

RISK ADVISORY PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH

Philmont has an excellent health and safety record with over 650,000 adults and young people having attended over the last 60 years. Philmont strives to minimize risks to participants and advisors by emphasizing proper safety precautions. Most participants in Philmont programs do not experience injuries because they are prepared, are conscious of risks, and take safety precautions. If you decide to attend Philmont, you must be physically fit, have proper clothing and equipment, be willing to follow instructions and work as a team with your crew and take responsibility for your own health and safety. For further information please thoroughly read the *Guidebook to Adventure* which will be mailed to you in mid-March 2003. Like other wilderness areas, Philmont is not risk free and you should be prepared to listen to safety instructions carefully, following directions and take appropriate steps to safeguard yourself and others.

Parents, guardians and potential participants in Philmont programs are advised that journeying to and from Philmont and one's stay at Philmont can involve exposure to accident, illness, and/or injury associated with a high elevation, physically demanding, high adventure program in a remote mountainous area. Campers may be exposed to occasional severe weather conditions such as lightning, hail, flash floods and heat. Other accidental possibilities include injuries from tripping and falling, motor vehicle accidents, asthma and diabetes related incidents, heart attacks, and heat exhaustion.

Philmont's trails are steep and rocky. Wild animals such as bears, rattlesnakes and mountain lions are native and usually present little danger if proper precautions are taken. Please refer to the *Guidebook to Adventure*, speak with previous Philmont participants, or call Philmont for further information concerning risks and measures that can be taken to avoid accidents

Philmont's staff is trained in preventing accidents. They are trained in first aid and CPR and are prepared to assist in recognizing, reacting, and responding to accidents, injuries and illnesses. Medical and search and rescue services are provided by Philmont in response to an accident or emergency, however, response times can be affected by location, weather or other emergencies and could be delayed 6 or more hours. All Troop 240 adult leadership will be CPR and First Aid certified.

THE PHILMONT TREK EXPERIENCE

A Philmont trek is physically, mentally and emotionally demanding. Each person will carry a 45 to 50 lb. pack while hiking 5 to 12 miles per day in an isolated mountain wilderness, ranging from 6,500 to 12,500 feet in elevation. Climatic conditions include temperatures from 30 to 90 degrees F, low humidity (10-30%) and frequent sometimes severe, afternoon thunderstorms. Activities include horseback riding, rock climbing and rappelling, challenge events, pole climbing, black powder shooting, 12 gauge trap shooting, .30-06 shooting, flint knapping, trail building, mountain biking and other activities that may have potential for injury. Philmont strives to minimize risks to participants and advisors by emphasizing proper safety precautions. Refer to the *Guidebook to Adventure*, which will be mailed in mid-March, for specific information. Philmont staff instructs participants in safety measures to be followed. Each participant and crew is expected to follow these safety measures and to accept responsibility for the health and safety of each of its members.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHRONIC ILLNESSES

Philmont requires that this information be shared with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and examining physician of every participant. Philmont does not have facilities for extended care or treatment, therefore, participants who cannot meet these requirements will be sent home at their expense.

CARDIAC OR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Adults or youth who have had any of the following should undergo a thorough evaluation by a physician before considering participation at Philmont.

1. Angina (chest pain caused by heart or coronary artery disease)
2. Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
3. Surgery or angioplasty to treat coronary artery disease; surgery to treat congenital heart disease or other heart surgery
4. Stroke or transient ischemic attacks
5. Claudication (leg pain with exercise caused by hardening of the arteries)
6. Family history of heart disease or a family member who died unexpectedly before age 50
7. Excessive weight
8. Smoking

The altitude at Philmont and the physical exertion involved may precipitate either a heart attack or stroke in susceptible persons. Participants with a history of any of the first six (6) conditions listed above should have a physician supervised stress test. A thallium stress test is recommended for participants who have coronary heart disease. Even if the stress test is normal, the results of testing done at lower elevations and without the backpacks carried at Philmont do not guarantee safety. If the test results are abnormal, the individual is advised not to participate.

HYPERTENSION (HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE)

The combination of stress and altitude appears to cause significant increase in blood pressure in some individuals attending Philmont. Occasionally, hypertension reaches such a level that it is no longer safe to engage in strenuous activity. Hypertension can increase the risk of having a stroke, developing altitude sickness or angina. Persons coming to Philmont should have a normal blood pressure (less than 135/85). Persons with significant hypertension (greater than 150/95) should be treated before coming to Philmont, and should continue on medications while at Philmont. The goal of treatment should be to lower the blood pressure to normal. Persons with mild hypertension (greater than 135/85 but less than 150/95) probably require treatment as well. It is the experience of the Philmont medical staff that such individuals often develop significant hypertension when they arrive at Philmont. Participants already on antihypertensive therapy with normal blood pressures should continue on medications. Diuretic therapy to control hypertension is not recommended because of the risks of dehydration that exist with strenuous activity at high altitude and low humidity. Each participant who is 18 years of age or older will have his or her blood pressure checked at Philmont. Those individuals with a blood pressure consistently greater than 150/95 probably will be kept off the trail until the blood pressure decreases.

