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Trip Info - Guidelines for Leaders and Participants

The Club organizes and leads regular day trips (usually in the Ottawa-Gatineau area) and weekend trips (usually farther afield). These guidelines can help you understand the Club's procedures and your responsibilities, which differ depending on whether you are a trip leader or participant.

Day Trips

Planning

- The trip leader must have his/her trip approved by the appropriate coordinator
- The leader should assess the level of difficulty and advise the coordinator so the information appears in the newsletter
- The leader should be familiar with the route and, if possible, scout it out in advance
- The leader is recommended to take the following equipment: first aid kit, map & compass, whistle, flash light, space/rescue blanket, plastic garbage bags, paper & pen
- Unless the meeting point is very familiar, the leader should prepare written instructions for drivers with a map if appropriate
- The leader should remind participants that they should inform the trip leader of any serious medical problem they may have and let the leader know about the medication they have with them

Sign-up procedures

1. General Information
 - The leader should arrive at the excursion starting location at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting time designated on the web site
 - The leader should introduce themselves and introduce any newcomers to the group
 - The leaders shall ensure that each participant has filled in and signed the sign-up/waiver form

- The leader shall collect the appropriate [fee](#) [1] from each participant
 - The leader should advise all participants of the general nature of the trip (route, expected duration, level of difficulty, degree of fitness required, etc.) and should remind participants that they should ensure that they have the appropriate equipment, i.e. water, food, clothing appropriate for the season, etc.
 - The leader should recommend to all participants that they should have experience at the previous level before attempting a higher level trip
 - The leader should recommend to any participant who in his/her estimation is not sufficiently fit or adequately equipped that they not participate in the trip or switch to a less demanding trip, if one is available. The leader has the right to refuse to allow participation of anyone whose presence would, in their estimation, be a danger to that individual or to the group as a whole
2. Transportation
- The leader will assess how many cars will be required for transportation; he/she will give all volunteer drivers detailed instructions about how to reach the rendezvous point. He/she will then summon participants and ask them to choose a driver. If any driver is unfamiliar with the route to the rendezvous point, it is a good idea to assign him/her a knowledgeable passenger
 - For canoe trips, all canoe passengers must contribute to the transportation cost even if they choose to drive their cars to the launching point. This is to cover the cost of transporting the canoes
 - The leader will inform passengers of the amount they should pay the driver. Whenever weather permits, it is preferable to conduct the sign-up and allotment of passengers outside the meeting location
 - In those cases where the starting point for the trip is generally unfamiliar or difficult to find, the leader should assign a recognizable collection point and from there lead a convoy to the selected starting point

At the trailhead or trip starting point

- The leader should appoint a sweep and remind participants of general standards of behaviour (keeping in sight of the person or canoe ahead, calling for stops if necessary, waiting at all junctions or designated points, etc.) and of any requirements peculiar to his/her particular trip
- The leader should review the route noting areas that might warrant caution. He/she should also review emergency signals and procedures to be used in the case of separation or accident
- It is particularly important that leaders of bushwhacking hikes or cold weather ski trips impress on participants the need to adhere to all such rules.

Along the route

- The leader should allow periodic pauses to regroup and refresh, taking this opportunity to make a headcount to ensure all are accounted for
- When forks in the trail are encountered, the leader should instruct the person in the lead to wait for the rest of the group in order to ensure that everyone goes the correct way
- The leader should keep an eye on participants for signs of cold, fatigue, or excessive exposure to sun and should remind participants to keep their fluid intake high
- The leader should respond amiably but generally to questions about the group's progress and should refrain from making jokes about being "lost"
- The leader should always be aware of the group's progress in relation to his/her planned itinerary, and wherever possible should have in mind optional routes to shorten the trip should he/she deem this

advisable

Departure point

- The leader should check that all participants have returned and have a ride

Post-trip responsibilities

- When any equipment has been borrowed from the Club, the leader must remain at the place of storage to check that such equipment has been returned and that it is in good condition
- The leader must report to their respective Coordinator about any damage to or loss of Club equipment
- After the trip is over, the leader shall follow the post-trip responsibilities regarding submission of forms and fees [as described here](#) [2]

Overnight and Multi-day Trips

The responsibilities of trip leaders for extended trips are basically the same as for day trips except these trips entail more detailed logistical and financial planning.

Preparation

- Select a location, find out the cost of accommodation/camping for the weekend, then discuss the trip with the appropriate coordinator, normally before the schedule for that season is issued
- When a down payment is required, the trip leader may apply to the Club treasurer for an advance. Executive approval is required for amounts exceeding authorized limits
- Several weeks before your trip, post a sign-up sheet beside your phone. As participants call in to register, remind them of the planning meeting. Use a checklist to inform each registrant of the trip requirements, such as to send you a deposit payable to "OOC", preferences with respect to departure times, planning meeting, whether or not they have a car, etc.
- Inevitably, there will be cancellations, so if there is more interest than spaces available, keep a waiting list. Trip registration is based on a first-to-contact (such as phone or email), first-served basis; however, you may have to give preference to canoe and/or car owners. Trip registration won't begin until after the trip is publicly advertised in the newsletter or on the website. For trips with a long lead time as defined by the coordinator, registration typically won't begin until at least two weeks after first publication. The date of the announcement shall be determined in conjunction with the coordinator. You should also inform participants that they will only retain their space if a deposit is submitted within a period defined by the trip leader, normally within one or two weeks. Deposits are generally non-refundable and are equivalent to the non-refundable cost of accommodation. (Normally, as a leader, you will have to provide a deposit for accommodation - participant's deposit should be equivalent to your deposit divided by the minimum number of participants you feel are needed to make the trip viable.) **The default deposit is \$50 and should be collected from participants for weekend trips, even if there are no expenses to be covered ahead of the trip**
- The trip leader should be prepared to discuss in detail any aspect of the planned trip with any member or non-member who calls to request information prior to registering for the trip. The leader should

remember to emphasize to prospective participants that failure to turn up for a planning meeting may result in cancellation of their registration with no return of the deposit

