

Seattle Sea Kayak Committee

Leader Policy

Scope

This document describes the Seattle Sea Kayak Committee leader policy and covers how people become leaders, responsibility, rewards, and removal of leader status.

History

Date	Update
12/21/2020	Significant re-write of policies by Tom Unger, Curt Gelotte, Todd Scheuer, and Linda Cooley
2/8/2021	Accepted as our leadership policy by committee vote.
1/10/2022	Changed some required criteria to suggestions. Specified that votes on candidates must be announced before the meeting Defined "Temporary Leader Status"

Terms

"Leaders List" means the person's mountaineer website profile is on the Seattle Sea Kayaking committee roster and in the "Leaders" group with no expiration date. It is this status that grants that profile permission to post trips on the web site.

"SK Leader Badge" means the person's profile has the SK leader badge assigned to it. This assignment is made automatically by the web site when the profile is added to the leader group, unless "don't assign leader badge" has been checked. The badge is **not** automatically removed when someone is removed from the leader group. We must ask staff to remove the badge.

"Leadership Subcommittee Chair" is the committee member who has been assigned the "Leadership" role. If no one has this assignment, then it is the committee chair.

"Qualifying trip" is a trip, clinic, or field trip on which the leader is the "primary leader", posted according to standard mountaineers procedure, and available for community signup.

Becoming a Leader

It is recommended that the leader Candidate have the following experience or some combination of outdoor activities and Mountaineer trips that provides an equivalent background:

- Have a paddling career that has given them experience paddling in the diverse conditions found in our local waters. For example, 10 trips done over three years
- Have been active with the mountaineers enough to understand the Mountaineer culture and how Mountaineers trips work. For example, 1 year and 4 trips in any activities.
- Join paddles led by Seattle Branch Sea Kayak leaders and paddle with Seattle Sea Kayak committee members.

Paddlers who have the necessary sea kayaking experience, familiarity with how the Mountaineers run trips, and meet the following criteria may request to become leaders through mentoring and assessment.

Necessary Criteria

1. The leader Candidate shall be a graduate of the Mountaineers Sea Kayaking Course or have been granted equivalency for the course.
- 2.
3. The Candidate must have an existing foundation of these skills:
 - a. Group Management
 - b. Boat handling
 - c. Reading weather forecast and developing conditions
 - d. Reading tide predictions and observing actual currents
 - e. Navigation
 - f. Kayak incident management

Mentoring

Mentoring is our primary way of training new leaders. Candidates must lead at least one official mentored trip. Candidates may do as many additional mentored trips as they wish. “Official mentored trips” are done with a mentor leader designated by the Committee who subsequently writes up a report.

The leadership subcommittee shall maintain a list of qualified mentors

Assessment

The Candidate completes the process by leading an assessment trip with an assessor leader designated by the Committee. Between official mentored trips and assessment trip, the Candidate must paddle with at least two different leaders. It is suggested that the assessor be someone other than the last mentor leader.

The leadership subcommittee shall maintain a list of qualified assessors.

Assessment Criteria

The candidate will be evaluated in the following actions of leadership:

1. Judgment to choose appropriate trips for their paddling and leadership skills
2. Trip Planning
 - a. Weather
 - b. Tides and currents
 - c. Route plan
3. Awareness of the paddling environment
4. Risk management
 - a. Aware of risks from the environment and within the group
 - b. Thinking about options should problems be encountered
 - c. Incident management equipment
5. People skills
 - a. Attentiveness to the needs of participants
 - b. Aware of limitations of participants
 - c. Tries to create an enjoyable and physically and emotionally safe outing.
6. Knowledge of Mountaineers trip leadership process
 - a. Creating a posting
 - b. Managing the roster
 - c. Managing an incident during the trip
 - d. Setting trip results
 - e. Closing trips
 - f. Posting a trip report
 - g. Reporting incidents after the trip

All leaders are in the process of learning to be better leaders. Therefore we don't expect a high level of leadership competence at the outset. We are looking for leaders who are unlikely to create hazardous situations and will continue to improve. To summarize our expectations, leaders must:

1. Have the judgment to choose trips within their skill set
2. Have the skills to perform all actions of leadership on the trips they choose

Approval

Mentors and the assessor leaders will submit reports to the leadership subcommittee chair.

