

December 2010

In August 2009, based upon the recommendation of the Risk Management Advisory Panel and Health and Safety Committee, Item 3 of the [Winter Sports Safety section](#) in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* was changed to read as follows:

“APPROPRIATE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL ACTIVITIES. THIS INCLUDES THE RECOMMENDED USE OF HELMETS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN WINTER SPORTS SUCH AS SLEDDING AND OTHER SLIDING DEVICES. THE USE OF HELMETS IS REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES: DOWNHILL SKIING, SNOWBOARDING, AND OPERATION OF SNOWMOBILES (FULL-FACE HELMETS).”

The change can only be found at this time in the electronic version of *Guide to Safe Scouting*. The updated printed version should be available in January 2011.

The [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons recommends](#) the following safety guidelines to improve sledding safety:

- Parents or adults must supervise children at all times while they are sledding.
- Sled only in designated areas free of fixed objects such as trees, posts, and fences.
- Do not sled on slopes that end in a street, drop-off, parking lot, river, or pond.
- All participants must sit in a forward-facing position, steering with their feet or a rope tied to the steering handles of the sled. No one should sled headfirst down a slope.
- To protect from injury, it is important to wear helmets, gloves, and layers of clothing.
- Do not sit/slide on plastic sheets or other materials that can be pierced by objects on the ground.
- Use a sled with runners and a steering mechanism, which is safer than toboggans or snow disks.
- Sled in well-lighted areas when choosing evening activities.
- Individuals with pre-existing neurological problems may be at a higher risk for injury.

Please remember [The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety](#), which embodies good judgment and common sense for all Scouting activities:

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| 1. Qualified Supervision               | 9. Weather Check        |
| 2. Physical Fitness                    | 10. Planning            |
| 3. Buddy System                        | 11. Communication       |
| 4. Safe Area or Course                 | 12. Permits and Notices |
| 5. Equipment Selection and Maintenance | 13. First-Aid Resources |
| 6. Personal Safety Equipment           | 14. Applicable Laws     |
| 7. Safety Procedures and Policies      | 15. CPR Resources       |
| 8. Skill Level Limits                  | 16. Discipline          |

The District of Columbia requires helmets for any person under age 16 while using roller skates, a skateboard, sled, coaster, toy vehicle, sidewalk bicycle, scooter, or any similar device. Massachusetts is considering legislation that would require children under 12 to wear a helmet during sledding, snowboarding, and ice-skating activities.