

13.

Activities

13.1

Purposes of Church Activities

Activities at the ward, stake, and multistake levels bring Church members together as “fellowcitizens with the saints” (Ephesians 2:19). In addition to providing fun and entertainment, activities should build testimonies, strengthen families, and foster unity and personal growth.

Activities strengthen members by giving them a sense of belonging and mutual support. Activities should help members feel connected to others their age, to their leaders, and to their families. Activities should also help members see how living the gospel brings “the joy of the saints” (Enos 1:3).

Church activities should be planned to fulfill gospel-centered purposes. In addition to the general purposes mentioned above, these include:

1. Participating in service projects that bless others and build community relationships.
2. Developing talents and appreciation for cultural arts.
3. Improving fitness and learning sportsmanship.
4. Gaining education and vocational training.
5. Celebrating special occasions and commemorating Church or local historical events.
6. Developing leadership skills.
7. Developing self-reliance.
8. Participating in missionary work, retention, activation, temple work, and family history work.

13.2

Planning Activities

13.2.1

Responsibility for Planning Activities

Before planning an activity, leaders consider the spiritual and temporal needs of members. Leaders seek the guidance of the Spirit to determine what kind of activity would help meet those needs.

Careful planning is necessary to ensure that activities accomplish gospel-centered purposes and meet the needs of those who participate.

Under the direction of the bishopric, the ward council oversees the planning of ward activities. When an activity is for a specific organization or group in the ward, it is planned under the direction of the priesthood or auxiliary leaders who are responsible for the organization. When an activity is for the entire ward, the bishop may assign responsibility for it to one or more organizations represented on the ward council. He may also assign responsibility for an activity to other individuals or to a committee, working under the direction of the ward council. Normally these assignments are temporary for a specific activity.

Under the direction of the stake presidency, the stake council oversees the planning of stake activities. For more information about stake activities, see 13.3.

13.2.2

Strengthening Families

Leaders ensure that activities strengthen the family rather than compete with it. Some activities can be family centered, giving families opportunities to participate together. Activities should support

parents by teaching their children to be faithful followers of Christ.

Leaders also ensure that activities do not become so numerous that they put undue burdens on members.

13.2.3

Encouraging Participation

Those who plan activities strive to have participants be actively involved, since participating is usually more beneficial than just observing. One way to encourage participation is to have members use their gifts, skills, and talents in the activity.

Those who plan activities should make a special effort to reach out to new members, less-active members, youth, single adults, people with disabilities, and people of other faiths. Leaders should be sensitive to any special circumstances of participants, such as physical limitations, family concerns, and cultural and language differences.

13.2.4

Standards

Church activities should follow and teach Church standards. They should provide a wholesome environment where participants can develop friendships with others who have similar beliefs and standards. Activities should be uplifting and emphasize things that are “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy” (Articles of Faith 1:13). Activities are not to include anything that is immoral or suggestive or that makes evil appear acceptable and normal. Leaders ensure that any entertainment is in keeping with the teachings of the Savior.

Dress and grooming should be modest, tasteful, and appropriate for the activity. The bishopric or stake presidency determines the dress standards for activities. Leaders who plan an activity may recommend dress standards that are consistent with gospel principles.

Substances that are contrary to the Word of Wisdom are not permitted at Church activities or on Church premises. Persons who are obviously under the influence of alcohol or other drugs must not be admitted to Church activities.

For more information on Church standards, see *For the Strength of Youth*.

13.2.5

Safety

See 13.6.20.

13.2.6

Balance and Variety

Leaders should plan a balanced activities program that includes a variety of activities. Members should have opportunities to participate in activities that appeal to their interests. Members should also have opportunities to support others in their interests. Planning a yearly calendar helps leaders achieve a balance of service, cultural arts, and physical activities without creating excessive demands on members’ time.

The following paragraphs provide some examples of worthwhile activities.