The Candidate must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the committee members present at the meeting after the Candidate has successfully completed the assessment trip.

The Leadership Subcommittee Chair will ensure that a vote on the Candidate is included in the meeting agenda and is announced to the committee members at least a week before the meeting a vote is taken.

The Leadership Subcommittee Chair may solicit further feedback about the Candidate's ability to lead trips from the larger community.

Leaders from Other Branches

Leaders from other branches who move to the Seattle Branch may simply be voted on by the Committee, if the committee is satisfied that they meet Sea Kayak leader standards.

External Organization Credentials

The committee may waive or reduce any of the above requirements for leader Candidates holding appropriate sea kayaking credentials established organizations.

Temporary Leader Status

Non-leaders may be given temporary leader status on the web site in order to perform web site tasks related to a volunteer role. Examples are a Leader Candidate who needs it in order to post mentored trips or a class administrator who needs it in order to perform administrative tasks on the web site. Temporary leader status does not grant permission to lead committee sponsored sea kayaking trips (other than mentored trips).

Temporary leader status may be granted by anyone in the committee with “admin” rights and the technical understanding to grant it with the following constraints.

- The leader status must have an expiration date.
- A note should be added who granted leader status and the reason it was granted.
- Leader status must be granted without assigning the Sea Kayak Leader Badge.

Once the expiration date has passed, either the temporary leader status should be removed or it should be extended with a new expiration date and note.

Maintaining Currency

Leaders must maintain their leadership skills by leading a qualifying trip at least every two years and attending a leader update at least every two years.

Leader Update

Leaders may meet the requirement for attending a leader update through one of the following activities:

1. Attend a committee sponsored leader update clinic. (Preferred.)
2. Take a leadership course. The specific course must be approved by the leadership sub-committee chair or the committee chair. Potential topics include trip logistics, risk management, incident management, group management and so on. Instruction in personal kayaking skills or teaching does not apply. Practical, in kayak courses are preferred, but classroom or other activity leadership courses may apply.
3. Lead a qualifying trip accompanied by the leadership sub-committee chair, the committee chair, or a delegate.

Responsibility of Leaders

1. Exercise good judgment in selecting trips and participants.
2. Use your leadership position to create opportunities for other adults to engage in kayaking activities.
3. Maintain your personal kayaking skills, general trip skills, and leadership skills.
4. Lead at least one trip as primary leader every three years.

Reward of Leaders

1. The immeasurable intrinsic reward of creating opportunity for other adults to learn and enjoy.
2. Leaders will experience a growth in their group management skills.
3. The committee may pay a portion of training through a nationally recognized organization
4. From time to time the committee may organize training by professional instructors, offered to trip leaders and active volunteers at a discount.
5. The committee may create a reward system based on past activity or commitment to future activity.

Removal of Leaders

Leaders may be removed for inactivity according to the following process

1. Leaders who have not led a qualifying trip for two years will become “inactive”, removed from the leader list, and notified.
2. An inactive leader can be reinstated on request and at discretion of the leadership subcommittee chair, without further assessment.
3. Leaders who have not led a qualifying trip for three years will be removed from the leader list. They may be reinstated through the process below

Leaders who have not met the leader update currency requirement will be removed from the leader list and notified.

Leaders may also be removed

1. By request from the leader
2. A two-thirds vote of the committee members present at the meeting wherein the nominee’s name is presented for removal with cause.

Leaders who have been removed from the list can be reinstated with

1. Review of their recent kayaking and leadership activity showing that they have retained those skills
2. Leading an assessment trip
3. The committee will review the leader’s recent activity and assessment report. The Candidate must be approved by two-thirds vote of the committee members present at the meeting.

Appendix A: Requirements of other programs

Other committees have roster retention policies, which cover leaders as well as other committee positions:

- [Snowshoe](#): Extensive document with comparison to other committees
- [Hiking](#): Brief policy
- [Backpacking](#): Brief policy