

Mountaineers Adventure Club

2015-2016 Handbook

For Youth Members, Parents and Volunteers



Code of Conduct

Mountaineers activities are “Challenge-by-choice.” Each member has the opportunity to challenge themselves in new ways, learn new skills, and try new things. Recognizing that we all have areas of comfort and discomfort, members are encouraged to challenge themselves in a way that is appropriate for them. We all have different skills to offer, and we have a responsibility to provide a supportive learning environment for one another.

Maintain a safe and respectful environment. MAC members are expected to be intentionally inclusive of others, respect those talking and/or teaching, and refrain from inappropriate discussions and profanity. Be present in meetings (no texting), take responsibility for making safe decisions outdoors, and make an effort to get to know all members.

Be an active participant. Members are expected to attend as many meetings as possible, stay connected through email or Facebook, and participate in MAC events as well as outings.

Volunteer your time. Members are expected to pass on their skills and experiences with others, in the Mountaineers tradition. Teaching skills helps you hone and refresh the skills you have, and pays forward the instruction you received from another volunteer.

Participant Commitment

MAC is a year-round program that is not only skills-intensive, but also relies on the community formed among the members to be successful. *To get the most out of this program, participants and parents should plan ahead for MAC trips and meetings, which are typically listed on the MAC calendar months in advance.* Advisors, officers and trip leaders put significant effort into organizing fun and safe events. To ensure the greatest opportunity for success, participants must make a commitment to the program. If that commitment is not fulfilled, a participants' continued membership with MAC may be terminated or suspended for the remainder of the year.

Meeting Attendance – MAC members are expected to attend 2/3 of MAC meetings (12 meetings/year). Members should not miss more than 4 meetings.

Communication – MAC members are expected to take responsibility for communicating with the rest of the group, the advisors, and MAC officers. Whether by email or facebook, MAC members are responsible for checking the website frequently, and communicating with everyone else about what their plans are.

Trip Attendance – Trip attendance is not required. However, participants *must* sign up in advance (by the date stated by the trip leader) for a trip in which they choose to participate. Last minute cancelations are generally unacceptable, though we understand things come up and people get sick. Canceling after sign-up has closed on more than 2 trips will put a participant's membership at risk.

Skills Attendance – Most skills sessions are offered twice a year and cannot be made up during other times. Members who have completed skills are expected to help teach at least two skills sessions a year (encouraged to help teach one session for each skill for a personal refresher).

Leadership – 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th year members are expected to co-lead at least one outing a year. Those interested in being on leadership must have led at least 2 trips.

Responsibility – Mountaineers Adventure Club relies on the same volunteers who teach our adult students to teach us the skills we need to get outside. MAC members are expected to *exceed* volunteer expectations by showing a higher level of responsibility than many adult students would. This means: being packed and prepared and ready to go *before* its time to go, waking up with plenty of time to be ready early and being extra thorough in preparation. All MAC members should strive to be self-sufficient so that they can help others.

Community – Above all, Mountaineers Adventure Club is a community of young people who love the outdoors. Many members of MAC refer to it as their "second family". With more than 30 members, each person inherently finds folks they connect with more than others, and there is plenty of down time on our trips and before and after meetings to catch up with those people. We also expect all of our members to contribute to and be a part of our whole community. This means getting to know members you may not know as well, being a part of the group during campfires, meetings, etc..., and offering to help others if needed.

Parent/Sponsoring Adult Commitment

MAC is a program that is run almost entirely by the youth participants, with the support of adult advisors and parents. Youth have opportunities to learn life-long leadership skills. When a participant takes on a leadership role (even just leading a day trip), the rest of the participants rely on that leader to coordinate the trip. We rely on parents to help ensure the youth leader is fulfilling his/her commitment.

MAC Handbook – Parents are expected to read and understand the MAC Handbook, and support and encourage your participant's commitment and participation.

Communications – While we expect MAC participants to be the first point of contact for officers and advisors, we need parents to be involved and know what's going on with the program. Parents are expected to make sure frequent communication with advisors happens on behalf of their youth participant(s). Parents are encouraged to check the website frequently, share in email communications, and/or join the facebook page.

Chaperone/Driver – We understand that every family has different commitments and ability to help with MAC. While chaperoning and driving is not a requirement, we could not run outings without parent drivers. We encourage parents to review the schedule and sign up to help with driving and chaperoning as much as possible.

Leadership Support – Parents are expected to provide extra support when their youth participant is a trip leader. Parents should ensure that their child is fulfilling their commitment as a trip leader including trip planning, communications with the advisors and co-leader, and communications with the rest of the group.

How it all works

Calendar and Registration

The MAC calendar follows the school year calendar – September through August. New and prospective members are encouraged to attend the September kick-off weekend as guests. Program Registration is available only in September and January each year. Existing members are asked to renew their membership dues in September in order to continue with the program.

Age Restrictions

Mountaineers Adventure Club is for youth ages 14-18. In order to participate, youth must turn 14 by January of the school year in which they join. Youth are welcome to stay in the program until they turn 18 or graduate High School, whichever comes later. Youth who are too young to join are encouraged to join our Explorers program – a year-round program for youth ages 10-13. Youth who have graduated from High School can transition to our MAC alumni program and/or join our adult Mountaineers programs.

Fees

MAC membership is \$185 the first month, and \$85 each month thereafter. No dues will be collected in the month of September. Participants must enroll online. Payment is due by the 5th of each month. Because MAC is a year-round program, Participants can *only* enroll in September and January. If membership is dropped for failure to pay dues, participants cannot re-enroll until the next enrollment period.

Supervision and Guidance

Mountaineers Adventure Club is a community of young outdoor enthusiasts who come from many schools and towns in Western Washington. The program has a heavy focus on outdoor skills and leadership as well as building a community of outdoor adventure partners. While we closely monitor and train all technical skills to ensure the highest level of safety, we allow youth participants some freedom during down time to relax and spend quality time with one another. We believe that freedom is earned by teenagers who have demonstrated leadership and responsibility, and that unstructured time is a key part of community-building. During down time, youth may explore the area in groups of 3-6. Some examples are: going on a walk along a trail before dinner, riding bikes into town, going to a nearby field to play Frisbee. In all of these cases, youth are required to tell the adult leaders exactly where they plan to go, and not change that plan. Youth must return at the time specified by the adult leader(s). Youth who have responsibilities (such as cooking) are responsible for showing up on time. Youth who do not abide by these rules may forfeit future opportunities for unsupervised down time.