13.2.6.1

Service

Service activities provide opportunities for members to show love for those in need, whether or not they are members of the Church, and feel the joy of helping them. These activities could include visiting the sick or lonely, fulfilling welfare assignments, beautifying Church buildings and grounds, and participating in community projects.

13.2.6.2**Cultural Arts**

Cultural arts activities provide opportunities for members to develop their talents and interests. These activities also nurture creativity, confidence, communication, and cooperation. They could include talent shows or performances in dance, music, and drama. They could also include the celebration of local or general Church history.

13.2.6.3**Sports, Recreation, Health, and Fitness**

For information about Church sports activities, see 13.6.21.

Recreational activities can vary according to the resources available in the area. These activities may include historical commemorations, camping, hiking, or pursuit of hobbies. Recreational activities can often be planned so that families can participate together.

As individuals, as families, and as Church groups, members are encouraged to participate in activities that contribute to their health and fitness. These activities may include walking, jogging, aerobic and other exercise programs, health classes, and fitness training (see 13.6.25, item 2).

13.2.7**Scheduling Activities**

Church activities should be planned as far in advance as reasonable. They should be included on the stake or ward calendar. Leaders should keep parents informed of activities for children and youth.

If an activity will be held at a meetinghouse or another Church facility, planners reserve the facility in advance to avoid conflicts with other activities or meetings. Each meetinghouse has an agent bishop assigned by the stake presidency. He oversees the scheduling of the meetinghouse facilities, though

he usually appoints another person to do the actual scheduling.

Monday nights are reserved for home evening and family activities (see 13.6.10).

13.2.8**Funding for Activities**

Leaders ensure that expenses for activities are in accordance with the current budget and finance policies of the Church. The following principles apply.

Most activities should be simple and have little or no cost. Expenditures must be approved by the stake presidency or bishopric before they are incurred.

Stake and ward budget funds should be used to pay for all activities, programs, and supplies. Members should not pay fees to participate. Nor should they provide materials, supplies, rental or admission fees, or long-distance transportation at their own expense. Activities in which members provide food may be held if doing so does not place undue burdens on them.

Possible exceptions to the funding policy in the preceding paragraph are listed below. If the ward budget does not have sufficient funds to pay for the following activities, leaders may ask participants to pay for part or all of them:

1. One annual extended Scout camp or similar activity for young men.
2. One annual young women camp or similar activity.
3. One annual day camp or similar activity for Primary children ages 8 through 11.
4. Optional activities as outlined in 13.5.

If funds from participants are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising

activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8.

In no case should the expenses or travel for an annual camp or similar activity be excessive. Nor should the lack of personal funds prohibit a member from participating.

For a possible exception in funding large multistake or area events for young single adults, see 16.3.7.

For guidelines about funding travel that is associated with activities, see 13.6.24.

13.2.9

Funding for Equipment and Supplies

If possible, equipment and supplies that the ward needs for annual youth camps are purchased with ward budget funds. If these funds are not sufficient, the bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity annually that complies with the guidelines in 13.6.8.

Equipment and supplies purchased with Church funds, whether from the ward budget or a fund-raising activity, are for Church use only. They are not for the personal use of individuals or families.

Church funds may not be used to purchase uniforms for individuals.

13.3

Stake, Multistake, and Area Activities

13.3.1

General Guidelines

Most Church activities are held at the ward level. However, local leaders are encouraged to hold periodic stake and multistake activities when these activities are better able to accomplish the purposes outlined in 13.1. Area activities may also be held, as

approved by the Area Presidency. These activities are under the direction of an Area Seventy.

Stake and multistake activities are particularly beneficial for youth, young single adults, and women, especially in areas where there are few members or where members seldom associate in large groups. Well-planned stake and multistake activities can give members confidence in their Church membership and a wider circle of friendships.

The leaders who begin the process of planning stake and multistake activities are generally the stake Young Men, Young Women, and Relief Society presidencies. The stake young single adult committee begins the process of planning stake and multistake activities for young single adults. These leaders identify the needs of those they serve and consider whether stake or multistake activities would help meet those needs. These leaders then recommend activities to the stake presidency.