INSULIN DEPENDENT DIABETES MELLITUS

Exercise and the type of food eaten affect insulin requirements. Any individual with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus should be able to monitor personal blood glucose and to know how to adjust insulin doses based on these factors. The diabetic person also should know how to give a self injection. Both the diabetic person and one other person in the group should be able to recognize indications of excessively high blood sugar (hyperglycemia or diabetic ketoacidosis) and to recognize indications of excessively low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). The diabetic person and one other individual should know the appropriate initial responses for these conditions. It is recommended that the diabetic person and one other individual carry insulin on the trek (in case of accident) and that a third vial be kept at the Health Lodge for backup. Insulin can be carried in a small thermos that can be resupplied with ice or cold water at most staffed camps.

A diabetic person who has had frequent hospitalizations for diabetic ketoacidosis or who has had frequent problems with hypoglycemia should not participate in a trek at Philmont until better control of the diabetes has been achieved. Call Philmont at 505-376-2281 to obtain permission from the chief medical officer for individuals hospitalized within the past year.

EXCESSIVE BODY WEIGHT

Any youth or advisor who exceeds the maximum weight limits on the Philmont weight chart is at extreme risk for health problems.

SEIZURES (EPILEPSY)

A seizure disorder or epilepsy does not exclude an individual from participating at Philmont. However, the seizure disorder should be well controlled by medications. A minimum one year seizure-free period is considered to be adequate control. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered by Philmont's chief medical officer and will be based on the specific type of seizure and the likely risks to the individual and to other members of the crew. The medical staff at the Health Lodge may place some restrictions on activities (rock-climbing, horse riding, etc.) for those individuals who are approved for participation but whose seizures are incompletely controlled.

ASTHMA

Individuals must consult with a physician in order to establish "good" control of their asthma. The asthma should be control to essentially normal lung function with the use of oral and/or aerosol bronchodilators. The patient should bring ample supply of medication to Philmont. Individuals undergoing allergic desensitization therapy who require injections while at Philmont should bring and store them in the Health Lodge on arrival.

Asthmatic individuals whose exercise-induced asthma cannot be prevented with bronchodilator premedication; individual requiring systemic corticosteroid therapy and/or who have required multiple hospitalizations for asthma should not attempt to participate in the strenuous activities encountered at Philmont. At least one other crew member should know how recognize an asthma attack, how to recognize worsening of an attack, and how to administer bronchodilator therapy. Any

person who has required medical treatment for asthma within the past six years must carry a full size prescribed inhaler if that person is approved to go on a trek. If an inhaler is not brought, it must be purchased at Philmont.

RECENT MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES AND ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

Every Philmont participant will put a great deal of strain on feet, ankles, and knees. Participants who have had orthopedic surgery, including arthroscopic surgery or significant musculoskeletal injuries, within the past six months, find it difficult or impossible to negotiate Philmont's steep rocky trails. To be cleared to backpack by the Philmont medical staff, individuals with significant musculoskeletal injuries or recent orthopedic surgery must have a letter of clearance from their orthopedic surgeon or treating physician. A person with a cast on any extremity may participate only if approved by a Philmont physician. Ingrown toenails are a common problem and must be treated 30 days prior to arrival. All such problems will be reviewed by a Philmont physician to determine if participation in a trek will be permitted.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

A mental disorder does not necessarily exclude an individual from participation. Parents and advisors should be aware that a Philmont trek is not designed to assist participants to overcome psychological or emotional problems. Experience demonstrates that these problems frequently become magnified, not lessened, when a participant is subjected to the physical and mental challenges of a trek at high elevation, carrying a heavy backpack over steep, rocky trails. Any condition should be well controlled without the services of a mental health practitioner. Under no circumstance should medication be stopped immediately prior to a Philmont trek. Participants requiring medication must bring an appropriate supply. The nearest mental health support is three (3) hours from Philmont.

MEDICATIONS

Each participant at Philmont who has a condition requiring medication should bring an appropriate supply. The pharmacy at the Health Lodge is limited and the identical medications may not be available. In certain circumstances duplicate or even triplicate supplies of vital medications are appropriate. People with an allergy to bee, wasp or hornet stings must bring an EpiPen or equivalent with them to Philmont.

An individual should always contact the family physician first and call Philmont at 505-376-2281 if there is a question about the advisability of participation. Philmont's chief medical officer and other medical staff of the Health Lodge reserve the right to make medical decisions regarding the participation of individuals at Philmont.