

**Sierra Club – Angeles Chapter Safety Committee**  
**2020-2021 Safety Report (submitted in 2022)**

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**1. SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Groups, Sections and Committees (GSCs) are authorized to conduct O-level outings under the Angeles Chapter Safety Policy (ACSP). The Chapter policy, which was substantially rewritten in 2010 and amended since then, should eliminate the need for most entities to write their own policies; it is appended. The following organizations (first table below) have submitted safety procedures that have been approved by the Safety Committee for the level indicated. Entities that lead T-Level outings (second table below), those that do training (such as LTC and WTC), and some with special “authorizations” (such as HPS which can lead certain M-routes with pre-approved I-rated leaders) will continue to need standalone safety policies.

\* Note: During 2014, three sections or committees dissolved: Alpine Ski Mountaineers, K-9 and Easy Hikers.

**Approved Safety Policies and Procedures**

	Groups	Sections	Committees
I-Level			Lower Peaks
M-Level	Airport Marina Antelope Valley Crescenta Valley East San Gabriel Valley Long Beach Mt. Baldy Pasadena Palos Verdes-South Bay Rio Hondo San Fernando Valley Verdugo Hills West Los Angeles	20s & 30s Singles (20s & 30s) Gay and Lesbian Sierrans Hundred Peaks (HPS) International Community Nordic Ski Touring Orange County Sierrans Section (OCSS) Sierra Singles Wilderness Adventures	Backpacking Bicycle Touring Camera History Santa Monica Mtn TF (SMMTF)
E-Level		Desert Peaks (DPS) Sierra Peaks (SPS) Ski Mountaineers (SMS)	Leadership Training Wilderness Training

**T Level (Technical) with type of specialized outings listed.**

SCUBA Diving, Sailing	Airport-Marina Group	Sierra Singles	20s & 30s
Sailing	OCSS		
Water Travel	River Touring Section (RTS)		
Alpine Skiing	SMS		

## 2. LEADER CERTIFICATIONS

The Chapter's Leadership Training Program (LTP) and leader rating system started in 1971. In 1974, existing leaders were grandfathered into an O, M, or E rating, based on recommendation of the various entities. Some, but not all, of these grandfathered leaders later went through LTP. In 1975, RCS (Rock Climbing Section) and SMS leaders who had previously been designated with a technical (T)-designation were brought into the rating system and granted either an O, M, or E rating, based on recommendation of these sections. The mid-1970s also saw a number of adjustments to ratings that had been granted. In 1978, the I rating was added to the system. The O-1 (O Level 1) rating was started mid-year 2004. M-Rock and M-Snow ratings were added in 2008. E-Rock and E-Snow ratings were added in 2013.

The following table shows the approximate numbers of leader certifications each year for each of the leader ratings. Some years may include only LTP graduates (no direct certifications); other years include all certifications.

Year	New Leaders									Percentage Distribution						
	O O-2	O-1	I	M	M- Rock	M- Snow	E	E- Rock	Total	O O-2	O-1	I	M	M- Rock	M- Snow	E
1971	0			15			20		35	0%			43%			57%
1972	0			36			0		36	0%			100%			0%
1973	417			301			119		837	50%			36%			14%
1974	144			34			11		189	76%			18%			6%
1975	38			28			26		92	41%			30%			28%
1976	40			17			7		64	63%			27%			11%
1977	0			0			0		0							
1978	90		2	46			14		152	59%		1%	30%			9%
1979	34		4	18			2		58	59%		7%	31%			3%
1980	130		15	24			0		169	77%		9%	14%			0%
1981	75		17	18			0		110	68%		15%	16%			0%
1982	112		12	28			2		154	73%		8%	18%			1%
1983	98		11	23			9		141	70%		8%	16%			6%
1984	92		18	16			3		129	71%		14%	12%			2%
1985	101		8	27			3		139	73%		6%	19%			2%
1986	79		10	16			0		105	75%		10%	15%			0%
1987	94		12	13			2		121	78%		10%	11%			2%
1988	90		12	12			1		115	78%		10%	10%			1%
1989	103		4	7			1		115	90%		3%	6%			1%
1990	94		8	1			0		103	91%		8%	1%			0%
1991	102		12	4			0		118	86%		10%	3%			0%
1992	75		9	11			0		95	79%		9%	12%			0%
1993	74		15	9			0		98	76%		15%	9%			0%
1994	97		17	8			1		123	79%		14%	7%			1%
1995	68		15	6			0		89	76%		17%	7%			0%
1996	46		13	8			0		67	69%		19%	12%			0%
1997	57		16	3			1		77	74%		21%	4%			1%
1998	48		12	1			1		62	77%		19%	2%			2%
1999	65		14	2			0		81	80%		17%	2%			0%
2000	50		10	3			0		63	79%		16%	5%			0%
2001	67		9	1			0		77	87%		12%	1%			0%
2002	72		14	5			1		92	78%		15%	5%			1%
2003	70		17	3			1		91	77%		19%	3%			1%
2004	26	19	7	0			0		52	50%	37%	13%	0%			0%
2005	13	47	23	3			0		86	15%	55%	27%	3%			0%
2006	8	56	13	2			0		79	10%	71%	16%	3%			0%
2007	3	48	13	3			1		68	4%	71%	19%	4%			1%
2008	10	53	12	4	2	0	0		81	12%	65%	15%	5%	2%	0%	0%

