged to maintain the original AHMR forms in a safe location in a binder or file that protects the documents entrusted to the adult unit leader.
 - AHMR forms should be taken on all activities, including travel to and from events.
 - Designate an adult leader to keep the files containing the AHMR up-to-date. This may include reminding participants to update the AHMR annually or as needed.
 - Designate an adult leader as the point of contact with event or camp health officers. If needed, the leader should arrange to have the AHMR returned to him or her at the end of the event, if allowed by the state/local laws.
 - The unit leader (or his or her designee) is responsible for destroying or returning the AHMR documents to the participant (or parent/guardians) when the participant leaves the unit and when the documents become outdated.



- Records are NOT to be digitized, scanned, sent by email, or stored electronically by unit leaders.
- To streamline camp check-in, records of all participants are reviewed to make sure they are up-to-date, completed, and signed before leaving for camp. Be sure to check with the camp or the council health supervisor for any additional information that may be needed. For example, specific immunizations may be required by state/local laws.

Prepared leaders use the AHMR in the following ways:

- Review each participant's health history. This aids the leader in becoming knowledgeable about the medical conditions of adults and youth members in the unit.
- Review any treatment plans with participants and parents/guardians. Examples might include plans for asthma, food or other allergies, anaphylaxis treatment, diabetes including insulin pumps, seizure treatment, behavior, hypertension, and other health risks and medical issues that may require additional support. As an example, knowledge of a participant's use of any medication, especially inhalers or epinephrine auto injectors, would allow the leader to prompt the youth to bring needed items on an overnight camping trip.
- Be knowledgeable of a participant's restrictions. This may allow the leader to find ways to extend the Scouting program to those with restrictions while also protecting others and providing a positive and safe experience for everyone. For example, an adult leader may be able to plan alternate activities (within Youth Protection guidelines) for those youth members who are unable to participate in a long hike or a swimming event due to a medical issue.

Q. Can I use last year's Annual Health and Medical Record with a physical conducted in August 2019 for a summer camp in June 2020?

- A.** Yes, because 2020 will be a transition year. An AHMR that contains a valid physical exam can be used to meet your council's resident camp standards in 2020. It is suggested that those individuals who do not have a current pre-participation exam use the latest version now. The old versions will be obsolete as of January 2021.

Q. What do I do with the supplemental risk advisory and why is it important?

- A.** Each of the high-adventure bases has developed a risk advisory for you to review in preparation for your pre-participation physical exam and your trek. This information is designed to give participants, parents/guardians, and your health-care provider an idea of the environment you will be experiencing so you will be prepared for the trek. We are also encouraging local councils, as a best practice, to develop and publish risk advisories for their camps and high-adventure activities.

Review the information before your exam and share it with your health-care provider during your pre-participation physical exam. Contact the camp directly if there are questions about health risks for your participation.

Adults or youth who arrive at a Boy Scouts of America high-adventure base that are not prepared physically or mentally to meet the physical demands of their chosen activity may not be allowed to participate and may be sent home.

Q. Can I keep a record of my Annual Health and Medical Record somewhere at my council's office or online?

- A. No. Please do not digitize!** Districts and councils are discouraged from keeping any medical records, whether digital or paper, unless required by local or state ordinances. However, the electronic version of the AHMR is intended to be filled out and saved by individual participants. The electronic version should not be transmitted via email or stored electronically by units, districts, or councils. Units are encouraged to keep paper copies of their participants' AHMRs in a confidential medical file for quick access in an emergency and in preparation for all adventures.

Q. What should I do if the participant's health status changes between the time he/she has the physical exam and the activity occurs?

- A.** The medical form is a snapshot of your health at the time of the physical. Don't put yourself and others at risk by failing to recognize and disclose changes in your health status. New medicines, surgery, illness, and changes in disease process are all reasons to ask your provider to reassess your health status and fitness to participate.

Q. Why don't we have an online version or high-tech medical record?

- A.** We are examining possible solutions and proof of concepts. Select events (like jamboree) may have an online system developed specifically for that event and may accept online health records.

Q. Is the AHMR available in other languages?

- A.** No. We would suggest engaging local resources if assistance is needed.

Q. What does it mean by "adults authorized to take youth to and from events"?

- A.** For the majority of our participants, the parents or legal guardians will release youth to and retrieve them from a Scouting event. You may change this information or add someone authorized to pick up your child early from an event or to transport your child to and from the Scouting event.

Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to review this information with adult leaders to make sure they understand any out-of-the-ordinary requests or unusual circumstances such as who should *not* pick up a youth.



Q. Does Wood Badge OR National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) require Part C, the pre-participation physical?

- A. Yes, the course is more than 72 hours in duration, even if split into multiple weekends. Contact your course director to see if the course will be conducted in a backcountry location that will require adherence to the height/weight chart.

Q. What do I do if the medications listed on the form change between the pre-participation physical and the Scouting event?

- A. Update the information and be sure that your prescribing physician verifies that the new medication does not alter your health status and ability to participate.

Q. Why do you need to know if I use an asthma rescue inhaler or an epinephrine auto-injector?

- A. Prescribed medications that may be needed in an emergency or on an urgent basis should be available at all times and not past their expiration date.

In some cases, arrival at a camp, event, or high-adventure base with expired or inadequate quantities of medication may result in unexpected expenses or prohibition from participation until fresh supplies can be obtained. In all cases, the use of any emergency medications should be reported to an adult leader and/or the camp health officer.

