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| Outings Chairs | Complaint Resolution  Outings Chairs may encounter a wide range of complaints. The complaint may concern a Sierra Club leader, an outing participant, or even outing logistics. When handling complaints, gather all sides of the story before coming to any conclusions, be courteous and professional throughout, and follow up with all parties involved.  The following list of steps are suggested guidelines for Outings Chairs who receive outing-related complaints. If the complaint is not in writing, request the person logging the complaint submit it in written form.  *Keep notes and dates of the conversations you have with all the parties.*   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Gather Information:** | | **When:** | | Outings Chair | 1. The Outings Chair should contact the author of the complaint to acknowledge receipt of their complaint, and to inform them of the relevant complaint sequence listed below.  This is best done by phone as it speeds up the process.  The Outings Chair should find out the following information about the complainant:   * History with the Club. * Length of Club membership and membership number. * Frequency and number of outings attended. * Any other relevant history.   It is important to direct the conversation toward the facts of the outing and away from an emotional response to the complaint. | Upon receipt of the complaint. | | 2. The Outings Chair should contact the Outings Leader to let them know that:   1. A participant has submitted a complaint about them/the outing/logistics. 2. You want to gather the facts according to the leader's perspective.   For complaints around specific outings logistics, you may want to send the leader a copy of the complaint. It is important to direct the conversation toward the facts of the outing and away from an emotional response to the complaint. | Within 1 week of receipt. | | 3. The Outings Chair may want to contact other outings participants (if the situation warrants this) to finish building a fact-based picture of what occurred. | Within 2 weeks of receipt. | | If the complaint is more then then the Outings Chair can handle, they should distribute a copy of the complaint and a summary to their [Entity Chair](https://tioga.sierraclub.org/Wild/) and/or the [Local Outings Support Committee](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/committees/gcoc/index.asp) for support. |  | | **If there is a serious threat of a lawsuit (due to injury, illness, harassment, crime), contact the** [**Local Outings Manager**](mailto:local.outings@sierraclub.org) ***immediately* for additional support.** | | | | **Investigate the Complaint:** | | | | Outings Chair and/or:  Entity Chair, Chapter Chair, Local Outings Manager | After collecting all sides of the story, the Outings Chair and other designated investigators should review all the information to **identify if/where fault may lie, and what follow-up action items** may need to be taken.  Examples of what you may identify include but are not limited to:   * The complainant was a Problem Participant. * There were unreasonable outing expectations set by the Outings Leader. * Expectations were not made clear to the participant. * Logistical concerns were *not within* the control of the Outings Leader (weather, trail conditions, etc.) * Logistical concerns that *were within* the control of the Outings Leader indicating poor planning (area closed, no first aid kit, etc). * Outings Leader conduct was not professional. * Outings Leader conduct was not safe. * Proper/improper [screening](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/screening.asp) of participants on an outing. | Within 2-3 weeks of receipt. | | **Identify what action steps** such as:   * If you deem someone as a [Participant with Problem Behaviors](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/problem.asp), determine whether you welcome them on outings under specific conditions ***or*** you tell them that the privilege to participate on outings has been suspended. * If the participant wasn't suited for this type of outing (i.e. [screening](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/screening.asp)), refer them instead to an outing better suited to their skills and interests or to a non-Sierra Club option. * If the complaint raises leader training needs, provide clear and specific training steps for the leader to take. This situation may raise good questions that should be addressed during the next Outings meeting. Visit the [Training Extranet](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/gco/clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/training) page to see what resources are available to use during your next meeting.  If the complaint raises issues about the leader's behavior, refer to [Leaders with Problem Behaviors](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/leader.asp). | Within 2-3 weeks of receipt. | | **Identify whether you need additional support to address the complaint:**   1. Contact your [Entity Outings Chair](https://tioga.sierraclub.org/Wild/), Entity Chair, Chapter Outings Chair and finally your Chapter Chair.  Also consider contacting [Local Outings Support Committee](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/committees/gcoc/index.asp) for support. Consider sending a copy of the complaint and the summary of actions to date. 2. Feel free to contact the [Local Outings Manager](mailto:local.outings@sierraclub.org)  for additional support. | Within 2-3 weeks of receipt. | | **Follow Up:** | | | | Outings Chair | The Outings Chair should inform the parties involved of the final outcome.  Visit the [Sample Letter](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/gco/Chair/sample_letters.asp) page for examples of what to include in your correspondence.  Your written response should:   * Address the complaints that were listed. * Identify the conclusions drawn from looking at all the evidence. * Identify the steps that will be taken (by Outings, the participant, etc). * For serious issues, consider sending a copy of your correspondence to your Outings Chair and/or Chapter Chair. | Within 3 weeks |   For complaints that include a refund request, it is up to the group or chapter to determine the circumstances under which a refund is authorized. The [Local Outings Manager](mailto:local.outings@sierraclub.org) does not decide when a group or chapter should issue a refund. The group or chapter should consider the cost of a legal dispute (if threatened with one) versus the cost of a refund.  Occasionally complaints about local outings programs are received by the national office.  When this occurs, the Local Outings Manager determines the best course of action for handling the complaint. This may include asking the Local Outings Support Committee (LOSC) member who handles complaints to handle it, or referring the complaint directly to the chapter where the problem occurred. [More information](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/committees/gcoc/ComplaintsProcess.asp).  For Club-wide policies and Outings-specific Policies/Procedures that may refer to a complaint, refer to the following sites:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Club-wide Policies and Guidelines:** | **Outings:** | | * [Conflict of Interest](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/policies/conflict-of-interest.asp) * [Conflict Resolution](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/procedures/conflict_resolution.asp) * [Sexual Harassment](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/policies/sexual-harassment.asp) * [Standards of Conduct](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/policies/conduct.asp) * [Volunteer-Staff Relations](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/leaders/policies/VolStaffRelations.asp) | * [Outings Policies](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/policy/index.asp)   + [Conflict Resolution](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/GCO/policy/index.asp#Conflict Resolution) * [Problem Behavior Guidelines](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/Common/Incidents/problem.asp) * [Sample Letters](http://clubhouse.sierraclub.org/outings/GCO/Chair/sample_letters.asp) to use when working through a conflict. | |

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