For information about multistake activities for single adults ages 31 and older, see 16.1.2 and 16.1.3.

Occasionally stake or multistake activities for women may include young women and girls ages 8 and older. The stake Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary presidencies counsel together to recommend such activities to the stake presidency.

To help meet the needs of young single adults, multistake activities should be held for them wherever they are able to gather at reasonable time and expense. Such activities should be varied, simple, and of moderate frequency. Larger events for young single adults may also be held periodically.

All stake activities must be approved by the stake presidency and are coordinated in stake council meetings. Stake leaders notify ward leaders of stake activities well in advance. They also ensure that stake activities supplement ward activities rather than compete with them.

If stake presidents feel that a multistake activity would benefit the members of their stakes, they

may request permission from the Area Presidency. Special occasions such as holidays or the commemoration of a significant local event may provide opportunities for such activities. Youth conferences (see 13.4), service activities, cultural arts activities, and sports or recreational activities can all be held on a multistake level. Such activities are often coordinated in coordinating council meetings.

Before proposing a multistake activity, stake presidents determine whether it is the best way to meet the needs they have identified. The stake presidents also consider the cost, time, and travel the activity would require. In addition, the stake presidents consider safety factors and the availability of needed resources.

The Area Presidency may assign Area Seventies or stake presidents to be chairmen of committees that plan and carry out multistake or area activities. Stake presidencies may call members of their stakes to serve on these committees. These members report to their stake presidencies.

Funding for most multistake activities comes from the budget funds of the participating stakes. Funding for larger activities, such as cultural celebrations associated with temple dedications, may come from area or Church headquarters budgets when approved.

Stake, multistake, and area activities should comply with Church standards and with Church travel policies (see 13.2.4 and 13.6.24). These activities require effective leadership, careful planning, and adequate resources.

13.3.2

Stake Activities Committee

Stake activities are planned according to the guidelines in 13.2. The stake presidency may organize a stake activities committee to help the stake council and stake auxiliary leaders plan stake activities. The stake activities committee consists of a chairman (a

high councilor), one or more stake activities directors, and stake activities specialists (if needed).

In addition to helping plan stake activities, members of the stake activities committee may advise, support, and instruct ward leaders in their efforts to plan ward activities.

Unlike the temporary committees that plan ward activities, the stake activities committee usually plans more than just one stake activity.

13.3.2.1

Stake Activities Committee Chairman

If the stake presidency organizes a stake activities committee, they assign a high councilor to be the committee chairman. As determined by the stake presidency, the committee chairman may be given the following responsibilities:

He coordinates and maintains a calendar of stake activities that are approved by the stake presidency.

He supervises committee members in helping plan stake activities.

He recommends a detailed stake activities budget to the stake presidency before the beginning of each year. This budget does not include activities that are planned by stake auxiliaries.

He serves as a resource to stake auxiliary leaders when they plan activities.

He keeps a current list of talents and interests of stake members. In creating and maintaining this list, he may be assisted by the high councilors assigned to the wards in the stake. He may use the Talent and Interest Survey form for this purpose.

13.3.2.2

Stake Activities Directors and Specialists

A member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may call stake activities directors. They serve on the stake activities committee under

the direction of the committee chairman. Stake activities directors may help plan and organize service activities, cultural arts activities, sports and fitness activities, and other types of activities.

A member of the stake presidency or an assigned high councilor may also call stake activities committee specialists. These specialists are not sustained or set apart. They serve under the direction of the stake activities committee chairman.

13.4

Youth Conference

Young men who are members of the teachers or priests quorum and young women who are members of the Mia Maid or Laurel class are invited to participate together in an activity or series of activities called youth conference. Youth conferences are usually held once each year on a ward or stake level. They may also be held on a multistake or area level.