Q. Do I really need to explain everything about myself or my child, such as learning disabilities or depression? I don't want myself or my child to be treated differently.

- A. As hard as it may be to share these aspects about yourself or your child, this information is needed to keep participants safe and is critically important in the event emergency care is needed and parents/guardians are unreachable. Please be thorough and honest. A Scouting activity is not the place to change or stop medications. This information, like all other health-related information, should be maintained with privacy and respect.

Q. What immunizations are required?

- A. For the benefit of individual health, as well as that of the community in general, the Boy Scouts of America recommends that the members of the organization follow the joint recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians with regard to obtaining age-appropriate immunizations.

The Boy Scouts of America encourages all members of the Scouting community to become fully protected with vaccines that are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the groups listed above to prevent infectious diseases that are dangerous for children and adults. The current immunization recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/>

Although tetanus is the only immunization required by the Boy Scouts of America, state, county, city governments, and local camps may have additional requirements. Check with the camp or council health supervisor well in advance of your camp or event.

Additional information regarding immunization recommendations can be found at: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/immunization/>

Q. We have a participant who does not want to be immunized against tetanus, which is required. What should we do?

- A. An immunization exemption request is available here: [Immunization Exemption](#).

Q. If a participant does not believe in the use of doctors, how can they complete the medical form to attend summer camp?

- A. They would complete Parts A and B (both pages) of the AHMR. They would also need to fill out the Medical Care Exemption Request to waive the pre-participation physical exam. Please note that there may be camp/state/local requirements in addition to this, and the camp health officer will conduct a wellness screening on arrival to check if communicable disease symptoms are present.

Q. Can I decline medical treatment?

- A. Yes, but a Medical Care Exemption Request must be completed.

Q. Can the AHMR form be modified?

- A. No! There is only one Boy Scouts of America AHMR. It is not valid if modified or altered. This includes deleting or crossing out sections.

Q. Can I use another medical exam, such as a school sports exam, and attach it to the Annual Health and Medical Record?

- A. No. We have designed the AHMR to address the risks in Scouting. We would encourage participants who need both types of exams to complete them at the same time.

Q. When does the height/weight chart apply? We have differing opinions in our unit/district.

- A. The height/weight chart **will apply** in the following known adventure activities:
- Backcountry activities. When your travels take you more than 30 minutes off an accessible roadway, fire lane, camp road, etc., or where you float, walk, hike, bike, or otherwise go into the backcountry. Depending on the terrain and local conditions, this might be a few hundred yards or a few miles into the backcountry. Most Boy Scouts of America high-adventure camps include a backcountry component (ask them about their requirements before you go). For example, Philmont Scout Ranch has this standard in place.



- When your lodge, unit, district, or council requires it as part of a program.

The height/weight chart generally would **not apply** in the following situations (unless specific instructions are issued as an exception):

- Most resident camps. The majority of the Boy Scouts of America resident camps and most local council Cub Scout/Scouts BSA resident camps have drive-up campsites and don't require packing in or out. Check with the camp beforehand to be sure.
- Cub Scout programs. (Backcountry and high-adventure activities are not age-appropriate for Cub Scouting.)
- Most Wood Badge courses in a typical resident camp setting, though courses held at a national high-adventure base such as Philmont Scout Ranch will enforce the limit.

Q. Our camp is at least 30 minutes from the local hospital by ambulance or EMS. Does this mean that we automatically have to meet the height/weight requirements for all activities at the camp?

- A.** While response time for basic or advanced life support should be a consideration for a camp's emergency action plan, it is not the record's intent. If your travels by foot, bicycle, horseback, afloat, or any other mode of transportation take you more than 30 minutes off an accessible roadway where an emergency vehicle can reach you, you will be required to meet the height/weight requirements.

Q. I believe my body fat percentage will prove that I am fit and able to participate in the events described in the Annual Health and Medical Record requiring the use of the height/weight chart. Can I obtain a body fat test from my physician and use those results?

- A.** Yes, body fat percentage may be used if your weight is 295 pounds or less. However, please call the camp to determine if any specific testing is required. (Acceptable body fat percentage for women is 20 percent or less. Acceptable body fat percentage for men is 15 percent or less. Verification by a physician is required.) As an example, Philmont Scout Ranch requires a hydrostatic weighing or DXA test to determine percentage of body fat.

Q. My child is underweight according to the chart on the Annual Health and Medical Record. Can they still participate in high-adventure activities?

- A.** Yes, if they are cleared by their health-care provider as stated on the record. Confirm with the camp or high-adventure base about the specific program they will be attending as some have different requirements. Based on our experience, excessive body weight is a much higher risk for most activities.

If their high-adventure activity includes backpacking, make sure their backpack weighs no more than 20 to 25 percent of their body weight as recommended by Philmont Scout Ranch and the Health Lodge Task Force.

Q. What is the appropriate maximum weight to use if my child/I am under 60 inches tall?

- A.** Subtract 6 pounds for every inch you are shorter than 60 inches to come up with a maximum acceptable weight for your height. (Example: 58 inches, maximum would be 166 pounds–2 (inches less than 60) x 6 pounds = 154 pounds.)

Q. Why are there weight limits if I'm healthy?

- A.** In addition to health issues that may be experienced due to obesity or being overweight, some rescue equipment (e.g., litters) and/or boating equipment (e.g., ladders) have maximum weight limits.

Q. Where can I get a brief explanation of the Annual Health and Medical Record and how to review it?

- A.** Safety moments on the AHMR itself and how to review the AHMR can be found at: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/>

