



SEATTLE BRANCH HIKING COMMITTEE

Instructions for Mentoring a Hike-Leader Candidate

Mentors - thank you for volunteering your time to mentor a new hike leader! Following are some guidelines for the mentor role and tips for providing constructive feedback.

Overview

The hike leader candidate (“mentee”) is responsible for carrying out all aspects of leading the hike, including selecting and posting the hike, identifying meeting time and location, pre-hike communications, facilitating carpools, pre-hike briefing at the trailhead, managing the hike to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants, ensuring all hikers return to the trailhead and that cars start, and closing the activity. Note that the mentee should post the hike themselves as the primary leader and add you (the mentor) as the co-leader.

Your role is to provide support and guidance to the mentee throughout the process, answer questions, provide assistance as needed, offer advice if sought, and provide feedback to the mentee and the Hiking Committee upon completion of the hike.

Feedback

Feedback is an essential element of the mentor/mentee relationship, but it can often be uncomfortable for both participants. It is useful to have a conversation with your mentee before the hike to agree on how and when feedback will be provided. Some mentees prefer that the mentor wait until the end of the hike to provide feedback; others might prefer to receive feedback during the hike, or upon request (“did I cover everything at the trailhead briefing?”). Regardless of the process agreed upon, the mentee should be made aware that the mentor will speak up if s/he notices a safety concern at any point. When giving feedback, it can be helpful to follow a process such as this:

Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback:

1. **Self-assessment**: Start by asking the mentee what they thought they did well. Then, ask what they would change in future hikes. You can also ask questions such as “what do you want to work on?” or “what did you find challenging or surprising?” to prompt further reflection. It is important to allow this self-reflection before you provide your feedback. The mentee will often mention many of the points you might have observed, while their lack of awareness of other issues will help guide your feedback.
2. **Your assessment**: Begin with what the mentee did well. “I liked how you engaged that hiker who seemed uncertain...”; “your briefing was very clear and thorough.” “You did a good job checking in

with the group and making sure everybody was OK.” Then move on to suggestions on areas for growth or improvement. Tips for providing constructive feedback:

- Describe what you observed, rather than offering your judgment or interpretation of a behavior. Be as specific and concrete as possible: Say, “I noticed that a couple of times when the group was waiting for the 3 slower hikers that you started out again as soon as they arrived. It’s important to allow time for the slower hikers to have a full rest during breaks.” vs “You seemed impatient with the slower hikers.”
- It can be helpful to frame the feedback in terms of something you noticed and seek their perception of the situation: “Some of the group seemed to be dragging in the last mile before lunch, was that something you noticed? That might have been a good time for a break.”
- Offer concrete suggestions regarding elements they might have forgotten: “During the trailhead briefing, it can be helpful to ask the group if anybody has a medical condition they want the entire group to be aware of, such as location of an epi-pen.”

Please complete and save the attached Mentee Assessment form (as mentee_name_evaluation.pdf) after the hike, and submit to the Seattle Hiking Committee (SeattleHikeLeader@gmail.com) after the mentee has closed the activity. It is good practice to share the assessment form with the mentee, but is not required. Please be as thorough and honest as possible in your assessment. Note that there is no expectation that a mentee will score perfectly, and that it is anticipated that every mentee will have "areas for improvement."

Name of Mentee: _____

Mentor: _____

Hike: _____

Date: _____

Please rank each item on the following scale:

1- Needs improvement; 2 – Satisfactory; 3 – Excellent

Please send completed form to: SeattleHikeLeader@gmail.com

Item	Performance of task:			No oppty to assess	Comments
	1	2	3		
Before the Hike					
Hike posting on website: Provided enough information about the hike to enable participant “self-screening” (description of the hike and how it will be led, pace, breaks, etc); meeting time and place, other relevant information					
Pre-trip research and planning: demonstrated knowledge of trailhead location, trail or road closures or re-routes, trail hazards, permits, facilities, weather, gear requirements, water locations, backup plans					
Participant pre-screening: Identified registrants that might not be a good match for the hike; communicated with them appropriately; asked the right questions, persisted to get the answers, made objective decisions, communicated with sensitivity					
Pre-trip Communication: Hello Hikers email was comprehensive and included information about the meeting place and time, suggestions for arranging carpools, description of the hike, weather, any special gear requirements, hazards on the hike, etc.					
At the P&R, Trailhead					
At the Park and Ride: Had a hard copy of roster; facilitated formation of carpools. Ensured everybody had directions to trailhead.					
Trailhead Briefing: Facilitated introductions. Provided instructions on how the hike will be led, including stopping at all intersections and major stream crossings, party separations, route, hazards. Assigned a					

First aid lead and sweep. Roles and expectations clearly defined					
During the hike					
Communication during the hike: clear, timely, friendly communication.					
Management of hike logistics: Effective handling of party separations, breaks, pacing, water crossings, lunch, turnaround times, etc.					
Attentiveness: aware of the group and individuals' possible needs (tired, thirsty, struggling, anxious); sensitive to individual concerns and needs; dealt with issues effectively before they become problems					
Decision-making: Effective, timely decisions where needed, with an emphasis on safety					
Leader skills and knowledge: Skills-knowledge relevant to the trip: first aid, navigation, Leave No Trace, gear, trail etiquette					
After the Hike					
Return to trailhead: ensured all hikers have returned, all cars start before departing					
Closing the activity: properly closed the activity in a timely manner					

Overall assessment (please tick one): If you do not recommend leader status please explain why in the Comments section.

Recommend leader status

Recommend a 2nd mentored hike

Do not recommend leader status

Comments:

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