

# New Leader Seminar

---

Tacoma Hiking & Backpacking Committee





# Objectives

Hike and Backpack Leader Certification Requirements for Tacoma Mountaineers

Roles and Objectives of a Leader in the Mountaineers

Learn Leadership Techniques and apply them in scenarios

---



# Hike Leader Certification Requirements

---

- Review the Tacoma Hike Leader Resources page
- 3+ Mountaineers hikes
- Submit Hike Leader Application
- Complete required courses
  - WFA, MOFA or Emergency First Aid
  - Navigation or Staying Found/On-Trail Navigation
- New Hike Leader Seminar
- Successfully lead a mentored hike
- Final approval of Hiking & Backpacking Committee





# Backpack Leader Certification Requirements

---

- Review the Tacoma Hike & Backpack Leader Resources page
- Lead at least two Mountaineer day hikes prior to mentored backpack trip
- Committee leadership will contact you
- Earn Basic Backpacking Skills Badge
- Serve as assistant leader on at least one Tacoma backpack trip
- Successfully lead a mentored backpack trip
- Final approval of Hiking & Backpacking Committee





# Approval from the Committee

---

What we're looking for:

## Technical Skills

- Skills as demonstrated on 3 prior trips
- First-aid, Navigation, 10 Essentials (10 E's)
- Leave No Trace (LNT)
- Mountain Safety: identify & mitigate/avoid common hazards
- Knowledge of The Mountaineers Standards and Land Management Agency Policies

## Soft Skills

- Caring, service-focused, respectful, empathetic, safety-oriented
- Group leadership, trip planning and communication



# Maintaining Hike Leader Certification

---

- Lead at least two hikes for the committee each year.
- Be in adequate physical and mental condition to properly lead each hike scheduled.
- Meet and follow the Minimum Club-wide Standards for Hiking as outlined on the Mountaineers website.





# Maintaining Backpack Leader Certification

---

- Lead at least one day hike and one overnight backpack trip for the committee each year.
- Or, lead two separate overnight backpack trips per year.
- Or, lead one multi-night backpack trip per year.
- Be in adequate physical and mental condition to properly lead each trip scheduled.
- Meet and follow the Minimum Club-wide Standards as outlined on the Mountaineers website.





# Roles and Objectives of a Leader

## Why Lead?

- We need a diverse group of leaders to provide our members with a broad range of activities.
- Leadership is a shift from a focus on individual success to group success.
- Choose your own destinations, hike dates and types-pace of trips.
- Become part of a community – gain new lifelong friends.



# Mountaineers Covid-19 Policies and Guidelines

---

- Check the Mountaineers Covid Response page for updates.
- <https://www.mountaineers.org/membership/the-mountaineers-covid-19-response>
- The Mountaineers have suspended specific guidance for in-person activities.
- Leaders may continue to follow more restrictive COVID-19 precautions, so long as they are not in conflict with our [Member Code of Ethics](#).



# Roles and Objectives of a Leader

## Expectations:

---

- Plan, organize and carry out activities.
- Represent the Mountaineers & leave those you meet feeling great about their experience.
- Accountability for the SAFE RETURN of your group.



# Roles and Objectives of a Leader

## Responsibilities:

- 10 Essentials
- Emphasize critical items in pre-trip communications.
- Bring extras of especially critical items.
- Teach and lead by example.



# Leadership Techniques

## Good Leaders Create Good Participants

- Healthy Communication & Clear Expectation Setting
- Expedition Behavior: Group-Oriented Behavior
- Inclusive Decision Making
- Be engaged with your group



# Leadership Techniques

## Leadership Styles

- Pacesetting – “Here we go! Follow me like this!”
- Authoritative – “I’m the expert and this is what we should do.”
- Coaching – “Try this approach.”
- Democratic – “What do you think we should do?”



# Leadership Techniques

## Conflict Management

---

- Assume good intent
- Be proactive – don't wait until tempers flare
- Be discrete – don't put someone on the spot or humiliate
- Stay calm and manage your emotional state
- Listen to their issue / concern with an open mind
- Reflect their comments back
- If you can accommodate safely, do so



# Leadership Techniques

## Crisis Management

---

- Prevention is the best approach
- Stay calm and keep the group calm
- Crisis Management Cycle
  - Assess the situation
  - Make a plan
  - Implement the Plan
  - Re-assess the situation
- Maintain focus on the big picture
- Keep the group together



# Leadership Techniques

## In Case of Emergency

---

- Be prepared with basic skills and knowledge
- Think through an emergency plan for every trip
- Mountaineers emergency procedures – “Seven Steps”
- Complete incident report when you close your trip



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Definition of a Hike

- More than 2 miles
- Restricted to trail / roads with some exceptions
- Party Size
  - Minimum party size is 3 (safety)
  - Maximum party size is 12 (agency rules)

If posted on the website and led within these rules, The Mountaineers provides you and your participants with liability protection provided you are not grossly negligent.



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Legal Considerations

- Even as volunteers, we have a legal DUTY OF CARE to follow the STANDARD OF PRACTICE in our industry to keep participants safe.
- Volunteers are protected from individual liability by Federal and State statute and The Mountaineers insurance as long as they are not “grossly negligent”.
- Know and follow The Mountaineers guidelines and policies at all times.



