

National Outdoor Leadership School

Wilderness Medicine Institute

Student Agreement

(Including Acknowledgement and Assumption Of Risks And Agreements Of Release And Indemnity)

Please read this document carefully. It must be signed by all students and a parent or guardian if the student is a minor. "Student" includes adult and minor students, unless indicated otherwise. In consideration of the services provided by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Wilderness Medicine Institute (WMI), I agree, for myself (and for the minor student if I am signing as a parent or guardian), to the following:

Activities And Risks

I understand that WMI courses teach wilderness first aid, also known as wilderness medicine, and are taught in classroom and outdoor settings. The outdoor portions will occur during the day or at night in various types of environments from grass lawns to rugged wilderness-like terrain and in weather conditions that include heat, cold, wind, snow or rain or other conditions. I acknowledge that the activities of the course have risks, including certain risks, which are inherent. Inherent risks are those which cannot be eliminated without destroying the unique character of the activities. The same elements that contribute to the unique character of these activities and promote our educational objectives can cause loss or damage to equipment, accidental injury, illness, or in extreme cases, permanent trauma, disability or death. I understand that WMI considers it important for me to know in advance what to expect and to be informed of the activities' inherent risks. The following describes some, but not all, of those risks.

- WMI activities may be strenuous, physically and emotionally.
- WMI courses may occur in remote places. They may occur on lands open to the public, and exposed to the acts of persons not associated with WMI. Communication and transportation may be difficult and evacuations and medical care may be significantly delayed.
- Physical activities include, but are not limited to, walking, running, hiking, repetitive lifting, and carrying. Certain activities will require travel by foot and other means, over unimproved roads, hiking trails and rugged off-trail terrain including downed timber, river crossings, snow, ice, steep slopes, slippery rocks, and other features. These travel risks include falling, drowning, becoming lost, and others usually associated with such travel, including environmental risks.
- Environmental risks and hazards include, but are not limited to, flowing, deep and cold water; harmful insects, snakes, animals; falling and rolling rock; lightning, falling timber, and unpredictable forces of nature, including weather which may change to extreme conditions without notice. Possible injuries and illnesses include wounds or bruises; bites or stings and insect or animal-borne diseases; sunburn, hypothermia, frostbite, heatstroke, dehydration, and other mild or serious conditions.
- Equipment may fail or malfunction.
- Students will participate in realistic simulated injury and illness scenarios and will at times act the role of patient, being handled, carried, and otherwise treated as patients of a simulated medical emergency. Students will also use and practice with various medical equipment. Training, under close staff supervision, may include the option of injecting, and being injected, by fellow students. Risks associated with this training include being inadvertently stuck by a needle, being dropped or otherwise mishandled while being carried; unwelcome touching while acting the role of patient in a scenario; and emotional distress in response to training scenarios. Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course students will spend time at regional hospitals. Risks include those associated with contact with sick or injured patients.
- WMI may require students to arrange their own transportation to locations away from the primary classroom from which further activities will be conducted. This travel is not supervised by WMI and includes the use of personal vehicles and/or carpooling in vehicles not owned or controlled in any way by WMI.
- Decisions made by the instructors, other staff (including volunteers), contractors, and students will be based on a variety of perceptions and evaluations, which by their nature are imprecise and subject to errors in judgment. Misjudgments may pertain to, among other things, a student's capabilities, environment, terrain, water and weather conditions, natural hazards, travel routes, and medical conditions.
- WMI is not responsible for students, including minors, before the start and after end dates of their course. Between the start and end date of the course students are not supervised before or after the established class time. Students may have homework assigned for after class, but this is not supervised by WMI. WMI has no responsibility for students and students accept the risks that arise from this unsupervised time. WMI staff may from time to time provide assistance or even accompany students during unsupervised time, but in doing so, they are acting as private individuals, and WMI is not responsible for their conduct.
- During the established class time students are considered to be "participating" in their WMI course. Participation includes, but is not limited to, involvement with activities, time spent studying or practicing techniques, and formal classes.
- WMI programs in foreign countries may be exposed to laws, legal systems, customs and behaviors, animals, diseases and infections not common to the United States; in addition, these courses may be subject to dangerous road travel, political unrest, riots, demonstrations, banditry, terrorism, and other criminal conduct, including drug related activities.

