



## **SAFETY POLICIES**

Sonshine Wilderness Retreat (herein referred to as SWR) considers safety to be a top priority. We trust the credentials, standards, and protocols listed below will answer most of your questions concerning our commitment to the highest standards of safety. SWR follows the procedures and protocols set forth by the Wilderness Medicine Institute. For questions, please contact SWR at 719-966-7015 or email at [sonshinewildernessretreat@gmail.com](mailto:sonshinewildernessretreat@gmail.com).

### **Operation**

Sonshine Wilderness Retreat operates in the State of Colorado. The operating season for Sonshine Wilderness Retreat lasts from May to September each year.

### **Insurance**

Sonshine Wilderness Retreat, as required by state law, carries liability insurance. SWR does not provide individual or group medical coverage for participants, volunteers or employees. Individual participants, employees and volunteers are responsible for providing their own insurance.

### **General Safety Procedures**

The SWR office location is 13984 County Road 220, Salida, Colorado. The base camps will be located at designated national/state park camp sites. At least two SWR ministry personnel will participate with each group on every SWR led activity. During SWR led activities, a SWR leader will be available at base camp or office in the event of an emergency. One SWR leader with the group will carry a radio and/or mobile phone and be in regular contact with base camp or office. All SWR leaders are familiar with the location of the nearest medical facility. Ambulance, Search and Rescue, and Life Flight services are available in the event of life and death emergencies. Either of the Heart-of-the-Rockies Medical Centers are within 30 minutes from any of the SWR base camp locations. All sites and activities have been researched and chosen to balance adventure with the wellbeing of the participants.

### **Personnel**

#### **Credentials/Training:**

- **Ministry Leaders** for Sonshine Wilderness Retreat meet or exceed the following qualifications:
  - Are at least 21 years of age
  - Hold current wilderness First Aid and CPR certification
  - Have technical experience consistent with their specialized role
  - Have participated in at least five (5) group back country trips
  - Have exhibited the maturity to be an effective leader of participants and other personnel
- **Ministry Volunteers** for Sonshine Wilderness Retreat meet or exceed the following qualifications:
  - Are at least 16 years of age
  - Has experience with outdoors
  - Have exhibited the maturity to be an effective leader among their peers

**List of References:** At least two (2) references for each ministry leader on file attesting to the individual's character and suitability to work with people.

**Health Condition:** Each ministry leader shall be examined every 12 months by a licensed medical health care professional to insure they are physically able to fulfill the duties required by their role.

**Emergency Preparedness:** Each ministry leader shall be trained and given written instructions as to ministry policy when emergencies occur, such as fires, lost participants, and injuries.

**At Base Camp:** After ministry activities have concluded for the evening at Base Camp. Ministry Leaders will not be required to stay at Base Camp overnight. The designated group coordinator will be provided a radio or phone number for contact with Ministry Leader off site. In Case of emergency, this Ministry Leader is responsible for coordinating the efforts of securing appropriate medical attention for a participant in the group of an emergency.

**On Trail:** During SWR led activities, there shall be minimum of two SWR personnel, at least one being a Ministry Leader, with each group of participants. In the event of an accident requiring the evacuation of an individual, one



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SWR personnel must remain with the group and one must go with the injured person, unless the injured person is SWR personnel. In this case, staff will use their best judgment.

### **Emergencies**

Emergency Plan on File: SWR shall have a written plan for the following emergency situations: accident at base camp, accident on the trail or in a backcountry area, and lost participant. Plan shall be consistent with the protocol set forth by the Wilderness Medicine Institute. The staff shall be trained to implement this plan.

Emergency Report SWR shall provide each staff member with the proper form(s) for reporting injuries, fatalities, and lost participants.