The purposes of youth conferences are to help youth build faith in Jesus Christ, strengthen their testimonies, develop talents, make new friends, and have fun with youth who share similar beliefs and standards. Youth can also learn leadership skills as they assist in planning youth conferences.

Ward youth conferences are planned and carried out by the bishopric youth committee, under the direction of the bishopric. The bishopric obtains the stake presidency's approval of plans for a ward youth conference.

Stake youth conferences are planned and carried out by the stake Aaronic Priesthood–Young Women committee, under the direction of the stake presidency. Youth should be invited to assist the committee as much as possible in planning stake youth conferences. The stake presidency may invite youth to attend the committee's meetings as needed.

Youth conferences are to be funded from the stake or ward budget. Members should not be asked to pay for youth conferences.

As leaders and youth plan a youth conference, they should observe the policies in this chapter and the following guidelines:

1. Select a gospel theme, such as a scripture, that will inspire the youth and help them understand the expectations of the conference. The annual Mutual theme could be used as the youth conference theme. The bishopric or stake presidency should approve the theme.
2. Plan activities such as devotionals, group meetings, learning experiences, and service projects that are consistent with the theme.
3. Obtain approval of the bishopric or stake presidency for all speakers and activities. Speakers should be Church members who teach by the Spirit. Speakers who primarily entertain, with only casual reference to the gospel, should not be selected. Nor should speakers who would have to travel long distances be selected. See 21.1.20 for other guidelines concerning speakers.
4. Avoid scheduling events for Sunday that are not appropriate for the Sabbath day. Testimony meetings, bishopric youth discussions, or similar meetings are permitted. However, sacrament meetings are not to be held—and the sacrament is not to be administered—outside the boundaries of the ward or stake where the priesthood leaders preside. Any exceptions must be approved by the Area Presidency. Groups should not travel to or from youth conference on a Sunday.
5. Ensure that adequate adult supervision is present at all times (see 13.6.2).

Members of the bishopric or stake presidency are invited to attend as much of the conference as possible. Young Men and Young Women presidencies are encouraged to attend the entire conference.

13.5

Optional Activities

Units may sponsor optional activities that are presented by Church-related entities. Such activities include Church university performance groups, special youth programs, and periodic major cultural events. As authorized by the Area Presidency, members may be charged a modest fee to defray the costs of such events if (1) the program is entirely optional, (2) the cost is not burdensome, and (3) the event is not used to raise funds. Budget funds may be used to help those who want to attend but are unable to pay.

13.6

Policies and Guidelines

Leaders ensure that the following policies and guidelines are observed in all Church activities.

13.6.1

Accident Prevention and Response

See 13.6.20.

13.6.2

Adult Supervision

At least two adult supervisors must be present at all Church-sponsored activities attended by children, youth, and young single adults. Additional adults may be needed depending on the size of the group, the skill level of the group (for activities requiring certain skills), anticipated environmental conditions, and the overall degree of challenge of the activity. Parents should be encouraged to help.

In the United States, all adult leaders who participate in Scouting must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America (see First Presidency letter, May 12, 2017). These leaders must comply with Church

policies and with the guidelines in the BSA publication *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

13.6.3

Commercial or Political Activities

Activities that would use Church facilities for any commercial or political purpose are not permitted. For policies on using Church buildings and other property, see 21.2.

13.6.4

Copyrighted Materials

See 21.1.12.

13.6.5

Curfew Laws

Activities should comply with community curfew laws.

13.6.6

Dances and Music

In all dances, the dress, grooming, lighting, dancing styles, lyrics, and music should contribute to an atmosphere where the Spirit of the Lord can be present (see *For the Strength of Youth*). Those who oversee dances should carefully follow the policies outlined below.

Leaders use the Performance Contract form when hiring a band, orchestra, or disc jockey. This contract helps ensure that conduct and music are appropriate for Church dances. Those who provide music should not use inappropriate lyrics and should not dress or talk immodestly. Leaders hold auditions and make firm, clear agreements in writing that commit the persons who provide music to follow Church standards when performing for Church activities.