Carpooling

All MAC meetings happen at The Mountaineers Seattle Program Center, and all trips leave from there as well. Our members come from as far north as Bellingham, as far south as Tacoma, and as far east as Sammamish. While we do not arrange transportation for youth to and from the Mountaineers Program Center (or other designated meeting place), we do encourage carpooling. When you register, we will ask you to fill out a carpooling form. We will keep an updated list of members, towns/neighborhoods and contact information on a document viewable only by current MAC members. We encourage families to carpool to and from meetings and trips.

Trip Communication and Registration

All MAC trips will be posted online as activities within the Mountaineers Adventure Club. Trips will be posted with an allotted number of slots for youth as well as volunteers. Each trip will include a trip sheet, created by the youth leader(s) of the trip. A draft trip sheet will be posted online when registration opens, and a final trip sheet will be posted online when registration closes. Youth trip leaders will discuss upcoming trips at the meeting preceding the trip, and often in prior meetings as well. Trip information will be available on our Facebook page and on The Mountaineers website. Final trip sheets will be posted to The Mountaineers website. Families are expected to check these sources often, and youth members are expected to attend MAC meetings to stay apprised of upcoming trips.

Note: Trip sheets will list departure time and *approximate* return time. Because every trip has many variables (such as weather, traffic, etc), we list a target return time, and notify parents when we have a better estimate of our exact return time. Typically, youth call parents when we are approximately 1 hour away from Seattle. If we predict that we will be *much earlier* or *much later* than listed on the trip sheet, we will do our best to have youth call further in advance.

Trip Transportation

We rely on chaperones to drive youth to and from our trips. All of our trips begin and end at The Mountaineers Seattle Program Center. While this poses an inconvenience for some families who live *on the way* to wherever the trip is, it's very important that all participants help with the shared responsibilities of packing up gear before the trip and putting away gear at the end of the trip. Therefore, with few exceptions, we do not typically allow for carpool pick-ups or drop-offs at locations other than the Seattle Program Center.

Electronics

Cell phones, music and video games are typically not a part of the Mountaineers Adventure Club program. They detract from the wilderness experience and from the community. Youth are encouraged to leave all electronics out of sight (or at home) during Mountaineers programs. Youth who choose to use cell phones for pictures or music to fall asleep to may do so as long as it creates no disruption of the wilderness experience for others. During meetings, cell phones may only be used for calendars and other meeting-related needs. The Mountaineers is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronics.

Weapons

Weapons, which includes knives with blades longer than 3", are never permitted on any Mountaineers Adventure Club activity. Youth who are found with weapons will have the weapon confiscated by Mountaineers Staff and will be dismissed from the program without refund. Youth dismissed from the program for possession of a weapon may return the following year on a probationary basis.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Drugs (including marijuana), alcohol and tobacco are never permitted on any Mountaineers Adventure Club Activity. Youth who have or are under the influence of these will be sent home immediately and dismissed from the program without refund. Youth dismissed from the program for possession of drugs, alcohol or tobacco may return the following year on a probationary basis.

Medication

Medication prescribed by a licensed medical professional must be reported to The Mountaineers using the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form. This information will be shared with chaperones who are leading any trip that the youth is participating in. If the doctor does *not* authorize the youth to self-administer, the medication will be kept with adult chaperones, who will

administer the medication according to the doctor's orders. All controlled medication and medication requiring hypodermic needle administration (with the exception of epipens) must be stored with Mountaineers Staff or designated volunteer leaders. All medication must be current and kept in its original bottle.

Over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antacids or topical antibiotics may be kept by youth participants in their personal first aid kits. These medications should be listed on the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form and kept in a clearly marked container with expiration date.

Mountaineers staff and volunteers may carry over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antihistamine, antacids or topical antibiotics. Staff and volunteer leaders may provide these medications to youth as needed unless otherwise indicated on the youth's health form. All medication administration will be recorded in a notebook in the first aid kit.

Medical Clearance

Mountaineers Adventure Club members spend a lot of time in remote areas and on technical terrain, where group safety is paramount. In some instances, Mountaineers Staff may require medical clearance and/or instructions from a licensed medical professional in order for a youth to participate in the program. Examples include but are not limited to: injuries, surgery, eating disorders, psychological & nervous disorders, developmental disorders, heart conditions, diabetes. Mountaineers Staff will disclose this information only to the people who need to have it in order to maintain a safe environment. In some cases, Mountaineers Staff may, at their discretion, forbid participation on a trip if they feel the circumstances of the trip make it too difficult to safely manage the participant's medical needs or limitations.

Sample Yearly Calendar

Below is an example of the types of activities we do during a year. Because this program is youth-led, our calendar changes annually based on participant interests. All youth are encouraged to lead a trip to a destination of their choosing. The sky is the limit!

