



DELAWARE 4-H CHAPERONING STANDARDS POLICY (For Overnight County, State and National 4-H Events)

It is the responsibility of the Extension Educator to see that the overnight event is adequately chaperoned and appropriate standards followed. The following are minimum standards.

Responsibility of Extension Educator

Number of Chaperones:

The number of chaperones shall be determined by the age of the participants and the nature of the facility. Younger members, and/or widely spaced facilities will require more chaperones.

- Youth leaders and counselors should be least 2 years older than the group they are supervising.
- Adult/teen leader (age 16 or older) to youth ratio:
 - 1 adult/teen to 6 youth ages 5-7
 - 1 adult/teen to 8 youth ages 8-14
 - 1 adult/teen to 10 youth ages 15-18

If the event is for males and females, then a male and female chaperone are required. It is strongly recommended that at least two male and 2 female chaperones be present. At least one educator must be included among the chaperones at county and state events. Volunteers may make up the remainder of the group.

Selection of Chaperones:

The Extension Educator should select chaperones for 4-H events. Consideration should be given to the following criteria:

- All volunteers serving as chaperones must be screened 4-H volunteers and their completed screening information must be on file in the extension office.
- Volunteers serving as chaperones must be over 21 years old.
- The chaperone should be able to work effectively with youth of the age they are to chaperone. The Extension Educator is responsible for letting participants know who their chaperones are.

Responsibility of Event Coordinator

The Event Coordinator should assure an adequate number of chaperones are in place to assure the safety of the youths and the chaperones. Before the event, the Event Coordinator or designee must orient the chaperones. This orientation shall include the rules for the event, emergency procedures and any other special circumstances that chaperones need to be aware of to assure the safety of the youths. The Event Coordinator should provide a time for participants to meet face-to-face with their designated chaperones.

The Event Coordinator's first consideration should always be the safety and well being of the youth. Medical forms must be available to chaperones during the event.

Responsibility of the Chaperone

All chaperones are to complete the following:

- Emergency Medical Treatment Form (May be collected annually)
- Pre-event orientation

Volunteers are expected to abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct. Chaperones should plan a time at the event to meet face-to-face with the participants specifically assigned to them. All chaperones are responsible for all youth at the event. Should a problem arise, it should be brought to the attention of the Event Coordinator.

Chaperones are under the supervision of the Event Coordinator. Any problems involving a chaperone will be handled by the Event Coordinator and referred to the county Extension 4-H Extension Educator and County Extension Director.

Failure to follow these standards puts the youth, the educator and the program at risk. Every effort must be made to comply. In situations where circumstances compromise the standards during the event, the Event Coordinator must use his or her best judgment on whether the event should continue. This may mean the canceling of all or part of the event.

Delaware 4-H Checklist for Event Chaperones

1. ___ Participant List – List of names of all event participants for each chaperone.
2. ___ Chaperone Orientation – Discussion by staff with chaperones as to roles and responsibilities, identifying any young people with special needs.
3. ___ Program Participant Orientation – Introduce chaperones and indicate their role/responsibility/authority for specific event. Discussion by staff/chaperones as to the schedule of events, code of conduct, and expectations regarding this event/activity. If trip situation, indicate any departure times, check-in times, etc. Indicate where a chaperone can always be found in case of an emergency.
4. ___ Equipment/Supplies – Indicate where a first-aid kit, bullhorn/PA, health/emergency forms, and any other equipment/supplies are stored.
5. ___ Incident Reports – Every chaperone will be provided with Incident Report Forms to document any accident, behavior, or other problem situation (could be bus driver or bus company concern).