The beat of the music, whether instrumental or vocal, should not overshadow the melody. The volume should be low enough to allow two people who are standing side by side to hear each other as they carry on a normal conversation.

Lights should be bright enough for people to see across the room. Strobe lighting and psychedelic lighting that pulsate with the beat are not acceptable. Lights on the floor, in the corners of the room, or spotlighting wall and ceiling decorations are appropriate.

13.6.7

Devotionals for Participants in Activities

A brief devotional program may be held as part of an activity. Devotionals typically include a prayer, a hymn or musical selection, remarks by a leader, and a spiritual thought, testimony, or scripture by one or more participants. Such programs can help invite the Spirit and keep activities in perspective.

13.6.8

Fund-Raising Activities

Fund-raising activities are not usually approved because expenses for stake and ward activities are paid with budget funds. As an exception, a stake president or bishop may authorize one group fund-raising activity each year. Such an activity may be held to raise funds for the following purposes only:

1. To help pay the cost of one annual camp or similar activity as outlined in 13.2.8.
2. To help purchase equipment that the unit needs for annual camps as outlined in 13.2.9.

If a fund-raising activity is held, it should provide a meaningful value or service. It should be a positive experience that builds unity.

Contributions to fund-raising activities are voluntary. Priesthood leaders should take special care

to ensure that members do not feel obligated to contribute.

Stakes and wards that sponsor fund-raising activities should not advertise or solicit beyond their boundaries. Nor should they sell products or services door to door.

Examples of fund-raising activities that are not approved include:

1. Activities that would be taxable.
2. Activities completed with paid labor, either by employees or by contract.
3. Entertainment for which the stake or ward pays performers for their services, when admission is charged, and when the intent of the activity is to raise funds.
4. The sale of commercial goods or services, including food storage items.
5. Games of chance, such as raffles, lotteries, and bingo.

Any exceptions to these instructions must be approved by the Area Presidency.

The Friends of Scouting fund drive in the United States will continue as a separate, voluntary solicitation.

13.6.9

Insurance

13.6.9.1

Automobile Insurance

See 13.6.24.

13.6.9.2

Personal Health and Accident Insurance

In many parts of the world, health and accident insurance coverage is available to Church members

through employer-sponsored, personal, or government programs. Where such coverage is available, members are responsible to access all available benefits provided through it if they incur an injury during a Church activity.

13.6.9.3

Church Activity Medical Assistance Program

In the United States and Canada, the Church Activity Medical Assistance Program provides secondary medical and dental benefits and specific death and dismemberment benefits. This program is primarily designed to supplement, not replace, a person's own health and accident insurance.

Members who plan, conduct, and supervise activities in these countries should be knowledgeable about the Church Activity Medical Assistance Program, including its restrictions and limitations. The program is outlined in the *Church Activity Medical Assistance Handbook*, which may be obtained by contacting:

Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrators
P.O. Box 45530
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0530
Telephone: 1-801-578-5650 or 1-800-777-1647
E-mail: churchactivity@dmba.com
Website: www.dmba.com/churchactivity

13.6.9.4

Personal Liability Insurance

Where possible, those who oversee activities should protect themselves by carrying reasonable amounts of liability insurance. Such insurance may be available through homeowners insurance or other policies.

13.6.10

Monday Nights

Members are encouraged to hold home evening on Sunday or at other times as individuals and families choose. A family activity night could be held on Monday or at other times. No Church activities, meetings, baptismal services, games, or practices should be held after 6:00 p.m. on Mondays. Other interruptions on Monday nights should be avoided. An exception may be made when New Year's Eve is on a Monday (see 13.6.11).

Leaders ensure that Church buildings and other facilities are closed on Monday nights. Receptions and other similar activities may not be held in Church facilities on Monday nights. Members are also discouraged from holding receptions in other facilities on Monday nights.

Where practical, members may want to encourage community and school leaders to avoid scheduling activities on Monday evenings that require children or parents to be away from their homes.