September – Fall Kick-off weekend at Leavenworth; belay and rappel skills sessions

October – Climbing day trip to Vantage or Exit 38

November – Overnight camping trip

December – no outing – holiday party

January – XC Ski Day Trip, Wilderness First Aid, skills days

February – Snow Cave overnight, Backcountry Ski Trip; belay escape/rappel skills sessions

March – Climbing day trip, hikes; prusiking skills sessions

April – Overnight hiking trip, Alpine Scramble; crevasse rescue and snow travel skills sessions

May – Overnight backpacking trip; snow overnight

June – Early season alpine climbs and scrambles, Climbing and Rafting trip in Leavenworth; cleaning and re-racking skills sessions; catching lead falls skills sessions

July – 5-day backpack trip, 7-day car camping trip, Alpine Scrambles & Climbs

August – Alpine climbs, single-day cragging trips and hiking trips; end-of-year picnic

2015-2016 Leadership Roles

President – runs the meetings; sits on Climbing Committee; helps trip leaders ensure transportation, scheduling and volunteer needs are met; works closely with vice presidents to ensure programs and offerings for all members; coordinates end-of-summer picnic

Vice-President of Membership & Activities – provides orientation to new members, including facilitating introductions at meetings; ensures there is at least one non-pre-requisite outing each month; checks in with members who haven't been active to keep them engaged

Vice-President of Skills and Advanced Programs – keeps track of skills sheet on the website; plans climbs (crag and alpine); sits on climbing committee; ensures skill-building opportunities are planned; recruits climb leaders & assistants; ensures members sign up for climbs that meet their ability

Conservation Officer – ensures that our members participate in stewardship and conservation activities throughout the year. Schedules stewardship projects, facilitates conversations at meetings about conservation and stewardship interests.

Webmaster – updates the website with photos, trip sheets, and other information; connects members to Facebook page; assembles yearbook

Treasurer – coordinates any MAC fundraising activities or events; works with the MAC President to identify where any funds raised are needed; works with the Development team to help track MAC accomplishments or stories that might be helpful for grants, fundraising, or creating donor interest.

Master Packing List

A general outline of gear you'll need for a variety of trips. Always consult the Trip Sheet for your specific outing to make sure you have all of the necessary gear.

11 Essentials

- Food (plus extra just in case)
- Water (plus extra just in case)
- Extra clothes
- Shelter (emergency blanket)
- First Aid Kit
- Sunscreen, SPF lip balm & Sunglasses
- Map & Compass
- Repair kit (pocketknife, duct tape)
- Firestarter
- Headlamp/flashlight x2 (or one plus extra batteries)
- Whistle

Day Trips

- Lunch
- Water bottles
- Day Pack
- Hiking boots
- Toilet paper/WAG bag

Camping

- Breakfast/dinner food
- Stove & fuel
- Kitchen gear
- Mess kit
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Tent (with rain fly, ground cloth, stakes)
- Tarps
- Camp Shoes
- Toiletries

Winter

- Skis, poles, ski boots
- Snowshoes

Clothes

- Underwear
- Long underwear (top & bottom)
- Zipoffs/athletic pants
- T-shirts (non-cotton)
- RAIN GEAR- always
- Fleece/softshell pants
- Fleece/softshell/down heavy coat
- Liner socks
- Wool or fleece outer socks
- Warm hat
- Gloves
- Neck Gaiter/scarf
- Sun Hat
- Gaiters
- Bandanna/handkerchief

Backpacking

- Water filter/iodine tablets
- Bearproof food containers or rope & bags for food hangs
- Overnight backpack
- Pack rain cover
- Trekking poles

Rock Climbing

- Helmet
- Harness
- Rock Shoes
- Belay Device
- Carabiners (locking)
- Personal Anchor
- Webbing/runners
- Belay gloves
- Large Day Pack (that can hold your stuff plus a rope)

Glacier/Snow

- Ice Axe
- Crampons
- Mountaineering boots/waterproof boots
- Harness
- Helmet
- Prusiks
- Hero Loop
- Rescue Pulley
- Runners (unsewn)
- Chest Harness
- Blue bag/WAG bag

Miscellaneous

- Camera
- Book
- Playing cards/other games
- Swimsuit
- Bug repellent
- Watch
- Cell Phone
- Hand Warmers
- Money for food
- Clean Clothes for the car ride

Trip Leadership in 8 Steps

Step 1: Choose an activity (hiking, climbing, car camping, kayaking, skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking, mountain biking, paddle-boarding, rafting, etc)

Step 2: Choose a date (should be at least one month from now). As a trip leader, you should choose a date that works for you and your family. It's a good idea to pick two dates that work so you have a back-up if no chaperones are available or if the place you want to go to is booked on one of the dates.

Step 3: Choose a location. If location is most important to you, you could choose the location first, then choose the date that works for that location.

Step 4: Determine what the maximum number of youth participants and chaperones is. This might be dictated by land managers (USFS party size is 12), or by the number a volunteer leader has given you (climb leaders dictate their maximum number on a climb), or by campsite capacity, as examples. For day trips, we need a 1:4 adult:youth ratio so we can ensure enough drivers. Overall, we need 1:6. So, for example, a hike on USFS land would have a maximum of 9 youth and 3 chaperones

Step 5: Email all of the above information to emilyc@mountaineers.org at *least* 10 days before the outing (sooner is much better). Emily will email you as soon as the trip is posted online for registration.

Step 6: Create a Trip Sheet and email it to the Webmaster *before* the meeting that precedes your outing (see blank trip sheet). The Webmaster will email you as soon as the Trip Sheet has been uploaded to the website.

Step 7: Register yourself, and send a link to your Trip Sheet and to the online registration to the Club via *both* the Facebook page *and* email.

Step 8: Determine what information needs to be reviewed at the meeting preceding the outing, and contact the President to get on the agenda. This can include skills training, gear check and logistics discussions.

Resources for Trip Planning

Vice Presidents – The Vice Presidents are here to help. They have experience with leading MAC trips and can help you work through road blocks. The Vice President of Membership & Activities is there to provide support for all trip leaders who are leading a non-pre-requisite trip. The Vice President of Climbing and Advanced Programs is there to support the more skills-intensive outings and field trips.

Advisors – that's what we're here for. If you need help choosing a location, finding volunteer chaperones, or figuring out a good schedule, check in with one of the advisors for help.

Useful Websites:

www.wta.org – to find trails you'd like to explore

www.recreation.gov – to find and reserve campgrounds.

www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/state_list.shtml (scroll down to Washington) - to find campgrounds in Forest Service Land that do not take reservations (includes campgrounds like Klipchuck and Lone Pine in the North Cascades) These are first-come first served campgrounds but are often a great choice.

www.maps.google.com – to calculate round trip distance

The Mountaineers Book Store – there are lots of books you can browse through to find what you're looking for. Go to www.mountaineersbooks.org to find something that might be useful. Your advisors can help you access the book you need.

