

Safety Bulletin – Q4 December 2025

This bulletin covers incident and near miss reports which I have received from September 1st through to December 31st.

Another reminder please, can anyone who completes an incident report via the SmartSheet please ensure that the details are noted and forwarded to your GLV and also to me via: John.Bennett@cheshirescouts.org.uk

Cheshire Hike

There was a considerable number of first aid incidents over the two days of the Hike, only one of these was reportable and is detailed below along with a Near Miss. The non reportable incidents were mainly foot blisters. The majority of these could have been avoided if correct socks had been worn (i.e. not nylon) and footwear had been “broken in” prior to the event. There has to be an onus on leaders ensuring that their participants are correctly prepared.

Reportable Incidents and Near Misses in Cheshire

1 Burns to Fingers

A Scout taking part in Cheshire Hike was cooking his meal at Base Camp using a Trangia. He lifted the hot pan off the stove with a bare hand. The tips of fingers on his right hand were burnt. He received initial first aid at Base Camp and was then taken to Northwich Victoria Hospital where the fingers were dressed and advice given. He returned to the hike and continued to take part.

The lessons learned from this incident are obvious: use the equipment provided. It is safe to say that the Scout will not do that again.

2 Health Issue

A Scout was attending a Remembrance Sunday Service at a local War Memorial when he became unwell. He was taken from the parade to the first aid post where it was found that he had a very low temperature and was struggling to walk, as a consequence he was taken to hospital where he was admitted and remained there whilst tests were carried out to find the cause.

Lessons Learned: This was a medical emergency and as yet the cause is not known. However the incident does show the value of having Rec 2 qualified First Aiders available at the event.

SOUTH WEST CHESHIRE DISTRICT

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3. Fall

A Scout was climbing on an outdoor climbing wall using harness and rope. The Scout was descending when the rope fed through the Grigri device that was being used, too quickly. The Scout landed on the floor on his bottom, leaning to his left on his back and shoulder. The Scout leader in attendance had managed to slow down the descent reducing the speed at which the Scout impacted on the ground. Due to the nature of the incident it was considered that he may have sustained fractures and/or other injuries as a result was taken to the local A & E department by ambulance. X-rays revealed that there were no fractures and he was discharged into his parents care. Although initially there was some impairment in his mobility this cleared in a week.

Lessons Learned: This was a commercial climbing activity but run by suitably qualified scout leaders. Full risk assessments were in place and had been briefed out.

This incident is still under investigation and the root cause has yet to be determined. A full report with all relevant details is being prepared for HQ Safety Team.

4 Near Miss

At Cheshire Hike Base Camp a gas stove caught light, but for the very swift actions of leaders who were present this could have been a very serious incident. A Scout was about to prepare his evening meal using a small gas cooker. There was a gas leak at the connection between the gas supply and the stove which ignited. Thanks to the quick actions of those nearby the fire was quickly extinguished and no damage was caused.

Lessons Learned: There are questions around the initial assembly of the cooker which allowed to gas escape and clearly close attention should be paid to that particular process before lighting the actual stove.

This near miss demonstrates the importance and value of having fire buckets and extinguishers located at regular intervals around the camping area.

Miscellaneous

Martyn's Law: The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2 Desc025

The HQ organised working party looking at the implications of this for the Movement held its first meeting on September 30th. It was very productive and informative. The Government is updating guidance on a regular basis and it is hoped that definitive guidance for Scouts will be available in Q1 of 2026. In addition there will be guidance following the tragic incident in Southport. These will be circulated once available.

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And Finally

On a lighter note, one young hiker taking part in Cheshire Hike came to First Aid at base camp with blisters on both shoulders. Her rucksack had not been adjusted properly to fit her body. The straps were adjusted and the cause of the blisters explained to her. Her response was that this was her Dad's fault. The obvious question Why? was asked. Answer: Because its his rucksack!

John Bennett
County Safety Advisor
December 2025

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