



WARNING OF INHERENT RISK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK AND ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

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The NOVA staff are trained in the basics of camping, hiking, backpacking, skiing, ice climbing, snowshoeing first aid and risk management. Despite the training of our staff, there are still risks. These risks are inherent in the adventure-based activities in which our students take part.

Some of the many hazards inherent in camping, hiking, backpacking, winter sports are: dehydration, hypothermia, cold-related illness, falls, drowning, diseases from untreated water or sanitary conditions, sunburn, bruising and blisters. A stumble, especially while carrying a heavy pack, can result in a temporarily disabling injury such as torn knee ligaments, sprained ankle, or worse.

In addition, camping, hiking, backpacking, ice climbing or skiing can involve strenuous physical exertion on rugged trails for long periods of time. Extended trips in remote areas have minimal facilities (such as buildings, bathrooms and running water). You can expect to be challenged in an intensive group experience in which all members need to balance their personal needs with the needs of the group. These courses do not provided the traditional amenities of modern life.

In addition to environmental risks, there are other risks which include: psychological distress (due to interacting, living and working together in close quarters under physically challenging and stressful conditions) and those based on human carelessness (tripping over a rock, spilling boiling water on a hand or foot or getting lost).

The consequences may be relatively minor (sunburn, a pulled muscle, a sprained ankle) or very serious (resulting in serious injury, paralysis or death). *There are other risks inherent in outdoor activities which have not been specifically mentioned.*

Further, on extended trips the group may be away from phone or radio contact with Unity College or from emergency help for three to four days at a time. In the backcountry, electronic communication is unreliable and ineffective. In addition, weather may temporarily move in which will force a group to be unable to hike or participate in winter sports for a day or two. Such weather can also prevent outside rescue/emergency personnel from going into the backcountry.

LEADER AND PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Our instructors will make an effort to warn and alert you to hazards and to teach you safe practices. *But you are expected to assume responsibility for yourself.* Further, if you do not understand the nature of these hazards it is your responsibility to ask your instructor/leader.

Prior to and during the trip, the leaders will present general safety rules, guidelines and procedures. You will need to pay close attention to these instructions both for your safety and the group's safety.

Although our leaders are trained, it is possible for them to overlook safety considerations. As a group member, it is your responsibility to learn about and follow safe practices and to inform instructors of potential problems, including medical problems. It is also your responsibility to inform instructors of potential problems related to others. This would include, but should not be limited to:

- Equipment that has broken or is in need of repair
- Feeling ill, unduly fatigued or unable to participate
- Having difficulty in performing a skill
- Knowing of other trip participants who are improperly prepared, not feeling well or having unusual difficulties

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In exchange for being able to participate in this trip, I agree to the following (please initial the following elements and sign below to acknowledge):

- a) **I recognize there are inherent risks in this activity (that is, some risks are a necessary part of participation in this activity) (_____)**
- b) **I understand the nature and extent of these inherent risks (_____)**
- c) **I assume (accept) these inherent risks (_____)**
- d) **My participation is voluntary (_____)**
- e) **I agree to listen to instructors, to make reasonable efforts to learn and to follow safe practices (_____)**
- f) **I agree to work cooperatively with leaders and fellow participants (_____)**
- g) **If I do not understand directions, I will ask for clarification from the leaders. (_____)**
- h) **I will alert the instructors to any problems (medical or otherwise) I am having or to problems which I see others having (_____)**

Signature of student _____ Date _____

Printed name of student _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian if student under 18 _____ Date _____