2009	7	47	14	4	2	0	0		74		9%	64%	19%	5%	3%	0%	0%
2010	10	40	14	3	2	0	0		69		14%	58%	20%	4%	3%	0%	0%
2011	6	35	10	3	2	0	1		57		11%	61%	18%	5%	4%	0%	2%
2012	5	46	7	4	1	1	0		64		8%	72%	11%	6%	2%	2%	0%
2013	11	33	9	2	3	0	0	1	59		19%	56%	15%	3%	5%	0%	2%
2014	3	23	11	2	3	0	0	1	43		7%	53%	26%	5%	7%	0%	2%
2015	1	37	6	0	2	0	0	0	46		2%	80%	13%	0%	4%	0%	0%
2016	8	26	9	0	1	0	1	0	45		18%	58%	20%	0%	2%	0%	0%
2017	4	31	15	1	0	1	0	0	52		8%	60%	29%	2%	0%	2%	0%
2018	6	38	12	1	2	0	0	0	59		10%	64%	20%	2%	3%	0%	0%
2019	4	28	15	2	0	0	0	0	49		8%	57%	31%	4%	0%	0%	0%
2020	0	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	16		0%	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2021	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3		33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,848</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4,999</b>		<b>57%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>

The 1960s thru 1980s was our golden age of mountaineering. A Basic Mountaineering Training Course (BMTC) for participants (first started in 1961 by members of the climbing sections) topped 1000 students a year for a number of years. From 1978 to 1988, the sponsoring Mountaineering Training Committee and the climbing sections produced many mountaineering leaders. Leader certifications topped 100 for a dozen years in a row.

Insurance restrictions, first imposed in 1986, quickly put the brakes on this activity. In 1986, climbs were limited to 3rd class before restrictions were lifted a year later. In late 1988, more drastic restrictions prohibited use of ropes and ice axes. BMTC was re-structured into a Wilderness Travel Course (WTC). Many leaders retired. In the two decades since then, there have been fewer than ten new E leaders. M-level certifications were cut in half, and then cut again when the further restrictions were imposed in 1988. There was a bulge in production of new M-leaders in the early 1990s when the new Wilderness Training Committee emphasized leader training. Added M-level requirements beginning in 1997 slowed M certifications markedly.

The O-level certifications also saw a considerable drop in 1995 but were then steady until the O-1 (O Level 1) certifications started mid-2004. Since then, most of the new leader certifications have been O-1.

The Sierra Club halted all outings from March 2020 until early July 2021. This led to a steep decline in new ratings.

### 3. PROVISIONAL LEADS

The table below shows the Groups, Sections and Committees where new leaders conducted their provisional outings. Due to multiple trips by some leaders and joint sponsorship of outings, the total numbers will not correlate to the total number of new leaders. However, this list does indicate activities in entities leading to the generation of new leaders. Weaknesses and strengths in leader development activities may be inferred from these data to help focus attention to where additional encouragement or mentoring could help produce more new leaders.

The table below indicates that WTC and LA ICO were the Chapter's leading sources of new leaders in 2020-21.

Regional Groups		Sections and Committees			
2020-21		2020-21		2020-21	
Airport Marina	0	Backpacking	0	Mule Pack	0
Antelope Valley	0	Bicycle Touring	0	Nat. Science	0
Central	0	Camera	0	Nordic Ski	0
Crescenta Valley	0	Desert Peaks	0	OC Sierrans	0
E. San Gabriel Valley	0	Gay and Lesbian	1	River Touring	0
Long Beach	0	Griffith Park	0	Sierra Peaks	0
Mt. Baldy	0	Hundred Peaks	3	Sierra Singles	0
Orange County	0	LA ICO	5	Sierra Student	0
OC Sierra Sage	2	ROAD	0	Ski Mountaineers	0
Palos Verde-South Bay	0	OC ICO	0	SMMTF	1
Pasadena	0	Int. Com.	0	SSMTF	0

Rio Hondo	0
San Fernando Valley	0
Santa Clarita	0
Verdugo Hills	0
West Los Angeles	1

Little Hikers	0
Local Hikes	1
Lower Peaks	0
Mtn Bike	0

Trails	0
20's and 30's	1
Wilderness Adv.	0
WTC	5

#### 4. ACCIDENT SUMMARY COMPARISON

	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97
Rock	3	5	5	7	12	7	1	4	12	6	6	1	3	0	4	3	2	0	0
Snow	9	5	15	9	17	17	14	10	4	4	2	5	0	2	3	3	1	0	0
Other	3	4	11	9	22	16	26	17	12	18	24	14	17	18	13	19	9	13	16
Total	15	14	31	25	51	40	41	31	28	28	32	20	20	20	20	25	12	13	16

