

High-Adventure Risk Advisory to Health-Care Providers and Parents

Philmont Scout Ranch

Phone: 575-376-2281

Website: www.philmontscoutranch.org

Philmont Scout Ranch Experience. The Philmont experience is not risk-free. Staff will instruct participants in safety measures. Be prepared to listen to and follow these measures. Accept responsibility for the health and safety of yourself and others. Each participant must be able to carry 25 to 35 percent of their body weight while hiking 5 to 12 miles per day in an isolated mountain wilderness ranging from 6,500 to 12,500 feet in elevation over trails that are steep and rocky. Summer/autumn climate includes temperatures from 30 to 100 degrees, low humidity (10 to 30 percent), and frequent, sometimes severe, thunderstorms. Winter climatic conditions can range from -20 to 60 degrees. During a Winter Adventure experience, each person will walk, ski, or snowshoe along snow-covered trails pulling loaded toboggans or sleds for up to 3 miles—or even more on a cross-country ski trek.

Risk Advisory. Philmont has an excellent health and safety record and strives to minimize risks to participants by emphasizing appropriate safety precautions. Because most participants are prepared, are conscious of risks, and take safety precautions, they do not experience injuries. If you decide to attend Philmont, you should be physically fit, have proper clothing and equipment, be willing to follow instructions, work as a team with your crew, and take responsibility for your own health and safety.

Philmont staff members are trained in first aid, CPR, and accident prevention. They can assist the adult advisor in recognizing, reacting to, and responding to accidents, injuries, and illnesses. Each crew is required to have at least two members trained in wilderness first aid and CPR. Response times can be affected by location, terrain, weather, or other emergencies and could be delayed for hours or even days in a wilderness setting.

All Philmont participants should understand potential health risks inherent at or above 6,700 feet in elevation in a dry Southwest environment. High elevation; a physically demanding high-adventure program in remote mountainous areas; camping while being exposed to occasional severe weather conditions such as lightning, hail, flash floods, and heat; and other potential problems, including injuries from tripping and falling, falls from horses, heat exhaustion, and motor vehicle accidents, can worsen underlying medical conditions. Native wild animals such as bears, rattlesnakes, and mountain lions usually present little danger if proper precautions are taken.

Guests attending Philmont Training Center conferences and family programs who are unfamiliar with the backcountry should review the supplemental information available on the Philmont website, especially information about activities that may be new to them.

Please call Philmont at 575-376-2281 if you have any questions. All participants and guests should review all materials and websites related to the experiences they are planning to have at Philmont Scout Ranch.

Food. If the diet described in the participant guide does not meet the participant's special dietary needs, contact Philmont directly. Visit the Philmont Scout Ranch website for sample menus and more information.

Medication. Each participant who needs medication must bring enough medicine for the duration of the trip. Consider bringing two or three supplies of vital medication. People with allergies that have resulted in severe reactions or anaphylaxis must bring an EpiPen that has not expired.

Immunizations. Each participant must have received a tetanus immunization within the last 10 years. Recognition will be given to the rights of those Scouts and Scouters who do not have immunizations because of philosophical, political, or religious beliefs. In such a situation, the Immunization Exemption Request form is required; it is located on the Philmont website.

High Blood Pressure. Upon arrival at Philmont, all adult participants will have their blood pressure checked. Participants should have a blood pressure less than 140/90. People with hypertension (greater than 140/90) should be treated and controlled before attending Philmont, and should continue on medications while participating. The goal of treatment should be to lower the blood pressure to normal levels. Those individuals with a blood pressure consistently greater than 160/100 at Philmont may be kept off the trail until their blood pressure decreases.

Seizures (Epilepsy). The seizure disorder must be well-controlled by medication. A well-controlled disorder is one in which a year has passed without a seizure. Exceptions to this guideline may be considered on an individual basis, and will be based on the specific type of seizure and likely risks to the individual/other members of the crew.

Diabetes Mellitus. Both the person with diabetes and one other person in the group need to be able to recognize signs of excessively high or low blood sugar. An insulin-dependent person who was diagnosed or who has had a change in delivery system (e.g., insulin pump) in the last six months is advised not to participate. A person with diabetes who has had frequent hospitalizations or who has had problems with low blood sugar should not participate until better control of the diabetes has been achieved. If an individual has been hospitalized for diabetes-related illnesses within the past year, the individual must obtain permission to participate by contacting the **Philmont Health Lodge at 575-376-2281**.