13.6.11

New Year's Eve Parties

When New Year's Eve falls on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, and when Church activities are planned, leaders should observe the following guidelines.

Saturday. The stake president schedules an alternate Sunday for observing fast day. Dancing and similar activities are discontinued at midnight, but refreshments or a meal may be served afterward. Participants should not be kept past a reasonable hour so they can be available for Sunday meetings.

Sunday. (1) Dancing and similar activities may be planned for Saturday, December 30, using the guidelines in the previous paragraph. (2) Instead of Church units planning activities, families may be encouraged to celebrate New Year's Eve in their homes. Activities should be appropriate for the

Sabbath day. (3) Special meetings could be held at a reasonable hour on Sunday evening.

Monday. No local Church-sponsored New Year's Eve activities should be scheduled before 9:00 p.m. The stake president or bishop may authorize the use of Church buildings on Monday evening in this instance.

13.6.12

Overnight Activities

Parental permission is required for all Church-sponsored overnight activities involving youth (see 13.6.13).

Church-sponsored overnight activities for combined groups of young men and young women or for combined groups of male and female single adults are not authorized unless approved by the stake president and bishop. Such activities are only rarely held, such as for a youth conference or temple visit.

On Church-sponsored overnight activities, leaders arrange sleeping accommodations so that male and female participants do not sleep in immediate proximity to each other. Male and female leaders must have separate sleeping facilities. Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.

On Church-sponsored overnight activities, a child or youth may not stay in the same tent or room as an adult unless (1) the adult is his or her parent or guardian or (2) there are at least two adults in the tent or room who are the same gender as the children or youth.

If adult leaders and children or youth share other overnight facilities, such as a cabin, there must be at least two adults in the facility, and they must be the same gender as the child or youth.

All Church-sponsored overnight activities must include at least two adult leaders.

A sufficient number of adult priesthood leaders must be present at all times during overnight activities to provide support and protection. In the case of Young Women activities, priesthood leaders must stay in facilities separate from the young women.

Leaders fill out an Activity Plan form for all overnight activities.

Overnight activities at Church meetinghouses or meetinghouse grounds are not approved.

Overnight activities at commercial buildings such as sports malls or gyms are not approved. With approval from priesthood leaders, dances or other activities may be held in commercial buildings after closing hours if the activities end at midnight.

13.6.13

Parental Permission

Parents or guardians should be informed and give consent when youth participate in a Church activity. Written consent is necessary if an activity involves travel outside the local area (as determined by local leaders) or staying overnight. Leaders may also request written consent for other activities when they feel it is appropriate.

Parents and guardians give this consent by signing the Parental or Guardian Permission and Medical Release form. The person who leads the activity should have a signed form for each participant for each activity that requires written consent.

13.6.14

Participation of Youth under 14 Years of Age

Youth under age 14 do not usually participate in youth conferences or in dances that are held at times other than the regularly scheduled Mutual night.

Members of the bishopric or stake presidency determine to what extent youth under age 14 may participate in other activities. Leaders consider such

factors as late hours, the subject of the discussion, the nature of the activity, and the maturity of the participants.

13.6.15

Portrayal of Deity

God the Father and the Holy Ghost are not to be portrayed in meetings, dramas, or musicals.

If the Savior is portrayed, it must be done with the utmost reverence and dignity. Only brethren of wholesome personal character should be considered for the part. The person who portrays the Savior should not sing or dance. When speaking, he should use only direct quotations of scriptures spoken by the Savior.

At the end of the performance, the person should not wear the costume in the foyer or elsewhere. He should change immediately into street clothes.

The Savior should not be portrayed by children in dramatization except in a nativity scene.

13.6.16

Prayers at Activities

All activities should be opened and, when appropriate, closed with prayer.

13.6.17

Renting Non-Church Facilities for Activities

When Church facilities are inadequate for a stake or multistake activity, facilities may be rented with approval from the bishop or stake president and from Church physical facilities representatives.

