

III - Staffing and Training

Stokes Nature Center's Approach to Education Staffing

Staff are the most important variable in the management of safety and risk within SNC's operations. Staff represent Stokes Nature Center and their actions are the actions of Stokes Nature Center. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that our staff make the best possible decisions to facilitate our mission and to safely manage the task or challenge at hand.

Humans are not robots, and robots are not good staff.

It would be impossible and imprudent to attempt to give our staff all of the answers they might require in a season. It would also be deluding to think that we can provide training for every scenario our staff will encounter in the summer season. For this reason, Stokes Nature Center seeks applicants that have demonstrated excellent judgment and calm under pressure. Our training focuses on local knowledge matched with applying their calm and intelligent field decisions.

Risk Management Goals of Education Staffing & Training:

1. During Hiring:
 - a. Evaluate judgment through references and scenario questions.
2. Training:
 - a. Focus on decision-making skills rather than prescribed procedures or answers.
 - b. Discuss and practice scenarios of likely safety issues and injuries.

Staff Hiring, Qualifications & Certifications

Due to the diversity of Stokes Nature Center's operation areas the hiring process and qualifications vary by program area. See the following for detailed hiring and qualification requirements.

1. Education Staff Hiring – **Appendix C**

Education Staff Training Standards

The training process is the most important task to equip staff for productive and safe work practices. It is where SNC sets the tone for and properly demonstrates the expectations of the new employee. Staff training is designed and coordinated by the supervisor to meet the needs of the operation, yet to maintain consistency within the organization some trainings have been standardized by the SNC Management Team. These standard trainings include:

1. SNC mission and overview
2. Facility orientation
3. Overview of the local agency/public land
4. Emergency Response and Incident reporting

Specific Staff Trainings

Based on the operation area and the discretion of supervisor some or all of the following trainings may be included:

1. Situational Leadership & Field Judgment training.

2. Common injuries, First Aid, Medical Protocols & EMS/Evacuation
3. Vehicle and Facility Trainings
4. Activity Specific Trainings

For more details see the following appendices:

- i. Appendix C – Education Staff Hiring
- ii. Appendix E & F – First Aid & Prescription Medicine
- iii. Appendix G – Vehicles & Driving
- iv. Appendix H – Working with Minors
- v. Any activity relevant appendices (Hiking, Water programs, etc)
- vi. Appendix J – Communications & Evacuations
- vii. Appendix O – Participant Risk Training

Training Specific to Working with Unaccompanied Minors

Public expectations are high when programs are entrusted with America's most valued resource – our youth. By operating youth programs for unaccompanied minors, Stokes Nature Center acts "in loco parentis" – the legal term for 'being in place of the parent'. This legal principle assumes that Stokes Nature Center will act as any reasonably prudent parent (or legal guardian) would act in the same or similar circumstances. The following training is required for staff working with unaccompanied minors:

Topics include:

1. Appendix H- Working with Minors
2. Recognizing need for special supervision of minors
3. Staff Ratios & Supervision
4. Recognizing signs or evidence of 'requirements to report to authorities'
5. Management of Medication
6. Qualifications Specific to Working with Minors
7. Criminal Background checks
 - a. the type of checks done
 - i. Disqualifying offense criteria
 - ii. Past history of sexual abuse of children.
 - iii. Conviction for any crime in which children were involved.
 - iv. History of any violence or sexually exploitive behavior.

Media Relations As It Relates to Staff

POLICY - Only authorized spokespersons of Stokes Nature Center should meet and talk with the media. All requests for information by the media should be referred to the Central Office. The Central Office may determine that it is more appropriate for another Stokes Nature Center staff to serve as a spokesperson in a given situation. Information released to the media should be conveyed in a sensitive, caring manner, but should only present confirmed facts. Release of personal information will only be done with the consent of the participant or their guardian.

In the event of a major incident, representatives from the partner organizations should be contacted prior to interaction with the media. Contact information is found on the Emergency Contact Information sheet.