



Behavior Standards Policy

Approval Date: October 23, 2025

The Mountaineers is a community of passionate outdoor enthusiasts who welcome all people to share their deep connections to the outdoors. In support of this community, The Mountaineers has adopted this Behavior Standards Policy, as well as The Mountaineers Code of Ethics.

The Mountaineers is committed to maintaining an environment within our organization and during our sponsored activities that is free of any and all forms of harassment, any and all forms of assault, and other problem behavior so that everyone may enjoy our activities in a productive, respectful, safe, and dynamic environment. We strive for The Mountaineers to be a safe place for everyone to learn and explore, both emotionally and physically, and any conduct that is not supportive of that spirit will be subject to review and corrective action.

Problem Behavior

Problem behavior is any action that impacts another individual's safety or enjoyment of any Mountaineers activity and/ or violates The Mountaineers Code of Ethics. Within problem behavior there are specific actions that are particularly serious and will not be tolerated, including:

- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Threats, intimidation, and other forms of assault
- Other forms of harassment
- Retaliation against other members

All problem behavior may be subject to an investigation as outlined within this and other Mountaineers policies. Particularly serious allegations, such as any type of assault and/or other potential criminal violations, may also be referred to law enforcement for investigation.

Discrimination

The Mountaineers does not discriminate in membership or event participation on the basis of race; sex, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, marital status, veteran status, color, sexual orientation, the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability, or on any other basis prohibited by law (e.g. caste discrimination). Discriminatory behavior is prohibited within The Mountaineers.

While The Mountaineers does not specialize in integrating persons with disabilities into our programs, we encourage people of all abilities to consider participating in Mountaineers programming. For more information about requesting assistance and accommodations and/or the use of a service animal or a

trained aid in Mountaineers programs, please refer to our [Essential Eligibility Criteria & Service Animal Policy](#).

The Mountaineers bases its recruitment, promotion, and appointment practices solely on the ability of an individual to perform their volunteer or staff responsibilities in a manner that is safe for themselves and those around them while promoting the mission of The Mountaineers.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

Sexual harassment is a behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome or inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances. Examples of sexual harassment include actions such as:

- Comments or jokes about sex, intimate acts, or private body parts.
- Sex or gender-related name calling.
- Sharing letters, notes, emails, texts, photos/videos online postings or other messages that portray, talk about sex, sexually-suggestive acts and/or private body parts.
- Touching one's own body parts in a sexual way; intentionally exposing one's private body parts.
- Commenting or teasing anyone about their sexuality, sexual development, or gender identity; harassing another for not fitting their idea of social gender norms.
- Blocking another's path so they can't get away from the sexual harassment.
- Unwanted flirtations or showing sexual or physical interest in someone when the person has made clear that the interest is not wanted.
- Asking or requiring a student or activity participant to submit to any form of sexual harassment in exchange for allowing that student/participant to participate in any Mountaineers activity.
- Threats of sexual assault.

Sexual assault is an act in which one intentionally sexually touches another person without that person's consent, or coerces or physically forces a person to engage in a sexual act against their will. Examples of sexual assault include:

- Fondling breasts or genitals
- Touching anyone else's private body parts in a sexual way
- Smacking someone on the butt
- Groping another person in an unwanted and/or sexual way
- Coercing someone to perform sexual acts
- Rape

This list of examples is not considered exhaustive of all potential behaviors that constitute sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Sexual harassment and sexual assault are never acceptable behaviors in The Mountaineers under any circumstances. The Mountaineers policies and practices are intended to help prevent any conduct on the part of any member, volunteer, or participant that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual assault. Sexual harassment and sexual assault are particularly serious prohibited behavior and those who are found to have engaged in this type of behavior are subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion from membership and referral to law enforcement.

Threats, Intimidation, and other Forms of Assault

Assault can be defined as a wrongful act that causes someone to reasonably fear imminent harm. This means that the fear is something a reasonable person would foresee as threatening to them. In the context of Mountaineers activities, threats, intimidation, and other aggressive acts could be characterized as assault if the target of the behavior saw them as threatening and they feared harm.