Trip Sheet Guide

Trip name

Trip Leader

Purpose: What are you going to do/learn on this trip? Is it a prerequisite for other trips? Include a “sales pitch” here. Why would people want to come on this trip? How can you convince people who’ve never done this activity to come?

Chaperones/drivers: Which advisors are coming on this trip? Are other adults welcome?

MAC members: Who is this trip open to? Are there prerequisites? Is there a limit on how many can come?

Tentative schedule: Include the date of the trip

- When and where are you meeting in the morning?
- Plan on some time to gather gear and divide it into car loads, so don’t plan on leaving right when people show up
- Estimate the driving time—when will we get to the trailhead?
- Estimate a time for leaving that gives us enough time to drive home (stopping for dinner?) and still get home by a decent hour

Driving directions: for the chaperones. Google maps works okay, but try to look up the destination in guidebooks if it’s something past the main roads (Google maps doesn’t do very well on Forest Service roads and the like). Is there a parking fee or pass required?

Trip cost: most trips are included in monthly dues. Not included are extra accommodations (hostels, hotels), guide services (like raft guides) or equipment rentals. Those you would need to list the price for, and it would make for an additional fee for the trip.

Gear to bring: You don’t have to list every specific thing on here, go with general categories. Also make a note if The Mountaineers can supply gear (like harnesses and helmets) if people don’t have them. Remember group gear—make sure you know how many tents/stoves/etc you’ll need and who can bring them. Use the master packing list on the website to help you think of everything. Think about:

- Clothes—warm clothes? Rain gear?
- Shoes—hiking boots? Rock shoes?
- Technical equipment—rock climbing gear? Other gear?
- Food—which meals are bring-your-own and which are group meals?
- Money for dinner if you’re stopping on the way back, and how much (estimate)

Notes: Anything else special about the trip? This might include chaperone fees. Normally, chaperones don’t pay for outings. However, if there are certain per-person expenses (i.e. raft guide services or overnight accommodations like cabins), or if food costs will be especially high, chaperones may have expenses to pay. You can also note if this is designed as a skill-building trip or simply a fun outing

Expectations for Alpine Climbs

For many MAC members, Alpine Climbs are a significant goal while in the program. Whether training towards a summit of Rainier or simply climbing for the enjoyment of getting to incredible places, alpine climbs can be a fun and rewarding experience. Mountaineering is also serious business, and it is extremely important that all climbers are prepared physically, mentally, emotionally and technically. MAC members who participate in alpine climbs are expected to take responsibility for themselves and for the other members of their team.

Every alpine climb is different. Some are more strenuous than others, some have a higher level of technical difficulty than others, some have more exposure and may feel scarier than others, some have more rock, some have more snow. When a climb leader volunteers to lead a climb, MAC staff have a discussion with that volunteer to understand all aspects of the climb, including the speed with which the climb leader hopes to climb. MAC staff then consider the skills, strength, stamina and interests of each member and extend invitations to members to join the climb. Our goal is to assemble the best team possible that will have the greatest likelihood for success *and* to provide opportunities for each member that are appropriate for their skill level and interests.

It is *very important* that MAC members attend as many skills sessions during the year as possible. Each climb requires a different combination of skills, and MAC staff will not allow students to participate in a climb for which they are not prepared.

Be Prepared

All climbers **must have** the proper gear. Check with the leader if you are not sure whether you need a certain type of gear. Almost all gear can be borrowed with notice. You will most likely need gear from multiple categories below:

- 10 Essentials plus two (every climber must have these – no exceptions)
 - Headlamp and spare headlamp (or at least spare batteries).
 - Map of the climb, route description, compass.
 - Water (who is bringing a water filter? Do you need one?)
 - Food
 - Fire Starter
 - First Aid Kit with a copy of your health form inside
 - Repair Kit (knife, duct tape, cord...)
 - Emergency blanket
 - Extra clothing
 - Sunglasses & Sunscreen
 - Whistle
 - WAG bag
- Overnight gear (check the weather, see master packing list)
- Snow Travel Gear (check with climb leader about each of these)
 - Ice Ax
 - Crampons
 - Snowshoes
 - Helmet

- Harness
- Waterproof layers
- Gloves
- Snow Stakes if snow camping
- Multipitch Rock Gear (check with climb leader about each of these)
 - Harness
 - Helmet
 - Belay Device
 - 4 Extra Locking Carabiners
 - Personal Anchor
 - Chock Pick/Nut Tool
 - Rock Shoes
 - Tape Gloves
 - Belay gloves
 - Short and long runners
 - Hero Loop
- Glacier Gear (check with climb leader about each of these)
 - Harness
 - Helmet
 - Ice Ax
 - Crampons
 - 6 locking carabiners
 - Short and long runners
 - Rescue pulley
 - Texas Prusiks
 - Hero Loop

On the Climb

Whether camping at the trailhead the night before, camping on the mountain, or meeting early in the morning, all MAC members are expected to exceed climb leaders' expectations. Climbs are hard, and don't always go as planned, and that's okay. The best thing we can do to ensure a climb's success is be as prepared as possible, ready to help others, so the climb has the greatest chance at success. This means:

- Be early, always.
 - Be the ready to go before its time to go
 - On glacier climbs, be the first team to be roped up and ready to go
 - Pack as much as you can the night before so you aren't fumbling in the dark in the morning
- Pack your gear thoughtfully
 - Think about what you'll use and when.
 - Use stuff sacks to organize
 - Avoid the "yard sale" as much as possible
- Think ahead, take care of yourself
 - Stay hydrated and fed
 - Tape your heels, put wraps and braces on carefully and correctly

- Keep your stuff dry
- Keep your food critter-proof
- Speak up when you need something
 - Don't wait until you have blisters. If you have a hot spot, stop and fix it.
 - If you need a water break, speak up.
 - Don't ride things out until they are unbearable – you won't recover. Stay on top of your needs.
- Speak up when something doesn't seem right
 - If someone's slowing down, stop and suggest that they snack
 - If someone's looking red – ask them to put on sunscreen
 - If you see lightening, say something
 - If something feels unsafe, *ask the climb leader why* you are doing what you are doing.