Emergency Protocol: SWR shall report all emergencies according to the following protocols:

- Minor injury Staff shall report the injury to a supervisory representative within 12 hours. Staff shall complete and submit a written report within 72 hours to the SWR office or appointed representative.
- Major injury or illness (any injury requiring a participant or staff to be removed from the backcountry and taken to a hospital/clinic for emergency medical treatment) Staff shall report the injury to the SWR office as soon as possible. Staff shall complete and submit a written report within 12 hours to the SWR office or appointed representative. SWR shall notify the local hospital (and law enforcement/search and rescue if required).
- Fatality (injury resulting in the death of a participant, volunteer or staff) Staff shall report the incident immediately to the SWR office. Staff shall complete and submit a written report within 6 hours to the SWR officer or appointed representative. SWR shall notify the local hospital and law enforcement/search and rescue.
- Lost/Runaway Participant Staff shall report the incident immediately to the SWR office. Staff shall complete and submit a written report within 6 hours of the time the camper went missing to SWR or appointed representative. SWR shall coordinate the initial search and report the incident to law enforcement/search and rescue if efforts by staff have failed.

### **First Aid, Medications, and Adequate Medical Facilities**

- First Aid: A fully stocked first aid kit shall be available to all staff while in base camp. A first aid kit shall be carried by at least one staff member to backcountry areas.
- Medications: Staff are not to administer medications of any kind to participants. SWR's designated medical screener will check each individual's medical history and highlight any medical concerns. These concerns will be communicated to the staff before an individual's departure for backcountry areas. Staff are responsible for knowing which individuals require medication and where medications are located. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, a staff member may assist an individual in taking an oral and/or nebulized medication dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. The medical release forms should be available to staff at all times.
- Medical Facilities: SWR shall know the location of the closest medical facilities in all areas where activities occur. SWR shall provide the locations of the medical facilities to all staff members. SWR shall provide an adequate facility for separating a sick (and possibly contagious) individual from others.

### **Fire Safety**

Tents are to be at least thirty feet away from any campfire or open flame. Fuel bottles are to be kept at least ten feet away from stoves and campfires. A staff member should supervise the preparation and starting of all campfires and stoves. Fire extinguishers shall be provided by staff at base camp location.

SWR closely monitors the county's forest fire risk and campfire bans. Depending on the conditions, your group may not be permitted to have a campfire.

### **Bear Safety**



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Special procedures shall be used concerning bears in the backcountry. The SWR Bear Safety Procedures are designed to minimize a bear's access to participants in backcountry areas. Participants shall be instructed in the proper disposal of food and waste. Backcountry camps shall be arranged in a way that isolates food supplies and food odors from participants and tent areas. Staff shall give instruction in minimizing the possibility of an individual being isolated and vulnerable to bear attacks. All bear sightings shall be reported by the staff to the SWR office within 48 hours if staff determines there is no immediate danger. All bear sightings shall be reported immediately to the SWR office if participants or staff are at risk. SWR should determine how to deal with a bear that persistently threatens the safety of participants or staff. A "problem bear" shall be reported to the Colorado Division of Wildlife within 24 hours of an incident involving a bear and participants or staff. At no time shall a bear be approached or antagonized.

### **Activities**

**Camping, Hiking and Backpacking:** SWR Ministry Leaders shall be qualified to accompany groups in the backcountry according to Sonshine Wilderness Retreat personnel policies. They shall meet the following criteria and adhere to the following procedures:

- Hold a current First Aid and CPR certificate
- Know the symptoms and treatment of dehydration and hypothermia
- Observe participants for early diagnosis and treatment of dehydration and hypothermia
- Consider age, physical condition, and experience of group when setting pace
- Select terrain appropriate for the group
- Be able to lead a pre-trip orientation
- Participants should be instructed in at least the following:
  - Fundamental safety procedures on the trail
  - Procedures for a participant if he/she becomes lost
  - Proper health procedures
  - The need for hydration and eating appropriate foods
  - Sanitation procedures on the trail
  - Rules governing the land being hiked over
  - Potentially high-risk areas found on the route
  - Precautions for fire, flash floods, lightning danger, etc.
  - Procedures when encountering wild animals
  - Leave No Trace standards and ethics