

ACC SECTION HANDBOOK — RUNNING TRIPS

Minors on ACC Trips

Practical guidance for trip leaders and section chairs - based on ACC-SEC-004, approved February 5, 2026

Policy ACC-SEC-004 All Volunteers Updated Feb 2026

This document translates the **ACC Minors Policy (ACC-SEC-004)** into guidance for trip leaders and section chairs. A minor is defined as any person under the age of majority in the jurisdiction (Province or Territory) where the activity takes place.

Overnight trips with unaccompanied minors are not permitted.

The ACC's CGL insurance policy includes an Abuse Exclusion for overnight trips where minors are not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. No exceptions.

*Note: The Safety Committee and ACC Office are looking into other organizations and models for how to manage overnight trips for **unaccompanied minors**.*

1. The Three Scenarios

PERMITTED	DAY TRIPS ONLY	NOT PERMITTED
Accompanied Minor Parent or legal guardian present at the event. Trip leader consent required. Higher duty of care applies.	Unaccompanied Minor Day trips only. Minor must be 13+. Minimum two adult leaders required. Background checks required.	Unaccompanied - Overnight Not permitted under any circumstances. CGL insurance excludes this scenario.

2. Volunteer Screening Requirements

Before hosting a trip with **unaccompanied minors**, all trip leaders and coordinators must:

- Provide a **criminal records check including vulnerable sector** to the Canmore office, issued within the last 3 months. The vulnerable sector check is valid for 1 year.
- Hold **current first aid certification**.

Getting a vulnerable sector check.

Contact ACC Member Services for a nonprofit letter — this often reduces or eliminates the cost. Then contact your local police station or RCMP to request the check.

3. Waiver & Acknowledgement of Risk

Minors cannot waive their own rights, and legal guardians cannot waive rights on their behalf. The waiver serves as an **acknowledgement of risk only**.

MINOR'S AGE	WHO SIGNS	NOTES
12 or under	Legal guardian only	Guardian must be informed of all activity risks and hazards
13 or above	Both minor and legal guardian	Minor must also be personally informed of hazards and risks

Note: Acknowledgment of risk for minors are currently being built-into the member portal for family memberships.

Full hazard disclosure is mandatory.

Legal guardians must be informed of the full nature of proposed activities and associated risks before the trip - not at the trailhead. For trip leaders, this means ensuring to post the associated risk and hazards on your trip postings. The list of risks and hazards is included in appendix.

4. Avalanche Terrain Rules for Trips with Minors

All ACC trips where minors are present must adhere to the Parks Canada Custodial Policies, regardless of whether the minor is accompanied and regardless of whether the trip is in a National Park.

TERRAIN	PERMITTED?	CONDITIONS
Simple (ATES 1)	Yes	Permitted when danger is Low, Moderate, or Considerable
Challenging (ATES 2)	Conditional	Only if led by an ACMG or IFMGA guide AND danger is Low or Moderate
Complex (ATES 3)	No	Off-limits. No exceptions.
Extreme	No	Off-limits. No exceptions.

5. Supervision on the Ground

A higher duty of care applies throughout the trip - from planning to post-trip handover. The following are minimum requirements for any trip involving minors.

Minimum requirements

- An unaccompanied minor is in your care from the moment their guardian leaves them until they are returned to custody.
- Minimum **two adult trip coordinators** must be present and listed on the trip posting.
- Follow the **rule of two**: adult leaders should avoid being alone with any minor at any time.
- **No alcohol or illegal substances** are permitted. Inform parents/guardians and minors in advance that belongings may be checked.
- All medical/first response interventions should be witnessed and documented by a second leader wherever possible.

Suggested practices

Beyond the minimum requirements, the following practices reflect the ACC's commitment to creating a safe, welcoming environment for young participants and their families.

AREA	SUGGESTED PRACTICE
Before the trip	Send a detailed trip information package to guardians well in advance — covering itinerary, terrain, gear list, emergency contacts, and supervisor names. Invite questions before sign-up is finalized.
At the start	Conduct a brief orientation with participants that includes group norms, buddy system pairing, what to do if separated, and how to flag concerns to a leader.
On the trail / at the venue	Conduct regular head counts. Establish clear visual check-in points. Keep the group together and avoid situations where leaders and minors are separated from the rest of the group.
Communications	All communication with minors should happen in group settings or with a second adult present. Avoid one-on-one messaging with participants outside of trip logistics.
Incident documentation	Document any incidents involving minors in writing, even minor ones. Include time, location, what occurred, who was present, and what action was taken. Submit via the ACC Incident Report form.
Post-trip	Confirm with guardians when minors have been safely returned to their care. Follow up if a participant seemed distressed or if anything unusual occurred during the trip.

When in doubt, ask.

If a situation arises that isn't covered by the policy, err on the side of caution and contact the section executive or the ACC office before proceeding. No trip is worth compromising a participant's safety or the section's reputation.

6. Duty to Report

Anyone who has reason to believe a minor has been or is likely to be abused or neglected must report to the relevant authorities. In many Canadian jurisdictions, **everyone is a mandatory reporter**.