After the Climb

We want to hear how it went, and first and foremost we want to know that it went safely! Please text the MAC staff as soon as you have service so we know all is well. At the next meeting, we'll ask you to share what it was like, what went well, and what you learned. Every alpine climb is full of lessons, and we want the group to benefit from what you've learned.

Post pictures on Facebook or send them to the MAC staff!

Please send a special thank-you to the climb leader. Leading an alpine climb is a serious undertaking. Leading *someone else's kids* on an alpine climb is a huge responsibility that not all climb leaders are willing to take on. We are extremely lucky to have such wonderful climb leaders and instructors who are willing to take young Mountaineers into the mountains, and we need to be sure they know how grateful we are.

Volunteers

The Mountaineers Adventure Club relies on volunteers to provide our youth participants with the best possible mentorship to help them develop technical skills, leadership skills and competence in the outdoors. All volunteers play a vital role in the success of our program. THANK YOU for volunteering!

Food

During day trips, please bring your own lunch. During overnight trips, we will feed you breakfast and dinner. Please bring your own lunch.

Camping

We welcome volunteers to join us at our campsite! You are welcome to hang with the kids, spend time with the other adult volunteers, or hang out by yourself.

Dogs

There are some MAC trips where volunteers' dogs are okay to come and others where dogs are not appropriate for a variety of reasons. If you wish/need to bring your dog, please check with the MAC staff first.

Things to Know

We have a strict "no drugs, alcohol or tobacco" policy that we ask all volunteers to adhere to while you're volunteering. This includes at the campsite.

Please use appropriate language and keep comments and stories "PG", even if you are only talking to other adult volunteers. We are committed to a diverse and inclusive program. This means that we welcome participants and volunteers of all backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnicities, vocations, family models and lifestyles. We ask that volunteers, including parents, acknowledge this diversity and refrain from conversations that may be perceived as offensive or judgmental to others.

Qualified Youth Leader

All MAC volunteers must be Qualified Youth Leaders. To do this, contact info@mountaineers.org. You will receive an email with a docuSign form that includes acknowledgment of the Youth Manual as well as permission for a background check. Once you have completed that form, you'll receive an email from TalentWise that walks you through the background check. It's a simple process. Below are some pieces of our youth policies manual that are particularly relevant to MAC. While our Qualified Youth Leaders need to be familiar with the entire Youth Manual, MAC volunteers should be especially familiar with the policies and procedures below

A note about the use of photos

We encourage you to take photos on your programs, and share those photos with the program participants and Mountaineers Staff. Many of our programs have facebook groups, which are private groups where participants interact and share photos. A Flickr or Shutterfly album are also great ways to share photos.

Because some families prefer not to have photos of their children publicly available, and because some of the youth in our programs come from unstable home situations, we need to be sensitive about not posting photos

in public forums. It's important that photos ONLY be shared with the group participants and Mountaineers Staff. Mountaineers Staff will only use photos of youth whose parents have granted permission to use their photos.

Forms and Paperwork

Every MAC Youth must have on file our standard Health and Permission to Treat Form, as well as any pertinent medication authorization forms (including permission to apply sunscreen). Other forms we require for MAC members include:

- Health and Permission to Treat Form – parents give basic medical history for their child, including red flags and allergies, and sign a statement granting health care providers permission to treat the child in an emergency even if we cannot reach the parents. **It is important that this form is quickly accessible to hand to a medical professional should an accident or injury occur.**
- Youth Programs Waiver, including photo release.
- Drop-off & Pick-up Form – parents can opt to allow their child to leave with any adult (or transport themselves – walk home, take the bus, etc), or they can designate specific people who are authorized to pick up their child at the end of a program. If the parent requests that we monitor who the participant leaves with, Mountaineers staff and volunteers must ensure (and may check ID) that we release MAC participants only to those people designated on the child's drop-off & pick-up form.
- Drivers for Trips form – On this form, parents acknowledge that we facilitate carpools to trailheads or other program locations. Parents can choose to allow their child to ride with any volunteer or staff member, or they can choose to list drivers their child may not ride with, or they may choose to list an exclusive list of drivers that their child can ride with. Mountaineers staff and volunteers must ensure that we abide by these requests.
- Special Circumstances – parents list any confidential circumstances or needs their child has. Parents also specifically designate who this information may be disclosed to, and it is critical that our staff and volunteers honor those requests.
- Disaster Preparedness Form – parents list an out of state contact and any medical circumstances we may need to know in the event that we must care for their child for an extended period of time due to a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

It is important that MAC leaders have read the forms submitted by the parents and file them in a way that they are accessible. The blank forms can be found at www.mountaineers.org/MACforms

Health History & Medications

All participants must have on file a medical history current within two years.

Program leaders must have a "permission to treat" form for each participant, signed by the participant's parent/guardian, with them or accessible on site.

Youth prescription medications must be discussed with the program leaders and accompanied with Doctor's orders. It is imperative that program leaders know what medications are present, what the appropriate dosage is, and the effects of not taking the medication, the effects of overdose and the potential side effects

of the medication. If the participant self-administers the medication, we must have written permission from the parent.

Controlled medications (federally listed controlled substances which includes any potentially addictive substance such as codeine, oxycodone, Adderol, Ritalin, Xanax, Ativan and others) and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Time and dosage must be logged.

Hypodermic needles that are required for medical administration and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with Mountaineers adult staff or volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by Mountaineers staff or volunteers. Exception: EpiPen auto-injectors may be carried with the youth to whom it is prescribed.

Diabetes monitoring plans must be discussed in detail and presented in writing to Mountaineers staff and volunteers, signed by the participant's parents, even if the youth self-monitors. Plan must include daily routine, possible complications, signs and symptoms and appropriate response.

Special Circumstances

Many youth have life situations that may impact their participation in Mountaineers programming. These situations may be medical, physical, dietary, religious, emotional, family-related, school-related or trauma-related. In order to best serve each youth, we request that parents/guardians share this information with us on a "Special Circumstances" form.

