

TRIP LEADER CHECKLIST

The intent of this checklist is to provide a well-organized trip for club members, to help minimize risk and make sure participants know what to expect on a MCA trip.

BEFORE the trip

1. Verify that all participants have signed the Release of Liability form. Participants do not have to be MCA members, but they must sign the Release of Liability form.
2. Prepare a trip roster with route description, list of participants, and emergency contact numbers. Make sure that each participant provides the name of a person to contact in case of emergency.
3. Inform participants of potential hazards, discuss the difficulty of the anticipated terrain and review the physical demands of the proposed trip.
4. Inform participants of expected gear and any special equipment that may be required (i.e., ice axe, crampons, etc.).
5. Leave a trip roster with a responsible person that will be able to contact a Hiking and Climbing Committee member (names and telephone numbers are on the sign-up sheet) in case of an emergency or delayed return.

At the Trailhead

1. Set the tone: This trip is for fun. It is a MCA sanctioned outing. The goal may be to hike to a certain destination or climb a mountain. The priorities for a club trip are safety, fun, and achieve the goal, in that order.
2. Take attendance and have everyone introduce themselves.
3. Review the General Rules listed in the Club Sanctioned Trips Policy. Be prepared to disallow a participant if you feel the General Rules are not followed or the individual is not prepared for the trip. For example, if a participant forgot required gear (e.g., helmet or rain gear), the leader is empowered by MCA rules to disallow that person from the outing. One approach to handling this type of situation is to bring that person aside and explain that club rules are designed to provide a safe trip for the entire group. If appropriate, add that this happens once in awhile, and encourage the person to sign up for future MCA trips.
4. Discuss the planned route, anticipated terrain, expected conditions, physical demands and potential hazards. Describe trail, brush, bears, bugs, rock, scree, snow, weather, etc. Also, review the skill level that may be required.
5. Identify who is trained in first aid. Tell the group that if someone gets hurt, the goal of the trip will change immediately to assisting that person. Re-emphasize the priorities of the trip: safety, fun, trip goal.
6. Explain that decisions will generally be based on consensus, but may be authoritarian in emergency situations or at the discretion of the trip leader.
7. Discuss how the group may travel. The leader will facilitate keeping the group together. Techniques

may vary, especially if there is a wide range of capabilities among the participants. Let everyone know common methods used:

a. If a fast and slow group develops, the group may split with co-leaders. Alternatively, the fast group may have to stop at intervals so the other can re-join. The fast group, for example, may have to wait 10 minutes every 30 minutes of travel. Or, the fast group may be limited to never losing sight of at least one member in the slower group.

b. The fast group must stop at all trail intersections.

c. If someone gets lost, the leader should collect the remaining group and develop a plan to find the missing person. The lost person should stay put -- not wander around.

8. Ask if anyone has questions or concerns.

a. Does anyone have to be back by a certain time?

b. Does anyone have any physical concerns (a weak knee, allergies, on medication, etc.) -- see leader after remarks.

c. If anyone feels uncomfortable during the trip, let the leader know.

9. Prior to leaving the trailhead, make sure everyone is 100% ready to go. This helps keep the group together, especially with larger groups.

After the Trip

Contact the Hiking and Climbing Committee to file a brief trip report. The report shall include any injuries, incidents or personnel problems.