

Idaho Trails Association

Youth Program: Protection Policies

At Idaho Trails Association (ITA), the safety and well-being of every young person in our program is our top priority. We have put in place clear policies to ensure youth participants are supervised, respected, and protected at all times. The following is a summary of those policies for parents and guardians.

1. Crew Leader Requirements

All crew leaders working with youth must meet the following requirements before leading a trip:

- Pass a criminal background check.
- Complete Youth Protection Online Training through the Boy Scouts of America.
- Hold a minimum of Basic First Aid/CPR certification. Wilderness First Aid is strongly recommended.
- Attend an in-person Crew Leader Education and Mentoring (CLEM) training at least once every three years. Keep up to date on policies and procedures each year.
- Co-lead or deputy-lead an ITA project before solo-leading any trip.
- Support ITA's anti-harassment policy and mission of trails open for all.

2. Supervision & Adult-to-Youth Ratios

- ITA maintains a 6:1 youth-to-adult ratio on all trail work events.
- Rule of 3 - No youth is ever alone with a single adult at any time. All interactions between youth and adults occur in groups of at least three people.
- Youth may NOT go out alone on a day off. With two adult crew leaders, one may lead an activity while the other supervises youth who prefer to relax in camp.

3. Anti-Harassment Policy

ITA has a zero-tolerance policy for harassment of any kind. All crew leaders are required to review and support our anti-harassment policy before leading any project. Crew leaders hold a safety and harassment talk at the start of every trip to set clear expectations for all participants.

4. Inclusion & Gender Identity

- ITA recognizes and celebrates each participant's gender identity. We use each individual's preferred name and pronouns in all written and verbal communication.
- Youth of mixed gender may not share tents unless they have written permission from a parent or guardian.
- As much as possible, ITA provides gender-neutral restrooms and changing options so that all youth feel safe and comfortable. In backcountry settings, we use a communal latrine. We ensure youth have private options for changing and are never required to use common spaces.

5. Prohibited Items

The following items are strictly prohibited on all youth trips:

- Alcohol. Crew leaders do not consume alcohol in the presence of youth participants at any time.
- Firearms and other weapons. The only exceptions are bear spray, which crew leaders may carry for safety, and our mule/horse packers, who may carry a firearm as a standard safety precaution for the animals in their care.

6. Safety & Emergency Preparedness

- All crew leaders carry a group first aid kit and a satellite communication device (Garmin InReach) on every trip.
- A safety meeting is held at the start of every project to review hazards, tools, and expectations.
- ITA has clear emergency procedures and incident reporting protocols in place. Any incident is documented and reported.
- Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided by ITA and required during all trail work.
- Closed-toe shoes are required at all times in camp.

7. Liability Release & Medical Authorization

All youth participants are required to have a signed Parent/Guardian Liability Release on file before participating in any ITA project. This form:

- Acknowledges the inherent risks of trail work, hiking, and backcountry travel.
- Authorizes ITA staff and volunteers to seek emergency medical treatment for the participant if a parent or guardian cannot be reached.
- Grants ITA permission to photograph or film the participant for use in ITA materials.

8. Camp Sanitation & Wellbeing

- Crew leaders take time on the first day of every trip to orient youth to hand-washing stations, dish washing, and latrine use.
- Camp sanitation standards are actively maintained to prevent illness.
- ITA encourages crew leaders to check in regularly with youth throughout the trip, during breaks, at meals, and at the end of each day, to ensure every participant feels supported and is having a positive experience.