Examples of other forms of assault include:

- Aggressive physical behavior such as pushing, shoving, slapping, punching, and kicking;
- Getting in someone's face, screaming, spitting, and/or forcefully holding someone;
- Threats of physical harm, whether physical, verbal, or written (e.g. a specific threat of harm in a text message or on social media);
- Brandishing a deadly or non-deadly weapon in a way that suggests the victim may be hit or harmed by it;
- Repeated bullying type behavior that harms the victim or leads them to believe they will be harmed.

Similar to sexual harassment and sexual assault, other forms of assault are never acceptable behaviors in The Mountaineers under any circumstances. Assault in all forms is considered to be a serious violation of our behavior policies. Those who are found to have engaged in any type of assault are subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion from membership and referral to law enforcement.

Other Forms of Harassment

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Epithets;
- Slurs;
- Derogatory comments or jokes;
- Negative stereotyping;
- Any physical interference with the member or volunteer's participation in Mountaineers activities;
- Taunting by offering a thing, then pulling it back;
- Other conduct that the individual might reasonably find to be offensive and which is directed at an individual member, their relatives, friends or associates; and
- Written or graphic material placed on walls, bulletin boards or elsewhere on any Mountaineers premises, in e-mail, text messages, in online forums or circulated in the workplace that denigrates, shows hostility or aversion towards an individual or group for any reason.

The Mountaineers does not tolerate harassment by one member towards another whether the member is a leader, volunteer, director, participant or staff.

Use of Personal Information

Use of personal information provided by The Mountaineers to leaders is limited strictly to use for that activity unless other permission is explicitly provided for non-Mountaineers related contact. For the full Privacy Policy consult The Mountaineers [website](#).

Conduct Outside of Mountaineers Activities

Member interactions outside of Mountaineers activities and/or off of Mountaineers property are generally outside the reach of this Behavior Standards Policy. However, The Mountaineers will not tolerate conduct by a current Mountaineers member that The Mountaineers determines creates a negative impact on The Mountaineers or otherwise creates or furthers a physically or emotionally unsafe environment for Mountaineers members or guests during Mountaineers-sponsored events or activities, or on Mountaineers property. Use of Mountaineers and/or member information for non-Mountaineers purposes is not permitted and would be considered a violation of this policy.

Responsibilities, Reporting, and Investigation

Each member, volunteer, and participant is responsible for supporting and adhering to this policy, cooperating with any investigation as necessary, and conducting themselves in a manner that respects the integrity of The Mountaineers and all members. Members should never tolerate problem behavior. They should make their feelings known to the offending person immediately, whenever possible and safe, and in a direct and constructive manner. In many cases if a member makes their feelings known to offending persons, tells them the conduct is not appropriate, and asks them to stop, this may resolve the situation, and immediate feedback is likely to be the most effective corrective action for changing behavior.

However, if any member is not comfortable doing this, or has tried and the offending behavior has continued, then the member should promptly [report any offending behavior](#), whether such behavior is directed towards them personally or to other members, according to the process outlined below.

Members are strongly encouraged to report concerns before offensive behaviors become severe or pervasive, as The Mountaineers prefers to stop all problem behavior before it escalates to more severe acts like harassment or assault. Group leaders, volunteers, or board members who know or receive reports or complaints of offending behavior must promptly notify staff so action can be taken and an investigation can commence as necessary.

As outlined in the Prohibited Behavior Investigation Policy, staff will provide support to the designated investigator and review committee. Staff may also conduct investigations as appropriate. Anonymous complaints will be logged and an investigation conducted to the extent possible, however it is noted that without the ability to follow up for further detail findings may be inconclusive.

As outlined in the Prohibited Behavior Investigation Policy, the investigation process will be followed and the recommended resolution will be documented and communicated to the parties involved in the

Behavior Complaint. Because we strive for privacy and anonymity, we do not disclose the outcomes of this process beyond the parties involved.

Broadly speaking, outcomes have included things like providing additional support to improve processes within a course or committee, mediated conversations between parties, a temporary or permanent removal of leader status, and, in rare cases, the removal of individuals as Mountaineers members. Individuals involved in a behavior complaint process may appeal a decision if they feel it is warranted.

