

Safety Tips for Teaching in the Sugar Bush

This is not meant to be a definitive list, but helpful ideas to keep in mind. Referenced from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

HEAD COUNTS

Do frequent head counts or create a way to know that everyone is accounted for: before you leave the school, when you arrive at the forest, before you leave the forest, and when you return to school.

HAZARDS

Identify potential hazards and mark them. Let students know if there is a danger close to where they are working, such as a hole or loose ground.



BRANCHES

Remove detached hanging branches in the trees and be mindful of falling branches on windy days.

SLIPPERY CONDITIONS

If there is hard snow or ice, spread sand, mark as a hazard, or create paths around the slippery area.

STAY IN THREES

For your safety and that of the students, don't be alone with a child. Always make sure that you have another adult or another child present with you.



STAY TOGETHER

Remind the class that they'll be walking together as a group. Make sure no one is left behind or runs ahead. If you have a volunteer adult, have them walk with the back of the group when heading down a trail.

SIGNAL

Have a signal for students to know it is time to go back, such as a whistle or signature call.

MIND THE TEMPERATURE

When it's hot outside, gather in shaded areas. In colder conditions, stand out of the wind and where the sun is at your back to help keep everyone warm.

GIVE THE EVAPORATOR SPACE

If you have students in the sugarhouse while you are boiling, create a roped off area around the evaporator. This gives students a place to observe the operation without crowding each other or the sugarmakers. This will give the sugarmakers space to do their work, and will make it less likely that students will be accidentally burned.

HOT SYRUP

If doing sugar on snow, have only adults stir the syrup. Allow the syrup to cool for a few seconds before inviting students to taste it.

WEAR GLOVES

If you are having students help stack wood, provide them with work gloves to reduce risk of a splinter. Never have students add wood to the evaporator.



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