

May 14, 2008

To: Scout Executives

From: Mark L. Dama  
Director, Insurance and Risk Management

Subject: Unauthorized and Restricted Activities

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Risk Management and Health and Safety have received several inquiries as to whether paintball and laser tag are authorized Scouting activities. Per the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, “*The following activities have been declared unauthorized and restricted by the Boy Scouts of America . . . Pointing any type of firearm (including paintball, dye, or lasers) at any individual is unauthorized.*”

Over the last several years, we have learned of three serious eye injuries that have taken place on Scouting outings in which paintball was one of the activities. Be aware of the following alert, which soon will be posted on the Scouting Safely area of *Scouting.org*: **Paintball is prohibited in Scouting!**

Paintball poses a significant risk of injury, especially among children. In contrast to other Scouting activities involving firearms, the object of paintball is to fire a pellet—at a speed of at least 300 feet per second—at another human. A paintball that hits the body may produce a mere sting or welt, but a paintball that strikes an eyeball can cause severe injury to the eye and even blindness. The Consumer Product Safety Commission noted three deaths between 2002 and 2005 from paintball gun equipment.

At the request of the Risk Management Advisory Panel, the Health and Safety Committee is working to establish guidelines for laser tag activities, including and not limited to indoor commercial facilities. The guidelines will become part of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.