

TRIP LEADER'S GUIDE

This is a guide aimed at new leaders.

BEFORE THE MEETING

Before each term the Trips Officer selects trips and emails experienced members to see who can lead each trip. Volunteers and those with ideas should email the Trips Officer. Be aware of your limitations.

Trip details, along with a difficulty rating, are published in the Newsletter. They are repeated in the Club email which goes out on Tuesday mornings.

Investigate your route and possible alternatives. The gear locker has laminated maps. Find information from route guides (held library, gear locker, by Trips Officer), the DoC website (www.doc.govt.nz) and offices, other trampers, and old Troggs. Find out about the terrain and the current conditions (i.e. is the track open, are huts still there, where are rivers crossable, do you need permission to cross private land).

For weather forecasts check <http://www.metservice.co.nz/default/index.php> and the MetPhone service; also www.metvuw.co.nz

Identify hazards, which may include: wasps, river crossings, rock falls, steep terrain, cold, wet, or hot weather, giardia.

Identify the equipment you need, such as helmets and an emergency locator beacon.

DURING MEETING

The Trips Officer will tell people what trips are going, their grades, the cost (including hut fees), any specific skills required (e.g. snow craft), and where to meet the leader.

The group leader should get a map from the gear locker, if they haven't already done so. They should show people where the trip is going, and discuss what the trip will be like. Be realistic, but don't scare people. To assess someone's suitability you may need to know their experience, skills (1st aid, snow craft, river crossing), fitness (how much walking/tramping they have done), limitations (e.g. scared of heights), and what sort of trip they want. You may have to tell people they should go on another trip, or modify the trip.

The trip form (collect from the Trips Officer) should be legibly filled out by participants. Work out whether transport will be by members' cars, hired or public transport.

Limit numbers if necessary unless you can share the leadership burden with other people. Remind people that the trip will be repeated in the future, and that other trips are available. Remember that the trip should be a holiday for the organiser.

Plan the menu. Evening meals should be communal. Emphasise the importance of lots of high energy food, especially to the inexperienced. Arrange who will buy what for the evening meal, or allow time to stop at Countdown.

Personal gear - direct people to the CUTC website, their first newsletter, mountain safety (www.mountainsafety.org.nz), for a guide as to what they will require. Remind them of what is in the gear locker. If necessary, point out the best outdoor shops for different equipment.

Payment - remind participants to pay the Treasurer as this is easier on the day and makes van hire feasible. ~~There is an ANZ machine outside the Association building.~~ People can only get their money back if they contact the leader well before the trip leaves, have a good excuse, and no costs like van hire have been made. This is decided by the Treasurer and Club Captain. If too many people are interested limit it to those who have paid.

Members only - only in exceptional circumstances can a non member attend a club trip. Participants in subsidised instruction courses (except instructors) **MUST** be CUTC members.

BEFORE TRIP LEAVES

Email everyone the details of the trip. State the time and place of departure (usually the UCSA carpark), expected return time, the transport arrangements, base contact's name and phone number, your phone number, and what equipment, food and money will be needed. Ask them to email you details of medical conditions. Ensure other group members know of your medical conditions. If contact details are illegible email the membership officer. ~~Advertise spaces on the chat list.~~

Vehicle hire – if enough people have paid and you have two drivers over 21 you can hire a van from the usual supplier. Do this as soon as possible. You will need drivers' license details (dob, expiry, full name, and ideally a scan of both sides) for the hire company.

Be aware of the weather, and be prepared to modify the trip.

Car drivers – check that they know where to go.

Leave route intentions and return date and time with the base contact and with National Park HQ if appropriate. Also give the base contact a copy of the trip form, and take a copy with you so you can check who is missing. The base contact should ring the President, Trips Officer, or Safety Officer and the local police station (NOT 111), if you are significantly overdue.

Gear check –make sure that everyone is suitably equipped on the day. You may need to insist they change out of jeans or be left behind. Make sure that all party gear and food has been obtained and note down who has paid on the day.

DURING TRIP

The leader's responsibility is to ensure that the group achieves its objectives, such as safety, enjoyment, and instruction. The leader must make sure that appropriate decisions are made, and that everyone is informed what these are. Involve the group as much as possible.

At the start make sure everyone knows each other's name, where they are going, and who has the first aid kit. Ensure pack weights are appropriate, and packs are properly adjusted. Make sure someone responsible is at the front, and remind them to stop regularly and at junctions. They should set a steady pace, suitable for the slowest members.

Get the group moving early enough to reach its destination in daylight unless this is planned and everyone is experienced. If you are caught out in the dark it can be best to stay put rather than push on.

Regular breaks are important for enjoyment, to avoid exhaustion, and so that people can put clothes on or off. Breaks should occur at least every hour. Rest in safe and sheltered places with good views, such as the top of a rise.

During breaks discuss points of interest, such as the names of trees, mountains, rivers, explorers, etc. Pass the map around and point out features you can see.

Slow people - make sure that the same person is not always at the back. You may have to put someone slow in the lead or redistribute gear.

Watch the weather and hazards. Consider risks such as snow, rain and river levels, wind chill, sunburn, and heat exhaustion, and hazards such as avalanches and gas stove misuse. Get people to evaluate the weather.

Watch people for tiredness, hypothermia (excessive coldness), overheating and dehydration, blisters and other injuries, depression, being scared (e.g. of heights), being unsure where to go to the toilet, and struggling to keep up. Make sure that people are consuming sufficient food and drink, especially if conditions are bad.

Be approachable and do not assume that problems will be obvious. People's English communication skills vary widely in the club.

Group coordination - make sure that you are in communication with the people at the front. If you split the group ensure that there is a competent leader for each group and everyone knows what is happening.

Teach skills such as river crossing and choosing a campsite. Encourage everyone to learn skills such as fire lighting or pitching a tent. Encourage minimum impact and discourage littering. Involve the group in route finding decisions. Explain decisions.

Resolve conflict in an open and amicable way.

Hut books – fill these in as you go.

AT END OF TRIP

Contact the Base Contact when you get home, or by cell phone.

Group gear - Arrange for all group gear to be returned to the gear locker by the next meeting. Make sure you know who has group gear. Tents should be dried before being returned. Damage should be pointed out to the Gear Officer.

Talk about problems that occurred and about the high points of the trip. Get the members to give you an evaluation of your performance as leader. Get everyone to say something good and something that you can improve on.

Delegate the TROG report if there are no volunteers. Encourage people who have taken photos to send them to the TROG editors and to put them on the club website. You may want to do this and the evaluation by email.

Email the Trips and Safety Officer if there are any concerns about group members or if there are any potential leaders in the group.

Give the Treasurer any money you received before the trip and a list of who paid it.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, *Bushcraft Manual: Outdoor Skills for the NZ Bush*, is useful. It is available from the CUTC gear locker, bookshops, and the Council's website.

Comments on this draft can be sent to safety@cutc.org.nz