Special Circumstances forms will not be shared with anyone other than the program leader(s) without specific consent from the parent/guardian.

We will make every effort to accommodate any needs associated with a youth participant's special circumstances. If a program is such that special accommodations are not practical, Mountaineers Staff and/or Volunteer Leaders must communicate this to the family in advance of the program, so that they can decide whether or not to participate.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure

In each program, Youth Leaders must exercise careful judgment about the disclosure of health and special circumstance information.

Youth health and special circumstance information should not be shared with anyone—other leaders, other participants, youth or adults, without prior consent from the family.

In many cases, disclosure is not necessary for the safety of the program. In the event that disclosure is necessary for safety reasons, youth and parents must be notified in advance, and caution must be exercised to ensure that only those *needing* the information are given the information.

Young Adults in Youth Programs

Young Adults in Youth Programs in The Mountaineers refers to programs that are designed primarily for youth, but in which 18-19 year old youth who are legally adults enroll. An example includes youth between

the ages of 18-19 enrolling in Mountaineers Adventure Club who are currently still in high school, or participants in a youth program who turn 18 during the program.

While the law tells us that individuals 18+ are adults, these youth are still technically teenagers, and may not view themselves as adults in the program. Young Adults in our programs might not realize that their role in the program has changed. It's important that we lay clear expectations for any participants who are over the age of 18, and maintain these expectations for all of our Adult participants, volunteers, and staff.

Young Adults should never be alone with one youth out of sight of anyone else. This includes sleeping, changing and using the bathroom. This practice prevents uncomfortable or dangerous situations and protects adults from false accusations.

Programs that have procedures and structures in place to maintain a safe atmosphere for youth will make it easy for young adult participants to protect themselves as well.

In the interest of maintaining an inclusive environment, it is important that we clearly inform our Young Adults about their new responsibilities as adults, that they understand how to protect themselves, AND that our programs are set up in a way that allows them to participate fully without having to set up special accommodations.

Young Adults are encouraged to share sleeping accommodations with other young adults or older teenagers.

Dealing with the Public

Most Mountaineers programs happen on public land, which means we are often sharing the land with other recreationists. These other recreationists are often people we don't know. They have not been background checked, and we have no knowledge of their outdoor skills or whether they are able to act safely and responsibly in the presence of other groups. In many cases, the presence of others is a non-issue. However, plenty of us have stories of difficult or dangerous situations that arose due to another party's behavior. Here are some ways to deal with this:

First and foremost, it is important that we are prepared to be safe, responsible and respectful outdoor citizens. This means:

Ensure all participants (including youth and adults) agree upon and understand the plan for safe travel.

If horseplay is a part of your program (eg. Water fights while rafting) be sure it is done in a designated time and space so that it does not create a prolonged atmosphere of chaos, and so that it does not disturb other visitors.

Role model, teach and expect that all participants treat other visitors with respect by stepping to the side of the trail to let them pass, keeping voices at a reasonable volume, and respecting quiet hours at public campgrounds.

When sharing recreation facilities such as crags or small public picnic areas, Mountaineers Leaders should approach other parties (groups or individuals) to find out what their plan is and establish how they can both share the facilities. Mountaineers leaders should make specific efforts not to monopolize an area.

In public places, establish your group's area and stay together as much as possible. Most unwelcome encounters can be avoided by the way you physically position your group.

If someone not connected to your group begins talking with a youth, leaders must call that youth over to the group. This removes the youth from the situation. If removing the youth doesn't work and the stranger is persistent, one adult must remove the group and engage them in an activity while another adult talks with the stranger.

Overnight Programs

Overnight Programs are opportunities to provide deeper meaningful wilderness experiences for youth. They can provide greater learning opportunities, friendships through common experiences, and memories that last forever. However, overnight programs also require an additional layer of risk management. Supervision is trickier when everyone is asleep, and personal activities surrounding bedtime, such as changing and personal hygiene, need to be supervised safely and respectfully.

During an overnight program:

Youth should not share sleeping quarters with adults unless:

The adults are the legal parents/guardians or siblings of that youth.

The sleeping quarters have individual beds, such as in a cabin or yurt.

Sleeping quarters (especially a tent situation) should be designed and programmed for appropriate supervision. Youth should generally be in tent groups of 3 or more, which creates group accountability and "crowd supervision". In some cases, it may be appropriate for youth to sleep in solo tents. Tent groups of two should be avoided or treated as a last resort option because it creates an environment that enables bullying, abuse or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Adult tents (and other sleeping quarters) should be positioned in a way that adults can be accessed by youth in the middle of the night, and so that they can provide adequate supervision.

Specific nighttime bathroom procedures must be communicated before dark on the first night. Suggestions include:

Ensuring everyone knows how to get to the bathroom and knows not to leave their sleeping quarters without a light source and/or whistle.

Leaving a personal backpack in a designated area to identify that the bathroom is in use and by whom.

Identifying areas of hazardous terrain to be avoided at night (eg. Stream crossings).

Encouraging youth to wake an adult (and which adult to wake) should they need anything.

Ensuring all youth have working light sources and whistles should they get lost on their way back from the bathroom.

On the Trail

When hiking or traveling on a trail, it can be difficult to supervise a group of youth who travel at different paces. Some tips for success:

Be sure to review/teach trail etiquette and safety before heading out on trail. This includes Leave No Trace principles, scheduled water breaks, and specific hazards of the trail.

Designate a “lead” and a “sweep”. These can be youth or adults. Let youth know that they must stay behind the “lead” at all times, and if they get in front of the “lead”, they will be asked to go back and walk with the “sweep”.

At the Crag

Crag pose some unique safety hazards that leaders must acknowledge and address:

Potential for natural rock fall.

Potential for human-initiated rock fall.

Narrow crag bases.

Every adult who is belaying a participant is one less adult to problem-solve when a difficult situation arises.

