Appendix F: Event Safety and Operations

Safety at *FIRST* Events

ENTITIES/INDIVIDUALS CONDUCTING EVENTS

The organization or individual(s) conducting an event is/are responsible for implementing and maintaining Youth Protection standards throughout the event, in coordination with the hosting organization and applicable laws. The party conducting the event is also required to be fully familiar with the *FIRST* Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Requirements.

Event organizers must comply with:

- Hosting organization policies.
- Facility safety requirements.
- Applicable local, state/provincial, and national laws.

Event leadership must ensure that all key personnel (including staff, volunteers, and security) are informed of:

- *FIRST* Code of Conduct expectations.
- Youth Protection requirements.
- Reporting procedures for concerns.

Event organizers must establish a clear escalation and reporting structure for youth protection concerns, including designated points of contact during the event.

SAFETY SERVICES/FACILITIES

- Event organizers must ensure appropriate emergency, medical, and security planning is in place based on the size, scope, location, and risk profile of the event. The level of services required will vary depending on the event and applicable venue requirements. The party conducting the event, in consultation with the manager of the facility and various service providers, are responsible for determining what is "adequate."
  - Number and age of participants.
  - Nature of activities (e.g., robotics, tools, crowds).
  - Venue layout and access points.
  - Presence of spectators and vendors.

As applicable to the event, emergency, medical, and security personnel should:

- Be available throughout the portions of the event for which they are responsible.
- Be appropriately trained and capable of responding to medical or other emergencies within the scope of their responsibilities.
- Be informed of the unique safety and youth protection considerations associated with events involving youth participants.
- Understand that not all individuals onsite (e.g., vendors, sponsors, exhibitors, spectators) may be screened or trained by *FIRST* and remain alert to potential safety concerns.
- Remain available until their assigned responsibilities have concluded or as otherwise required by the event safety plan.
- Facilities and service providers must comply with applicable licensing, safety, and insurance requirements.

Facilities are required to be duly licensed to hold such events, and the event activities must stay within the legally specified parameters for numbers of participants and event elements (e.g., machine shops). Those providing services for the event or performing at an event (e.g., food services, childcare services, etc.) are required to be qualified to do so and show that they are properly licensed. *FIRST*® expects that outside service providers have an insurance certificate, identifying the party conducting the event as an additional named insured.

- Security personnel should be briefed on youth protection expectations, including recognizing concerning behavior and responding to reports.
- Event staff should be aware that not all individuals onsite (e.g., vendors, spectators, sponsors) are screened or trained.

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

All event volunteers must model appropriate behavior and maintain professional boundaries with youth participants at all times. Conduct must be both appropriate and perceived as appropriate.

Event Volunteers in the U.S. and Canada who are 18 years of age or older are required to obtain Youth Protection Clearance. For the purposes of this requirement, "Event Volunteers" are defined as the individuals who are assigned specific roles by the event's Volunteer Coordinator and will be regularly interacting with youth participants.

Since background screening is not available for minors, minor volunteers working onsite events must be supervised by screened adults. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians of the minor child, prior to the event, to ensure that their child possesses the maturity, character, and good judgment needed to be a *FIRST* volunteer.

Individuals who are exhibiting, providing entertainment, working with food vendors, or attending an event as a spectator are not required to obtain Youth Protection Clearance. These individuals should not be placed in roles involving supervision or unsupervised interaction with youth.

Volunteers whose service has been declined by *FIRST* will appear as "Do Not Assign" in the *FIRST* Volunteer Management System. Should they apply for an event, the volunteer management system will not allow them to be assigned. The reason *FIRST* has declined the individual's volunteer services will not be disclosed. Event Volunteer Coordinators are required to decline the services of such individuals in any capacity. *FIRST* requires that anyone with access to this information will keep the identity of these persons confidential.

- Event Volunteer Coordinators must not assign individuals flagged as "Do Not Assign" under any circumstances.
- Confidentiality of such determinations must be maintained.

The training and screening of coaches, mentors, and other adults who accompany *FIRST* teams to an event are the responsibility of that team's lead coaches and the local Program Delivery Partner. The party conducting the event and the event's Volunteer Coordinator are not responsible for confirming that lead coaches and other adults accompanying teams to an event have obtained Youth Protection Clearance, unless these individuals are fulfilling more than incidental event duties apart from oversight of their own team.

Regardless of whether an adult has obtained Youth Protection Clearance, adults must avoid one-on-one, non-observable interactions with youth participants. Interactions should be observable and interruptible.

