



CANADIAN BIRKEBEINER VOLUNTEER SAFETY INFORMATION

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of something as special as the Birkie. The Birkie happens because of the dedication of our amazing volunteers, new and long-serving. All activities have risks associated with them. To ensure you have a safe, enjoyable experience as a Birkie volunteer, please read the following information about potential problems that could arise, so that you know how to minimize or eliminate them.

KEEPING WARM

Be prepared for the weather. The Loppet event will run to -23°C or -28 °C wind chill.

- Eat a good breakfast in the morning.
- Drink plenty of fluids (before you are thirsty) to avoid dehydration and hypothermia.
- Dress in lots of layers; adjust them if you get too warm or too cold. Wear synthetics; wool or silk and *avoid* cotton.
- Mitts with liners or over-mitts are warmer than gloves. Wear a toque and buff/tube/scarf.
- Wear warm, roomy winter boots if you are working outside.
- Hand warmers are available at volunteer check-in if working outside.
- Bring a pack with extra clothes (ex. socks, toque, neck tube / scarf, mitts, etc.).
- Hand cleanser dispensers will be at food stations and the Festival Tent.
- Learn where the nearest warm place is (e.g. food station, a shuttle vehicle); use if needed to warm up.
- Regularly check each other for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.

ICY/SNOWY PATHS

- Wear boots or overshoes with soles with a good grip. Avoid smooth-soled shoes
- Walk consciously. Be alert to the possibility that you could slip.
- Walk cautiously. Keep hands out of pockets and avoid carrying heavy loads.
- Walk "small." Take care on icy areas – use short, shuffling steps, curl toes under and walk flatfooted.
- Use a walking stick to feel stable.

LIFTING

- Use proper lifting techniques. Use your legs vs. back.
- Lift within your limits. Ask for help if something is too heavy.
- Bulky loads should be carried in such a way as to permit an unobstructed view ahead.

CAMP FIRES AND COOKING

- When working with fire pits/wood stoves wear protective leather/work gloves.
- Stay up wind from fire to avoid spark holes on clothing.
- Keep loose clothing tucked in or tied back when working around the fire pit.
- Place your unused firewood upwind and away from the fire.
- Keep a bucket of water / snow and a shovel nearby to keep the fire from spreading.
- Remember to Stop! Drop! And Roll! If your clothing catches on fire.

OTHER RISKS

- When setting up tables make sure that you can leave from either end.
- Be alert and proactive about eliminating potential hazards e.g. inappropriately placed extension cords.
- Wear sunscreen and sunglasses to protect from sun damage to skin or eyes.
- Carry an Epi Pen on you at all times if you have allergies. If you have food allergies, ask about ingredients before sampling or bring your own safe foods.
- Wash hands before and after eating or drinking.
- If you feel threatened, position yourself with something between you and the person that you are dealing with and radio, phone or call out for assistance.

If you have any questions about this or related topics, please talk with your Chief. All Chiefs will be wearing orange arm bands on Birkie day.

**Birkie emergency phone numbers (Blackfoot Base) – for Saturday morning emergencies
(780) 922-3293 or (780) 221-1441 (telephone only, no text messages)**

Thanks again for helping out on this big day. Without your support and continued assistance, we wouldn't be able to run a successful Birkie event.