Expectations of Leaders

Leaders (including instructors) are held to a higher standard of behavior in The Mountaineers because leaders set an example for others. Roles considered “leaders” for purposes of this policy and specific expectations of leaders are defined in The Mountaineers Code of Ethics.

Because leaders are in positions of power and have greater ability to negatively impact the experience of other members, any engagement by them in prohibited behavior is particularly problematic. Violations of our behavior policies by leaders may result in disciplinary action such as suspension of leadership duties or even expulsion from membership, depending on the severity of the behavior.

Retaliation

No action will be taken against any member who in good faith files an incident report, behavior complaint or assists in the investigation of such a complaint, solely because the member filed the report, complaint or assisted in an investigation. Members who believe they have been retaliated against for having reported harassment or participated in an investigation, by any member, must promptly report any concerns about retaliation either to the person(s) who are conducting the investigation, or if the investigation is concluded, the appropriate leader.

Retaliation directed towards any person who has submitted an incident report, behavior complaint, and/or participates or assists in investigations, is prohibited. Members who believe they have been subject to retaliation must report evidence to the person(s) conducting the relevant investigation. Retaliation investigations will occur within forty-five (45) calendar days of submission, and appropriate corrective measures will be taken if the report is substantiated. For additional information consult the [Whistle Blower Policy](#) as adopted by the Board of Directors.

Representation of Non-Mountaineers Activities

It is a violation of this policy for a member, regardless of membership status, to represent a non-Mountaineers activity or event as being one sponsored by The Mountaineers.

Activity and Event Participant Standards

Participants in Mountaineers activities and events, and persons present on Mountaineers premises (collectively “participants”), must comply with standards of personal conduct set forth below. For purposes of this policy the term “Mountaineers premises” shall include all Mountaineers properties, whether leased or owned by The Mountaineers. The term “activity” shall include all Mountaineers events, including courses, trips and social events. The term “participants” shall include members of The Mountaineers and guests. The phrase “could reasonably be expected to” shall be measured by reference to the judgment that would be exercised by a reasonably prudent person in the context of the activity, event, and/or location presented.

Application

1. Participants shall exercise personal responsibility and shall refrain from conduct during Mountaineers activities and on Mountaineers’ premises that could reasonably be expected to impair the safety of the party, individual participants, or the collective participation and enjoyment of others.
2. Participants shall:
 - a. Respect private and public property.
 - b. Obey federal, state, and county, and municipal laws.
 - c. Treat all persons present with respect and comply with The Mountaineers Code of Ethics and this Behavior Standards Policy.
3. Participants shall minimize the environmental impact on the outdoors by practicing Leave No Trace principles.
4. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited during Mountaineers activities and otherwise on Mountaineers premises even if such use is otherwise permitted, when such use, or, the extent of such use, could reasonably be expected to impair the safety of the party or individual participants, or the collective participation and enjoyment of others.
5. No participant, other than a qualified law enforcement officer in compliance with the terms of his or her employment and commission, shall bring a firearm to or possess a firearm during any Mountaineers activity or onto any Mountaineers premises. Such law enforcement officer shall, on occasions other than non-overnight social events, inform the leader of the officer’s possession of any firearms.
6. Except alcohol as permitted elsewhere under this policy, the possession and/or use of non-prescribed drugs other than over-the-counter medications, including cannabis, whether or not permitted by state law, is strictly prohibited during Mountaineers activities and on Mountaineers premises. Over-the-counter medications shall be taken as directed and in a manner that is not reasonably expected to interfere with the member’s safe participation in Mountaineers activities.
7. Pets are not allowed in Mountaineers activities and/or premises without the consent of the leader, except that such advance permission shall not be required for activities specifically listed to include pets, such as “Hikes with Dogs”. The term “pet” under this policy does not include, and this policy shall not apply to, service animals.

Participants shall comply with any additional rules established by board, branch, division, or committee policies or procedures. In the event of a conflict, this policy shall take precedence.