RURAL DRIVING SAFETY

Many camping sites and Scout camps are located in rural areas. Driving in rural areas can be as dangerous as urban driving. There are a disproportional number of motor vehicle accidents in rural areas.

There are many factors that contribute to the severity and frequency of these motor vehicle accidents. Some of these factors include:

• fewer safety factors built into the road, such as guardrails, signs, and rumble strips
• distractions and fatigue
• a lack of other vehicles, which may cause excessive speeding
• slow-moving farm equipment and other drivers
• longer times required for emergency responders to reach accidents and travel to medical facilities

When traveling in rural areas, concentrate on factors that can impact driving. The driving conditions can change with terrain differences, day or night driving, and weather changes.

Since rural roads contain fewer built-in safety elements, if driving includes hills and different terrain, slow down and concentrate on the driving conditions. Speed increases braking distance, and there is less time and distance to react to immediate hazards.

Consider the following conditions when driving:

• Wildlife and animals may be in or crossing the road.
• There may be no shoulder to use in an emergency.
• Crossroads or intersections may not be apparent and visible.
• Farm equipment may not be marked with the “slow moving vehicle” triangle sign.
• Entranceways to your destination may not be marked or readily visible.

BE PREPARED. Rural areas have driving conditions and hazards that a person may not be accustomed to. When traveling in rural areas, concentrate on the surroundings and changing conditions that can affect driving in the area.