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Difficulty Ratings

### Difficulty (Route)

Casual	Up to 4 miles and up to 600 feet of elevation gain round trip.
Easy (E)	Up to 8 miles and up to 1200 feet of elevation gain round trip.
Moderate (M)	Up to 12 miles and up to 2500 feet of elevation gain round trip.
Strenuous (S)	Up to 14 miles and up to 3500 feet of elevation gain round trip.
Very Strenuous (VS)	Over 14 miles or over 3500 feet of elevation gain round trip.

The overall Difficulty Rating for a trip or route shall be the lowest rating that satisfies both the distance and elevation gain criteria. For example: a trip with 11 miles of distance and 1000 ft of gain would be a Moderate trip.

### Leader Rating

Casual	Average pace under 1 mph and no technical challenges or special skills needed.
Easy	Average pace 1-1.5mph and no technical challenges or special skills needed
Moderate	Average pace 1.5-2mph OR an easy route with an overnight pack, or some route challenges (e.g. rough trail, log crossings, steep terrain)
Challenging	Average pace >2mph OR a moderate route with an overnight pack, OR significant route challenges or skills requirements (e.g. fixed ropes, very rugged terrain, steep scree descents, snow or ice crossings; snow camping, bear canister requirement, carrying water to a dry camp)

It is recommended that the leader clearly specify the distance and elevation gain for the route as well as their planned pace, any special technical challenges and special gear, skills and conditioning requirements of the trip in the trip posting within the activity summary and/or the leaders' notes.



# Running a Trip

---

## 2-3 Weeks Before the Trip

- Choose a safe destination
- Post the hike on the website, with clear and concise description of the route
- Include highlights (what will I see?)





# Running a Trip

---

## 3-7 Days Before the Trip

- Check weather forecast, road & trail reports
- Send out “Hello Hiker” email
- Check the roster – screen participants





# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Screening Participants

- Most problems reflect a poor match of capabilities / interests
- Set expectations with hike descriptions and pre-trip communications
- Consider using the “Leader Permission Only” option
- Check a participant’s activity and course history on the website
- When in doubt, contact the participant



# Leadership Techniques

## Roster Management

---

Changes to the roster and wait-list are common and frequent!

- Enable Notify Leader of Registration Changes
  - Check this box for the primary leader to receive an email notification when there are updates to the activity roster.
- Check roster for cancellations and additions a couple of times after you send the “Hello Hiker” email, and always the day before your trip. Print the final list or save to your phone.
- Send the “Hello Hiker” email to anyone who has been added from the wait list and conduct any necessary screening.
- Report no-shows when you complete your trip report and close the activity.



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Carpooling

### Current State

- Carpooling with household members is encouraged. Carpooling with non-household members is up to the participants and their comfort levels.

### Pre/Post Covid

- Leaders CANNOT assign or require carpools
- Leaders CAN encourage carpooling
- Willing drivers are a precious resource
- Remind people that it's an important courtesy to reimburse their driver



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / Privacy

- Mountaineers members can make their profile data private
- Trip leaders can see all the profile data of people on their roster, even private profiles
- See Mountaineers website for Privacy Policy



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / At the Meeting Place

- Arrive at meeting place 10 minutes early
- The “Meeting Place” may be prior to the trailhead or the trailhead
- Provide directions to trailhead and info on the right permits
- Introductions. Introduce yourself as leader, check off names on roster
- Check for essential equipment before people leave their vehicles and switch to carpools



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / At the Trailhead

- Introductions and ice-breaker
- Emphasize that Mountaineers travel as a group
  - Leader reserves the right to make the call for safety
- Review the map
- Encourage open, respectful communication of safety concerns
- Ask for volunteers to be first-aid leader and sweep
- Address the procedure for bathroom breaks (“party separations”)
- Safety first! The group will turn around if the conditions are unsafe



# Leadership Techniques

## Running a Trip / During the Trip

- Manage the pace for the safety and morale of everyone in the group.
- Stay vigilant for participant, weather or route issues.
- Stop and help struggling participants.
- Lead for the whole group's success!
- If the conditions change, find a safer alternative or turn around.
- Don't be afraid to make an unpopular call if YOU believe it's important for the safety of the group.



# Leader Checklists

---

Review the Leader Checklists on the Leader Resources page.

- Before the hike
- At the meeting place
- At the trailhead
- On the trail
- In case of emergency
- After the trip





# Leadership Techniques

## Scenarios

---

- Injuries or trip problems often result from system failures or leader decisions that can be examined to prevent recurrence.
- Discussion groups with facilitator
- Discuss your scenarios, choose one to report out to group.
- Listen and consider taking notes from other groups' report outs.



# Wrap Up

## Leading Trips With Youth or Pets

- Hikes with Youth:
  - Special requirements for leaders for anyone under 18
- Hikes with Dogs:
  - Establish in advance in trip posting
  - Follow posted trail rules
  - No dogs in active wildlife areas
  - Be sensitive to dogs in camps with other people
  - Party size is twelve heartbeats.





# Wrap Up

## Leading in General

---

- Leaders must be approved on the leader roster to post and lead a trip
  - You can lead for any Mountaineers branch, regardless of your 'home branch'
  - Choose the committee you feel works best for you
- Backpack leading has special requirements and steps for earning Backpacking Skill Badge
- You can request additional mentoring or post trips with a co-leader at any time



# Questions?

---