These safety hazards can be minimized through smart programming:

Ensure that there is one helmet per person at the crag *before you arrive* to avoid the need to “share” helmets.

Designate a “helmet zone” and require that all participants and leaders wear helmets in this area at all times.

Teach rock safety *before* arriving at the crag. This includes what to do when someone yells “rock”, etiquette when walking around belayers, where packs will be placed, and any potential hazards of the particular site (snakes, cliffs etc).

Ensure that one adult is a “rover” at all times, not on belay.

Alpine and Multipitch Climbs

Alpine and Multipitch Climbs add a layer of complexity to supervision with rope teams. Oftentimes communication between youth and adults is difficult, and at other times one youth and one adult are hanging out at a belay station together. It’s important to remember the reasons behind our procedures so that we can make the best decisions in a given situation. In this situation, we’re trying to provide safe and adequate supervision. We want to always be able to see or hear the youth we are responsible for, and we avoid putting youth and adults in compromising positions that could be unsafe for youth or detrimental to adults. Here’s how we can do that in this situation:

Ensure you are bringing youth on climbs that are appropriate for their abilities. When youth have the skills and fitness to participate safely, they will be less reliant on constant adult support. It is very difficult to do most of these types of climbs while providing constant adult support. Don’t take youth if they are not ready.

Carry walkie talkies and keep them on at all times. Train all participants in using them effectively, and practice using them before climbing.

Switch up rope teams as many times as possible. Obviously you cannot switch rope teams in the middle of a multipitch climb. However, it is often possible to have different descent teams (whether a walk-off or rappel-off). These teams should be predetermined at the trailhead by the Climb Leader. (eg. At the Blue Lake Trailhead, the leader determines hiking buddies for the approach, rope teams for SEWS, and descent pairs for the rappel. The added benefit is that every student has the opportunity to work with different instructors) By switching up rope/hiking teams, the Climb Leader makes it impossible for any adult to single-out any youth. It also helps to protect adults from false accusations.

Alpine climbs do not always lend themselves to privacy for bathroom use. Addressing this at the beginning of the climb so that everyone is aware can help avoid misinterpretations of actions while on the climb. For example, Leaders might tell the group that leaving a rope team while on a glacier is not a safe option, so those who need to use the bathroom will need to be okay with others simply turning their heads. It is also a good idea for the leader to remind participants (especially youth participants) to use the bathroom before roping up to avoid such a situation.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Chaperones

On all of our trips, parents and sponsoring adults act as chaperones. Chaperoning a trip is fun and does not require technical skill, though it can be an opportunity to learn and play alongside the kids. Chaperones have several responsibilities:

Drive

Most of our trips happen outside of Seattle, and we rely on chaperones to drive youth and/or gear. Chaperones will be reimbursed at a rate of \$.24/mile. Note: when driving youth, whether to/from the Program Center or to/from a campground, it is very important that all youth are accounted for before *any* drivers leave.

Transportation Policies

All adults driving youth as part of a Mountaineers program must be at least 21 years old, carry a valid US Drivers License, carry a minimum of \$300,000 in auto insurance, and have a driving history free of major violations. The Mountaineers will keep copies of drivers licenses, insurance policies and driving record on file.

Note: To purchase a driving record, visit <https://fortress.wa.gov/dol/dsdiadr/>. The process takes less than 5 minutes to complete. On the last screen, be sure to request an emailed record. Forward that email to joshg@mountaineers.org who will file the driver record and reimburse the cost for the driving record.



PURCHASE A Driving record

Select record type:

- Noncommercial insurance \$13
To get or renew auto insurance.
- Commercial driving insurance \$13
To get or renew commercial auto insurance.
- Life insurance \$13
To get or renew life insurance.
- Employment \$13
Used to determine if a driver should be employed.
- Volunteer \$13
Used to determine if a volunteer meets the criteria to drive a vehicle for an organization.
- School bus driver \$13
Used to determine if a driver should be employed to drive a school bus.
- Complete \$13
Can only be requested by the driving record owner.
It only shows what we're required, by law, to keep on your record for a specific period of time.

[← Back](#)

[Continue →](#)

When transporting youth, all laws must be followed without exception. This includes speed limits, seatbelt laws and not using cell phones unless pulled over in a safe location

Vehicles transporting youth must have current registration

12-passenger and 15-passenger vans are not approved means of transportation

Vehicles transporting youth must have one working seatbelt per passenger

When driving more than 2 hours, *one* of the following conditions must be met:

Driver must not have participated in more than 6 hours of activity prior to driving.

At least two drivers over the age of 21 must be in the car, and switch driving at minimum every 90 minutes.

If neither of the above conditions can be met, driver **MUST** stop driving to rest for a minimum of 20 minutes at least every 90 minutes.

Attendance check

Chaperones will receive a list of trip participants ahead of time, and will share in the responsibility for knowing where all participants are at all times.

Supervise prep work

As participants arrive, help ensure they have the gear they need, listed on the trip sheet. Help to facilitate the packing of cars and group gear. On multiday trips, there is prep work to be done for meals and for each day. We need chaperones to help facilitate this.

Supervise clean-up

When we return to the program center after a trip, there may be personal gear to be sorted out and group gear to be put away. During multiday trips, there is clean-up to be done after each meal as well as at the end of each day. We need chaperones' help with both of these things.

Other

Chaperones are usually welcome to participate in whatever activity is happening – whether it's a skills session or an outdoor adventure. This is not a requirement unless the chaperone is also a leader.

In some cases (such as a backpacking trip), chaperones may double as leaders.

Instructors

Skills instructors must meet the minimum requirements for instructing at that level within The Mountaineers. For example, Basic Alpine Climbing skills are taught by instructors who have finished the Basic Alpine Climbing Course. All skills instruction is overseen and vetted by a lead instructor who meets the minimum standards within The Mountaineers.

Instructors

Instructors will receive an email detailing the subject to be covered and the plan for the day. Instructors will also receive a brief profile on the group they'll be teaching, and the name of the Lead Instructor for the day. When instructors arrive, they should check in with the lead instructor, help to set up, and plan to spend most of their time *mentoring* older youth to teach younger youth.