Local units may be asked to show evidence of liability insurance when renting or using facilities that are not owned by the Church. The bishop or stake president may obtain a certificate showing evidence of insurance from the Risk Management Division at Church headquarters or from the assigned

administrative office. Requests should include the name and address of the requester (normally the owner of the facility), a description and location of the facility, the liability limits required, and other pertinent information. Leaders should plan well in advance to allow time to prepare and mail the certificates.

13.6.18

Reports of Abuse

If a leader becomes aware of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of someone during a Church activity, he or she should contact the bishop immediately. Instructions for bishops are provided in *Handbook 1*, 17.3.2.

13.6.19

Sabbath Day Observance

No Church-sponsored sports events (such as games, practices, or travel) or recreational events (such as camping or hiking) are to be scheduled on Sunday. Nor should youth groups and others travel to or from camps or youth conferences on Sunday.

When security risks or travel costs are serious issues, leaders can schedule some youth activities on Sunday. Such activities should be separate from the Sunday meeting schedule and in keeping with the spirit of the Sabbath.

13.6.20

Safety Precautions and Accident Response and Reporting

13.6.20.1

Safety Precautions

Activities should involve minimal risk of injury or illness to participants. Activities should also involve minimal risk of damage to property. During activities, leaders make every effort to ensure safety. By

planning effectively and following safety precautions, leaders can minimize the risk of accidents.

Activities should include appropriate training and proper supervision. They should also be appropriate for the participants' age and maturity.

Leaders should be prepared for emergencies that may occur. They should also know in advance how to contact local law enforcement and emergency services.

13.6.20.2

Accident Response

If an accident or injury occurs on Church property or during a Church-sponsored activity, leaders observe the following guidelines, as applicable:

1. Render first aid. If a person needs medical care beyond simple first aid, contact emergency medical services, the bishop or stake president, and the parent, guardian, or other next of kin.
2. In case of a missing person or fatality, immediately notify local law enforcement authorities and cooperate fully with them.
3. Provide emotional support.
4. Do not encourage or discourage legal action against the Church, and do not make commitments on behalf of the Church.
5. Gather and preserve witness names and information, accounts of what happened, and photographs.

13.6.20.3

Accident Reporting

The bishop or stake president should be notified promptly if:

1. An accident, injury, or illness occurs on Church property or during a Church-sponsored activity.

2. A person who was participating in a Church-sponsored activity is missing.

3. Damage to private, public, or Church property occurs during a Church-sponsored activity.

If a person has been seriously injured or is missing, if property has been seriously damaged, or if legal action is threatened or anticipated, the stake president (or a bishop under his direction), promptly takes one of the following actions:

1. In the United States or Canada, he notifies the Risk Management Division at Church headquarters (1-801-240-4049 or 1-800-453-3860, extension 2-4049; after business hours or on weekends, call 1-801-240-1000 or 1-800-453-3860, and the operator will contact someone immediately).
2. Outside the United States and Canada, he notifies the area office.

Leaders also report injuries and damage involving Church facilities or property to the facilities manager.

13.6.20.4

Insurance and Questions

Leaders should review the applicability of the Church Activity Medical Assistance Program if an injury occurred during a Church-sponsored activity, event, or assignment. For information about insurance, see 13.6.9.

The stake president (or a bishop under his direction) refers questions about safety issues or claims against the Church to the Risk Management Division or to the area office.

13.6.21**Sports**

Church sports activities provide opportunities for wholesome physical activity, fellowship, and sportsmanship. The emphasis in Church sports is on participation, sportsmanship, and skill development, not competition. All team members should have regular opportunities to play.

The stake presidency approves the rules for sports activities sponsored within their stake. If area or multistake sports activities are held, the Area Presidency approves rules for all participating units. Rules used in local school and community sports activities may be consulted.

If multistake sports activities are held, they are administered by sports specialists who are called by agent stake presidents designated by the Area Presidency. Area sports tournaments are not approved.

