

Best Practices for Participants Requesting Leader's Permission on Mountaineers Climbs

Many Mountaineers trips require “Leader’s Permission” to register. This is not a barrier, it’s a safety and vetting tool used by volunteer leaders to build teams that are capable, prepared, and ready for the specific demands of a climb, scramble, hike, backpack, etc.

Following these steps will increase your chances of being invited and build respect with your volunteer leaders. Learn more here: <https://www.mountaineers.org/blog/what-is-leaders-permission>

1. Read the Trip Listing and Leader Notes Section Carefully

- Always expand the “+More” section of the activity page to read the full **Leader Notes**.
- Look for:
 - Required **skills, fitness, or gear**
 - Whether there is a **specific date or window** when permission requests are accepted
 - The leader’s **preferred contact method** (email, form, Mountaineers message link)
- **Don’t skip this. Many leaders decline requests that ignore clearly stated instructions.**

2. Send a Complete, Specific Request

Use a short, high-impact message that covers exactly what the leader needs to know. Include:

- **Your relevant experience** (e.g., "Completed Ingalls Peak on 6/15, with Seattle branch")
- **Fitness evidence** (e.g., "Mailbox Peak with 3,800’ gain in 2:30 on 4/27, with 30lbs pack")
- **Technical skills** if required (e.g., "Used crampons and axe on Muir snowfield, April")
- **Mentor/leader references** (optional, but helpful)
- Anything else requested in the Leader Notes

Avoid vague terms like “I’m in good shape.” Be concrete.

3. Time It Right

- **Do not send early requests** unless the leader explicitly invites them.
- If a leader states a **specific request window** (e.g., “starting April 10”), respect it.
- Do not click “Request Permission” and register unless you’ve gotten a written OK - **leaders may remove you from the roster without notice.**

[The blog](#) confirms: Leader’s Permission is never assumed, even if you’ve climbed with them before.

4. Be Professional and Polite

- Respect the leader’s time - they may receive dozens of requests.
- Give them time to respond (usually 2–3 days).

- Don't send repeated follow-ups unless more than a week has passed without reply.

Remember: leaders are volunteers offering their time to help others.

5. Handle Waitlists Responsibly

- If you're added to a **waitlist**, treat it like a soft hold. Be ready to go.
- If your plans change, **remove yourself promptly** so someone else can take your spot.
- Don't cancel at the last minute unless truly necessary - this can create stress and chaos for leaders trying to refill open spots and preparations with the team. Also, this may leave a wrong impression leading the leader to perhaps not consider you on their future trips.

6. Sample Request Message

Hi [Leader Name],

I'd like to request permission for the [Climb Name] on [Date]. Here's a few examples of things I have done:

- Completed Ingalls Peak (Basic Rock, 6/15)
- Mailbox Peak (3,800' gain in 2.5 hrs, May 2024 with 30lb pack)
- Confident with ice axe/crampon travel (Muir snowfield in April and Mount Shuksan in June)
- I'm currently in the [2025 Basic Alpine] course with [Leader/Mentor].
- [Answer any other specific asks that may be stated in the leader notes]

Please let me know if you need anything else. Thanks

– [Your Name]

8. Still Have Questions?

- Reach out to **Member Services** if you're having trouble contacting a trip leader
- Talk to your **course leader or other leaders you have closely worked with** to assess your readiness.