Asthma. Asthma must be well-controlled before participating at Philmont. This means: **1)** the use of a rescue inhaler (e.g., albuterol) less than once daily; **2)** no need for a rescue inhaler at night. Well-controlled asthma may include the use of long-acting bronchodilators, inhaled steroids, or oral medications such as Singulair. You may not be allowed to participate if: **1)** you have asthma not controlled by medication; or **2)** you have been hospitalized/gone to the emergency room to treat asthma in the past six months; or **3)** you have needed treatment by oral steroids (prednisone) in the past six months. You must bring an ample supply of your medication and a spare rescue inhaler that are not expired. At least one other member of the crew should know how to use the rescue inhaler. Any person who has needed treatment for asthma in the past three years must carry a rescue inhaler on the trek. If you do not bring a rescue inhaler, you must buy one before you will be allowed to participate.



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Recommendations for Chronic Illnesses.

Adults or youth with any of the following conditions should undergo an evaluation by a physician before considering participation at Philmont.

1. Chest pain, myocardial infarction (heart attack) or family history of heart disease in any person before age 50
2. Heart surgery, including angioplasty (balloon dilation), to treat blocked blood vessels or place stents
3. Stroke or transient ischemic attacks (TIAs)
4. High blood pressure
5. Claudication (leg pain with exercise, caused by hardening of the arteries)
6. Diabetes
7. Smoking or excessive weight

The physical exertion at Philmont may precipitate either a heart attack or stroke in susceptible people. Participants with a history of any of the seven conditions listed above should have a physician-supervised stress test. Even if the stress test results are normal, the results of testing are done at lower elevations, without backpacks, and do not guarantee safety. If the test results are abnormal, the individual is advised not to participate.

Allergy or Anaphylaxis. People who have had an anaphylactic reaction from any cause must contact Philmont before arrival. If you are allowed to participate, you will be required to have appropriate treatment with you. You and at least one other member of your crew must know how to give the treatment. If you do not bring appropriate treatment with you, you will be required to buy it before you will be allowed to participate.

Recent Musculoskeletal Injuries and Orthopedic Surgery. Participants will put a great deal of strain on their joints. Individuals who have significant musculoskeletal problems (including back problems) or orthopedic surgery/injuries within the last six months must have a letter of clearance from their treating physician to be considered for approval, and Philmont should be contacted in advance of participation. Permission is not guaranteed. Ingrown toenails are a common problem and must be treated 30 days prior to arrival.

Psychological and Emotional Difficulties.

Parents and advisors should be aware that no high-adventure experience is designed to assist participants in overcoming psychological or emotional problems. Experience demonstrates that these problems frequently become worse, when a participant is under the stress of the physical and mental challenges of a remote wilderness setting. Medication must never be stopped prior to participation and should be continued throughout the entire Philmont experience.

Weight Limits. Weight limit guidelines (see Part C) are used because overweight individuals are at a greater risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, altitude illness, sleep problems, and injury. These guidelines are for all Scouting high-adventure activities. Each participant's weight must be less than the maximum acceptable limit in the weight chart. Participants 21 years and older who exceed the maximum acceptable weight limit for their height at the Philmont medical recheck WILL NOT be permitted to backpack or hike at Philmont. They will be sent home. For participants under 21 years of age who exceed the maximum acceptable weight for height, the Philmont staff will use their judgment to determine if the youth can participate. Philmont will consider up to 20 pounds over the maximum acceptable; however, exceptions are not made automatically and discussion with Philmont in advance is required for any exception. **Philmont's telephone number is 575-376-2281.** Due to rescue equipment restrictions and evacuation efforts from remote sites, under no circumstances will any individual weighing more than 295 pounds be permitted to participate in backcountry programs.

Philmont Approval. Staff and/or staff physicians reserve the right to deny the participation of any individual on the basis of a physical examination and/or medical history. Each participant is subject to a medical recheck at Philmont.



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