- The trip leader is responsible for keeping an accurate record of all participants who register and pay the trip deposit

Planning Meeting

- The planning meeting is normally held on the Tuesday evening prior to the weekend activity; however, it may be held at a time and place of the leader's choosing provided this information is clearly indicated in the newsletter or in some manner conveyed to all registrants
- A well thought-out planning meeting is often crucial to the success of any overnight trip. It is, therefore, the prerogative of the trip leader to refuse to allow anyone who does not attend the planning meeting to participate in the trip. The leader, on the other hand, may use his/her own discretion in allowing proxy representation or some other means of conferencing
- The leader should describe the trip. If you advertise different levels of activities, e.g., level 2 and level 3 hikes, make sure you have leaders for each level of hike. If you do not have leaders for certain levels, make sure participants are informed so that they can decide if they still want to go. Planning should not be left to the morning of the trip particularly for large groups
- Remind members that they must ensure that they are physically capable of doing the trip and for bringing the proper equipment. The leader has the right to refuse participation of a member if they are doubtful that the person is capable of doing the trip
- At the planning meeting, the leader should provide each participant with the following information, wherever possible in written form:
 - Driving directions and/or roadmap of route to start point
 - Planned routes for each day's biking, hiking, skiing or canoeing
 - List of recommended clothing and equipment
- The leader should oversee planning of:
 - Carpool arrangements: these can at times become quite complicated with groups leaving at different times. The leader should ensure that he/she has an accurate record of who is traveling in which car and the estimated departure time of each car
 - Group equipment sharing arrangements: the leader should make a written record of who is bringing what equipment, e.g., cooking stoves, tents, pots, etc.
 - Collection of borrowed or rented equipment: immediately following the planning meeting, the leader should advise the Equipment Coordinator of any equipment that will be needed for the trip
 - Food purchase, menus, and meal preparation: although individuals or groups should assume responsibility here, the leader should determine special dietary requirements of any participants and provide advice on cost, portability, and nutritional value of foodstuffs. He/she should remind participants to keep receipts for all purchases. (Note: normally, meals are prepared on a group basis and an attempt is made to take into account special dietary requirements; however, in cases where participants have very limiting dietary requirements, e.g., no dairy products, it may be preferable to have that participant bring their own food.)
- Leaders should remind participants of their obligation to inform the trip leader of any serious medical problem they may have and let the leader know about the medication they have with them
- The leader should have each registered participant fill in the sign-up sheet and waiver form. If the leader has allowed participants to be absent from the planning meeting, it is his/her responsibility to see that such participants sign the waiver form before the trip departs. It is, furthermore, the responsibility of the leader to choose an emergency contact person and notify him/her of the itinerary,

- expected return time, and the participants' names and car license plate numbers
- Ensure all participants sign the trip and waiver form and collect a deposit from each participant if they have not already sent one to you
- Remind participants to bring cash with which to pay any outstanding amounts

The Trip

- Leave word with someone (activity coordinator or a friend/family member) of your expected return and route as well as a list of the participants
- All club equipment used on the trip must be signed out
- Calculate the costs of the trip by obtaining receipts of food expenses, and using the trip expense sheet. Costs are based on shared expenses and are averaged out so that each participant and leader each pays the same amount less expenses and deposit already paid. Car drivers must also pay for their own transportation. It's a good idea to not leave this task to the last minute when you are tired. Take a few minutes by yourself while on the trip to work out costs if possible
- When signing participants up for a trip, you must never guarantee a specific cost. The trip cost must be conveyed as approximate. The forecasted cost must be described as a range based on a) the number of participants who sign up and b) an added 'just in case' contingency charge, the amount of which is at the leader's discretion
- Collect and distribute the necessary amounts from each participant. Do not ask a participant to write a cheque to another participant; a participant may not be comfortable receiving a cheque from a stranger
- If trip costs are greater than forecasted, any deficit must be made good with all participants contributing

Post-trip Responsibilities

- Ensure all borrowed equipment is returned to the place of storage in its proper place. Returned equipment must be checked off on the sign-out sheet. Report any damage or loss to the Equipment Coordinator
- **The trip leader must send a financial statement to the Club Treasurer no later than 7 days after the activity.** (The trip sign-up sheet should have been left for the Treasurer before the trip). This statement will indicate any advance made by the Club, the amount of fees collected from participants, and incidental expenses incurred by all participants. If the Club is owed money, a personal cheque from the leader should accompany this statement
- Although not required, it is recommended that the leader write a trip log assessing and grading the trip and detailing problems, recommendations and highlights

Financial Considerations and other Relevant Policies

- Refer to the financial guidelines section of the [News and Policy Updates](#) [3]

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Links

[1] <http://ottawaoutdoorclub.ca/trip/fees.php>

[2] <https://ottawaoutdoorclub.ca/club/../../content/post-trip-responsibilities>

[3] <http://ottawaoutdoorclub.ca/administration/updates.php>