Participants in Church-sponsored sports activities do not need to be Church members. However, they should live in the stake's boundaries and agree to follow Church standards and policies.

The stake presidency establishes guidelines that specify the ages at which players may participate in Church sports. These guidelines should take into account the local culture, geographical setting, school system, and rules of governing sports organizations. Such decisions should be made before the start of a season so everyone who is involved understands the age and eligibility rules.

Schools, states, provinces, and national sports organizations often establish rules about playing on school teams and Church teams in the same sport season. Church leaders and participants in Church sports ensure that they follow these rules. Violating them can result in the loss of eligibility for school teams and individuals.

In the United States and Canada, a person who is a member of a school sports team generally is not

eligible to participate in the same sport in the same season in the Church sports program. School teams include those associated with junior high or middle schools, high schools, and colleges and universities, including junior colleges. This guideline does not apply to those who participate in intramural sports. If two schedules of play are either concurrent or overlapping, they are considered to be in the same season. Leaders encourage youth who play on school teams to assist with Church sports programs in ways other than as players.

Team uniforms should be simple, inexpensive, modest, and appropriate for the activity. Colored T-shirts or pullover reversible shirts are usually sufficient. Uniforms should be paid for from the stake or ward budget.

The presentation of team or individual awards or trophies is discouraged.

13.6.22**Taxable Activities**

Leaders ensure that activities do not jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status. For guidelines, see 21.2.

13.6.23**Temple Visits**

Temple visits are organized on the ward or stake level within the assigned temple district. Organized ward or stake visits to temples outside the assigned temple district are not encouraged. Such visits would require the approval of the stake presidency. Overnight temple visits also require the approval of the stake presidency.

Temple visits must comply with the travel policies in 13.6.24. Overnight temple visits must also comply with the policies in 13.6.12.

13.6.24**Travel**

Members who travel in Church-sponsored groups should have the approval of the bishop or stake president. Travel for activities should not place undue burdens on members.

Long-distance travel for activities is discouraged. If a stake president or bishop feels that such travel may be justified, he prayerfully considers the potential spiritual benefits of the activity, the cost of the travel, and the effect on families before approving it.

If long-distance travel for an activity is approved, members should not provide it at their own expense. Nor should significant portions of the stake or ward budget allowance be retained from one year to the next to cover travel expenses.

Travel practices and the application of guidelines in this section should be consistent among units in the same coordinating council. Stake presidents may discuss and agree on general consistency in travel practices during coordinating council meetings.

Leaders fill out an Activity Plan form for activities that involve travel outside the local area.

When a Church activity for youth involves travel outside the local vicinity or staying overnight, parents should give written permission for their children to participate (see 13.6.13). Responsible adult supervision must be provided (see 13.6.2).

When feasible, Church groups should use commercial transportation that is licensed and is protected by liability insurance.

When Church groups travel in private passenger vehicles, each vehicle should be in safe operating condition, and each person should use a seat belt. Each driver should be a licensed, responsible adult. All vehicles and drivers should be covered with reasonable amounts of automobile liability insurance.

Church organizations may not own or acquire automobiles or buses for group travel.

A man and a woman should not travel alone together for Church activities, meetings, or assignments unless they are married to each other or are both single.

13.6.25**Unapproved Activities**

Church units may not sponsor the following activities. Leaders, parents, and others who plan or participate in Church activities should be aware of these restrictions.

1. Activities that have a high risk of injury or illness or that require unusual expense or travel (see 13.6.20 and 13.6.24).
2. Exercise programs that have music, lyrics, dress, or other elements that are not in harmony with Church standards.
3. Activities that involve wearing masks, except in dramatic productions.
4. Debutante balls, coming-out parties, or activities that include selecting kings and queens.
5. Any other activities that are not in harmony with the guidelines in this chapter.

If a bishop has a question about whether an activity is appropriate, he directs it to the stake president. Stake presidents may address questions to the Area Presidency.