PROVINCE / TERRITORY	RESOURCE
British Columbia	www2.gov.bc.ca — Duty to Report pamphlet
Alberta	alberta.ca/report-child-abuse
Saskatchewan	saskatchewan.ca — Child Protection
Manitoba	gov.mb.ca — Child and Family Services
Ontario	ontario.ca/page/report-child-abuse-and-neglect
Quebec	quebec.ca — Director of Youth Protection
New Brunswick	gnb.ca — Child Protection booklet
Newfoundland & Labrador	gov.nl.ca — Duty to Report
Nova Scotia	novascotia.ca/report-child-abuse-or-neglect
Prince Edward Island	princeedwardisland.ca — Duty to Report
Yukon	yukon.ca — Report Child Abuse

Questions?

Contact ACC National at info@alpineclubofcanada.ca or 403-678-3200. The full policy document (ACC-SEC-004) is available on the ACC Governance page: alpineclubofcanada.ca/governance-overview/

ACC SECTION HANDBOOK — APPENDIX

Activity Hazards & Risks

Reference list for section trip postings. Select all categories relevant to the activity being posted.

How to use this appendix.

When posting a section trip, select the hazard categories that apply to the terrain, season, and activity type. Copy the relevant sections into your trip description under an “Activity Hazards” heading. Participants must be informed of these risks before registering.

Quick-Select Checklist

Tick the categories that apply to your trip before building your hazard disclosure.

HAZARD CATEGORY	APPLIES TO
<input type="checkbox"/> Avalanche	<i>Any snow travel in or near slopes steeper than 25°</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Terrain	<i>All backcountry, scrambling, alpine, and ski touring trips</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rockfall	<i>Climbing, scrambling, hiking in alpine or canyon terrain</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Falls and Belaying	<i>Rock climbing, ice climbing, rappelling</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication & Rescue	<i>Any trip in remote terrain beyond cell coverage</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Boots and Binding Systems	<i>Any ski touring, backcountry skiing, or ski mountaineering trip</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Injury	<i>All trips — include by default</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Helicopter Risk	<i>Any trip that involves helicopter access or evacuation planning</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other / General Hazards	<i>All outdoor trips — include by default</i>

Full Hazard Descriptions

The following text can be copied directly into your trip posting. Use the preamble below, then add only the categories that apply.

Suggested preamble — copy this before listing hazard categories:

Participating in this activity involves many risks, dangers and hazards that could result in injury, death, paralysis, property damage, or loss to me or other third parties. These risks, dangers, and hazards may include, but are not limited to those listed below. Please review them carefully before registering.

Avalanche

Avalanches can occur in the terrain in which we operate and can be caused by natural forces, or by people travelling through the terrain (e.g. skiing/snowboarding).

Terrain

Terrain is uncontrolled, unmarked and not inspected, and may include:

- Cornices
- Crevasses
- Cliffs
- Trees, tree wells, forest deadfall, and tree stumps
- Creeks
- Rocks and boulders
- Holes and depressions below the snow surface
- Variable and difficult snow conditions
- Variable and difficult walking terrain
- Snowcat roads and road banks
- Fences and other man-made structures
- Snow immersion
- Impact or collision with other persons, vehicles or objects
- Extreme variation in trails or terrain
- Encounters with domestic or wild animals
- Loss of balance or control
- Slips, trips and falls
- Becoming lost or separated from one's group

Rockfall

- Rockfall can be caused by natural forces, or by people travelling through the terrain (e.g. climbing/scrambling/hiking).

Falls and Belaying

- Rock climbing presents the risk of falling from the wall causing the climber to collide with the wall or ground, which can lead to injury or death.
- The risk of belay failure is also present which can contribute to the risk of a ground fall.
- Equipment failure, including equipment associated with climbing, rappelling and belaying.

Communication, Rescue and Medical Treatment

- Communication can be difficult and in the event of an accident, rescue and treatment may not be available.
- Adverse weather may also delay the arrival of treatment and transport out of the field.
- If an injury occurs in challenging terrain, movement to an evacuation point may be slow.

Boots and Binding Systems

- Even when set up correctly, a ski binding might not release during every fall or may release unexpectedly. The ski boot/binding system is no guarantee that the skier will not be injured. Non-DIN-certified bindings, such as pin/tech bindings, present a higher risk of pre-release and/or injury as they are not designed to the same safety standards as a DIN-certified alpine binding.
- Unlike alpine ski boot/binding systems, snowboard and some telemark boot/binding systems are not designed or intended to release and will not release under normal circumstances. Using such a system increases the risk of injury and/or death when caught in an avalanche.

Personal Injury

Personal injury includes: Sprains, strains, shock, stress, nausea, food-borne illness, diarrhea, burns, cuts, abrasions, fractured or broken bones, impalement, drowning, hypothermia, loss of limbs, frostbite, sunstroke, sunburn, dehydration, illness, soft tissue injuries, neck, head and brain injury, paralysis, psychological injury, and other injury to the body.

Helicopter Risk

Helicopter risk applies to any programs involving a helicopter.

Other

- Slips, trips and falls both outdoors and indoors.
- Changing weather conditions including but not limited to high winds, lightning, and forest fires.
- Effects of high altitude including pulmonary edema and cerebral edema.
- Infectious disease contracted through viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi which may be transmitted through direct or indirect contact.
- Equipment failure.
- Incomplete warnings or instructions.
- Negligent first aid.
- Negligence of other people, including trip coordinator and other guests.
- Negligence includes failure on the part of ACC guides (if applicable) to take reasonable steps to safeguard or protect you from or warn you of the risks, dangers and hazards of wilderness activities.