# Activity Worker Guidelines

Last Revised: August 2013

The following guidelines were developed to avoid questionable contact between Activity Workers and youth participants. The preferred method is to avoid private one-on-one interactions and always have another adult observer present during all interactions with youth participants. This will provide greater protection to the youth and the Activity Workers.

**Definitions**
**Youth** – Any person under the age of 19, excluding full- and part-time NCTA students

**Activity Worker** – includes directors, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, student assistants, staff, faculty, officials, referees or contracted teachers or any other adult or student acting as a supervisor/mentor/worker in a paid, unpaid or volunteer status.

**Activity Director** – a person who plans, directs and supervises all youth activity programs and staff

**Activity Support Staff –** any person who provides support services such as food service, custodial, maintenance, etc. for the activity.

**Activity Worker Judgment**
Activity Workers are role models to the activity participants and should act accordingly. Ask yourself the following questions regarding your decisions and the situations you may find yourself in as an Activity Worker. Contact the Activity Director if you have questions or concerns.

1. What are the physical risks involved in this activity/decision?
2. Are there any foreseeable risks? What dangers can be avoided?
3. Who is this activity/decision for, the youths or me?
4. How will youths benefit from this activity and how is it related to the purpose of the activity?
5. What would I do if the youths or their parents were watching?
6. What would I do if the Activity Director was watching?
7. Could my action/decision cost me my job?

**Interaction Guidelines**

The primary interaction guidelines are provided below and are to be followed by all Activity Workers.

1. Immediately report any suspected abuse and neglect (including sexual assault or contact) of a youth to NCTA Dean, local law enforcement or the Nebraska Health and Human Services.
2. NCTA reserves the right to terminate an Activity Worker or Activity Support Staff worker for engaging in illegal activities or sexual misconduct while off duty.
3. Alcohol or tobacco products should not be used in the presence of youth(s) and any use must comply with University policies. Use of illegal drugs or non-over the counter drugs without a prescription is prohibited. Activity Workers and Activity Support Staff should not conduct any activity under the influence of alcohol or other mind altering substances.
4. Use of profanity in front of youth is prohibited.
5. Avoid making inappropriate comments when in the presence of youth(s), including but not limited to comments that are sexual, racial, related to sexual or gender orientation, and/or religious comments.
6. A youth requiring medical attention is to be directed to the activities designated first – aid contact immediately.
7. Always have youths follow safety directives (i.e. fire alarm - evacuation, severe weather, etc.)
8. The possession of weapons or explosive devices is prohibited, except where use is a recognized part of the activity/clinic/conference.
9. Use of an Activity Worker's or Activity Support Staff's personal room or home for meeting/interacting with youth that are affiliated with the activity is prohibited. Activity Workers are prohibited from meeting youth off-site or off hours. Exceptions require parental written approval <u>and</u> the Activity Director's approval in advance.
10. Any participating NCTA Activity Workers who will be responsible for transporting youth by vehicle must undergo and pass a Driving Record Check as required by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Non-NCTA Activity Workers who transport youth must have a valid driver's license and be approved by the Activity Director to transport youth. If one-on-one travel must occur, the Activity Worker must contact his/her supervisor or designee immediately before departure and immediately upon the arrival at destination.
11. Taking pictures of youth or posting to social media sites without parental permission is prohibited.

**Interactions with Youth**

1. Respect the privacy of youths.
2. Supervise in pairs whenever possible; avoid being alone with a youth.
3. Never leave youth unsupervised.
4. All physical contact should be appropriate (i.e. high fives, bones). Activity Workers should not engage in, initiate, or encourage inappropriate contact, such as chest bumps, kisses, hugs, butt slaps or sitting on laps.
5. Sexual touching or related activity is prohibited.
6. Physical restraint is prohibited, except to protect youth or other youths.
7. Touching of youth is prohibited, except when it is in the open with others present.
8. Any touching of youth should be restricted to areas not covered by a typical bathing suit.
9. Always be in view of others (i.e. when meeting in an office) leave the door open and have another Activity Worker present in the room or close proximity. If privacy is required, inform another Activity Worker that the door will be closed for a private conversation and make sure the other Activity Worker will remain nearby in the area. If no other Activity Worker is present in the building, the meeting should be rescheduled or moved to a more public location.
10. When in bathrooms or locker rooms, Activity Workers must be the same gender as the youth. Activity Workers showering or bathing with youths is strictly prohibited under all circumstances. Activity Workers will not be in the shower or bath areas with youth except during extreme medical emergencies.
11. Whenever possible, youths should not be transported in an Activity Workers' personal vehicle.
12. All youths must have adult supervision until released to a parent or guardian, unless specific written parental permission is received.
13. Do not share personal or intimate information with youth.
14. Do not give personal gifts to youths.

**Overnight Activities/Programs**

In addition to the above, the following are further precautions related to overnight youths who stay in campus/other housing.

1. A ratio of at least one adult supervisor to every 15 youths is required, with a minimum of two adult supervisors regardless of size of activity. At least one adult supervisor of the same sex as the youths is required.
2. Youth are not allowed alone in Activity Worker(s)' private rooms.
3. Do not enter a bathroom or shower area to assist a youth without another Activity Worker present.
4. Never leave youths unsupervised in the residence halls at night.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Including Sexual Assault Reporting Requirements**
Nebraska statutes require any person who suspects or is aware of any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault, to report such abuse, neglect, or assault to law enforcement or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Law enforcement is likewise required to notify DHHS of any such incidents reported to them. Activity Directors are required to notify Department of Health and Human Services immediately by calling 1-800-652-1999.

This means that if you suspect any child abuse or neglect, including sexual assault:

1. You must report it,
2. You should give as much information about the circumstances as possible,
3. You are immune from liability from any civil or criminal liability if you have reported the information in good faith, and
4. If you know of child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault but are not reporting it, you are breaking the law.

**Reference: Nebraska Statutes 28-711; 28-716; 28-717:**

Nebraska Statute 28-711: (1) When any physician, medical institution, nurse, school employee, social workers, or any other person has reasonable cause to believe that a youth has been subjected to abuse or neglect or observes such youth being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report to be made to the proper local law enforcement agency, the local Department of Health and Human Services or by calling the statewide hotline number at 1-800-652-1999.

Nebraska Statute 28-716: Persons participating in an investigation or making a report of youth abuse or neglect shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, except for maliciously false statements.

Nebraska Statute 28-717: Any person who willfully fails to make any report required by the law shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.