Having at least two adults within sight when a child is present will ensure that help will be available in the event of an emergency and may provide clarity in assessing and reporting safety concerns or questionable incidents.

FUNDAMENTAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR *FIRST* EVENTS

Coaches and Mentors are responsible for ensuring that team members follow the following safety guidelines at all events:

- All participants must follow all safety rules set by the school/organization/ facility hosting the event. Before teams arrive, survey the facility, and remedy any safety hazards. Safety measures related to the game that are mandated by *FIRST* Program management must be adhered to.
- Allow only appropriate interactions between individuals. Practice *Gracious Professionalism*® and foster *Coopertition*® among team members, always adhering to the *FIRST* Code of Conduct. The use of offensive language, gestures, or behavior that is inappropriate for the ages of team members or spectators should not be tolerated. All participants should be able to effectively manage the inevitable stress of competing in an event and not resort to angry outbursts or intimidating behavior.
- Do not allow violent, hostile, or potentially harmful behavior; these are prohibited. Do not tolerate physical or verbal abuse, bullying, hazing, or confrontational behavior by anyone, including lead coaches, mentors, and parents or guardians. If anyone at the event behaves in a manner that might be harmful, security personnel should guide the individual to a separate space, if possible, and their parent or guardian, a child protection agency, or the police, should be called, as appropriate.
- Do not allow the use of controlled substances. Do not allow the use or presence of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances. Exceptions may be made for alcohol served to adults of legal drinking age at receptions and celebratory meals when controls are in place to prevent illegal use.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Establish procedures in advance for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost youth or adults, and security.
- Ensure safety when traveling to and from events. Oversight of team members' transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the team's lead coaches.

- Team members under 18 should only be allowed to leave an event with the approval of their lead coach or their parent or guardian, and under appropriate supervision. See Appendix E: Team Travel and Overnight Activities.
  - Youth participants may only leave under:
    - Parent/guardian supervision.
    - Authorized adult supervision.
    - Approved team procedures.
  - Ensure that all members of the team, including coaches, mentors, and parents and guardians, are aware of and comply with any public health guidelines or requirements related to communicable conditions that are set by the venue, event organizer, or local authorities.
  - Qualified adults must supervise the use of tools, robots, and equipment at all times. Keep team members safe while working with tools, robots, machinery, and materials. In advance of the event, confirm that qualified adults or volunteers are assigned to oversee the use of tools, machinery, and materials by the teams, as well as the loading in and out of robots and other gear from vehicles outside the facility.
  - Load-in and load-out activities must be supervised and organized to reduce injury risk.

REPORTING MEDICAL INCIDENTS

All medical and physical injuries/illnesses, however, slight, taking place at *FIRST* activities and events must be reported to *FIRST* using the Reporting Portal and select the medical incident form. Reports regarding slips, trips, or falls should include photos of the location where the person was injured, uploaded to the incident report before submission.

Names may be removed if privacy regulations require it.

Reporting is important for risk management purposes and to help make our events as safe as possible. It may also help to protect those responsible for the event, or involved in the incident, should questions arise later regarding the way the incident was handled.

All persons on-site who are responsible for operating the event should be able to recognize threats to safety and be prepared to take prompt remedial action.

Youth Protection concerns should be dealt with as promptly as possible in whatever manner is most appropriate to ensure the safety of everyone at the event. This may involve contacting event security, police, local youth protection authorities, management of the hosting entity, and/or parents and guardians.

Safety concerns may even require shutting down an event (e.g., power outage or health concern). *FIRST* requires that all safety concerns be reported to the party conducting the event and to *FIRST* Headquarters.

EVENT SPECIFIC RISKS

Crowd and Open Environment Risks

- Large events include individuals who are not screened or trained.
- Youth participants may be exposed to unfamiliar adults.

Mitigation:

- ✔ Use visible team identifiers (badges, shirts).
- ✔ Establish meeting points.
- ✔ Maintain supervision in high-traffic areas.

Digital and Social Media at Events

- ✔ Avoid private messaging with youth participants during events.
- ✔ Use team or event communication channels.
- ✔ Do not share location or personal details publicly in real time.

Lost or Missing Youth Protocol

- ✔ Immediately notify event staff and security.
- ✔ Activate event response procedures.
- ✔ Do not delay reporting while searching independently.

REPORTING AT EVENTS

All Youth Protection concerns at events must be reported immediately through:

- Event leadership or designated safety lead.
- *FIRST* Youth Protection channels (Reporting Portal).
- Emergency services when required.

Event staff must not delay reporting while attempting to independently investigate concerns.