Lead Instructors

Lead Instructors will receive an email detailing the plan for instruction, profiles of the youth attending, and a list of the other instructors who will be helping. The Lead Instructor's main job is to manage a safe environment, ensure instruction is within Mountaineers minimum standards, and report back to Mountaineers Adventure Club staff leadership about how each student is progressing towards mastery of the skills being taught.

In most instances, there will be a 1:3 ratio of student teachers to students. Meaning – 30% of the youth will have previous mastery of the skills taught and will be there as “student teachers,” teaching the skills to their peers, under the guidance of volunteer instructors.

Leaders and Assistant Leaders

All of our technical trips require a leader who has been vetted by The Mountaineers to be present, leading, teaching and overseeing activities. Leaders will receive an email detailing the plan for instruction, profiles of the youth attending, and, where relevant, a list of the other leaders and assistant leaders who will be helping. Leaders will work together with Mountaineers Staff to develop a specific plan for the day.

At The Crag

Mountaineers Adventure Club spends many days a year at the crag – top roping, learning to lead, and multipitch climbing. MAC members are all at different skill levels: some are learning how to belay, some are learning to clean and rappel, some can lead on sport, some are learning to lead on trad. Some members have assistant-taught some of these skills, and others have done enough “mentored leads” that they are able to teach these skills unsupervised. *Never assume a student has skills that have not been verified by you, another leader, or a MAC staff member.*

Before a trip (even a day-trip to a crag), you will receive an email from MAC staff providing a plan for the trip and a profile of each student you'll be working with, along with a recommendation for what would be a good thing for each student to work on. We always encourage our students to learn new things, but we also allow them to make their own decisions based on their personal goals and comfort level.

The email might look something like this:

Saturday plan for Vantage:

Feathers (**leaders: Mary, Lisa, Akash**) – Ralph, Bella, Mike, Sally, Marlie, Jack (the goal is to have warm-up climbs for everyone, opportunities for some warm-up mock leads and then possibly leads for Sally, Marlie and Mike, and great stations to teach clean & rappel)

Lower Millenium (**leaders: Laurie, Chris, Matt**)– Rylie, Chance, Adam, Carrie, Ishara, Rhys (this group has climbed quite a bit at vantage so this should be a newer area for them. Rylie is a strong leader. Chance is a good leader. Adam is solid

but probably needs easier grades (5.8 or below). Carrie & Ishara should get some mock leads in if possible, and Rhys if he is interested, which he may not be. Rylie, Chance and Adam should be able to clean & rappel with verbal guidance – they have done it a lot. Might be good to run through it on the ground first. Carrie & Ishara will have a chance Sunday, and Rhys I don't think is there yet)

Kotick Memorial (**leaders: Jed, Kelvin, Margot**) – Shane, John Paul, Ayumi, Morgan, Dan, Annika (this should be a good warm-up area for this group. Annika is new and needs to be belay-checked, though she does have some experience. Shane and John Paul have some limited leading experience and should mock lead for sure. Ayumi actually has quite a bit of experience. All three should be leading by the end of the day, and Morgan, Dan and Annika will likely be interested in mock leading. Please do not have kids lead Prince of Darkness unless you clip the first bolt for them. Shane, John Paul & Ayumi are ready to practice clean & rappel. They have minimal experience, so best to find a climb like the 5.9 with the ledge where one of you can be up there with them, or perhaps the chimney where its easy to give guidance from the ground. Shane, John Paul & Ayumi are all eager to learn things, but not the first to say when something makes them nervous and/or may not be aware that they aren't ready. So, run things through on the ground, and if they say they know how to do something, make them show you first!)

As a leader, you make the final call from a safety perspective. We typically start the day with some quick names and discussion of goals, so the youth are on the same page as the leaders. If a student asks to do something, and you are not sure that they have the prerequisite skills, ask them to list their experience to you and have them demonstrate first.

At the end of the trip, MAC staff like to debrief with each leader to hear how each of the students did, so that we can track it and know what's most appropriate for them in terms of skill building, confidence building, independence and leadership.

Leading a Climb, Scramble or Ski Trip

Leading a Climb, Scramble or Ski Trip with Mountaineers Adventure Club members is similar to leading the same trip with adults. Here are some things to know:

- Leaders select the trip and date, and let MAC staff know. On occasion, we ask for a particular climb on a particular date.
- Leaders post the trip online, calling out in the Leader Notes that it is a trip designed for Mountaineers Adventure Club teen members, and others can register if space allows. The trip should be listed as open for registration 2 weeks before the activity. MAC staff will assign youth to the trip and add them to the roster before it opens.
- Leaders can choose to find their own assistant leaders/rope leaders, or MAC staff can help to find them.
- Unlike adult students, youth who have demonstrated competency in all of the Basic Alpine Skills do *not* inherently have a ticket to all Basic Climbs. Each Basic Climb is very different – in length, physical difficulty, exposure, technical terrain... and we want to ensure that students will be successful, and that we set our leaders up for a safe and enjoyable trip. Youth are selected by MAC staff for the trip with the following goals in mind:
 - Ensuring the greatest likelihood of success. Inviting students who have demonstrated the physical, emotional and technical readiness for the particular trip. Choosing a team that will work well together.
 - Inviting students who've had less opportunity than others to get on trips of this type.
 - Inviting students who are eager to do this type of trip.

- Inviting students we believe *should* do this trip in preparation for a future goal.
- Once the roster is complete, MAC staff will send student profiles including their skills and experience, contact information and emergency contact information, to the leader. MAC staff then does an introductory email between the leader and the students and parents on the roster. PLEASE COPY MAC STAFF ON ALL COMMUNICATIONS so that we can help coordinate as needed.
- On the trip, please note that youth participants are *less likely* to ask questions about a decision or ask for what they need (like a water break). Please try to include youth participants in the decision making, even though as the leader, you have the final call. Please also try to check in with students a little more often than you would with adult students.
- After the trip, we appreciate a quick email or phone call so we know how the trip went and anything important we should know about the kids.