	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
Rock	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	4	2	2	1	4	0	0
Snow	1	1	4	4	2	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	0	2
Other	7	18	18	21	11	16	6	6	8	6	10	8	18	20	8	11	10	14
Total	8	20	24	28	14	17	8	8	10	6	12	11	21	23	10	18	10	16
Incidents		4	4	2	5	2	2	3	5	5	5	6	2	1	4	3	7	4

	16	17	18	19	20-21
Rock	1	2	1	3	0
Snow	0	1	1	5	0
Other	8	17	11	21	11
Total	9	20	13	28	11
Incidents	5	10	2	20	10

“Rock” includes 3<sup>rd</sup> class scrambling and above; “Snow” includes snow climbs, glissading, and skiing; “Other” includes tripping and sprains on non-technical terrain, heat, medical conditions, etc. “Incidents” includes lost hikers, illness, and non-injury events that disrupt an outing, etc. These are not included in the total line.

The number of accidents and incidents reported in 2019 was the highest in nearly two decades. This appears to be the result of a switch from paper to online reporting, not because of a sudden decline in safety standards. But it remains important for Outings Chairs to ensure that all reportable accidents and incidents are reported promptly. Both the Safety Committee and the National Program Safety Team take a dim view of hearing about incidents secondhand. The online incident reporting form is available at <https://sierraclub.tfaforms.net/297>

#### 5. LESSONS LEARNED

Angeles Chapter conducts thousands of outings every year. And for many years, it has reported remarkably few accidents or incidents. While the Chapter prides itself on a culture of safety, the number of reported accidents in past years has beggared belief. It was and is impossible that a program of our size – 2,000 to 3,000 outings per year -- could result in nine accidents in 2016, 20 accidents in 2017 and 13 accidents in 2018.

In hindsight, flaws in our incident reporting system were partly to blame. The Club expected volunteer leaders to complete a form, email copies to a list of recipients and send an additional copy by standard mail to the National office. A simple incident report could take an hour; a complex report could take many hours. In hindsight, it is no wonder that many leaders decided that some incidents weren’t worth the trouble to report.

But last year things began to change with the rollout of an online incident reporting system. The Wilderness Travel Course tested the system from January through March. After this successful test, National rolled it out to all Chapters in April. The impact on reporting in Angeles was dramatic; the number of reported accidents more than doubled from 2018 while the number of incidents (events that disrupted the normal course of an outing while not causing injury) went from 2 in 2018 to 20 in 2019. While even these numbers probably understate the true level of accidents and incidents in Angeles Chapter outings, they probably come much closer to the truth.

The new form offers several advantages to leaders. It has drop-down menus to make reporting faster. It includes an option to attach documents and pictures. It routes the report directly to National and provides an immediate copy back to the person making the report. Angeles gets an alert every time one of our leaders files a report.

If the trend of increased reporting continues, it will be welcome news for the Chapter outing program.

First, we learn from these reports. Conditions and equipment change; on rare occasions, even the mountains change. Reports help Outings Chairs and the Safety Committee change our training and on-the-ground practices in response.

Second, reports document incidents. Occasionally an incident or injury that seems minor at the time becomes major. When it does, a report filed at the time, when the leader's memory is fresh, is invaluable.

## 6. TRANSITION OF ANGELES CHAPTER TO CAMPFIRE EVENTS

During 2019, Angeles Chapter largely completed its move to an online platform, Campfire Events. A few remnants of the former platform, including the LEADERS database of outings leaders, are still in use. Several outings have begun using Campfire's online reservation system, a great aid to trip planning. In addition, all Angeles Chapter trips submitted to Campfire Events are now automatically forwarded to Safety Committee, saving work both for the committee and for outings chairs.

However, outings chairs continue to play a vital role in reviewing outings. Safety Committee reviewers provide oversight once outings are posted and can put questionable outings (e.g., inappropriately rated leaders or improperly classified outings) into the "Pending Approval" category until any issues are resolved. But most of the time, outings chairs will be the people who ensure that outings are properly vetted before they get posted.

More information about Campfire Events is available at <https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/leadership-outings>

The move to Campfire Events is voluntary. Groups, sections and committees can continue to post outings on their own websites, outside the Campfire system. However, Chapter entities that do not use Campfire Events must submit all outings to [safecomm@angeles.sierraclub.org](mailto:safecomm@angeles.sierraclub.org) so the Safety Committee can review them.

## 7. GENERAL COMMENTS

In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic swept across the United States. The Sierra Club responded by stopping virtually all activities where people might gather. The shutdown initially was expected to last a few months. But as the death toll grew into the tens and then hundreds of thousands, the shutdown extended for 15 months, until early July 2021.

When outings resumed, the Club imposed new requirements for all outings. Some rules are likely temporary, for example restrictions designed to prevent exposure to Covid. But other rules may transform Club outings for years to come, perhaps permanently. These include a requirement for participants and leaders on longer day trips to complete a detailed medical form and for leaders of all but the simplest outings to prepare a safety management plan. These new requirements have stirred a great deal of dissension among outings leaders, both in Angeles and Club-wide.

Outings are proceeding at a greatly reduced frequency. Some sections that led many outings pre-pandemic have led none since the resumption of Club outings in early July. Other sections are sponsoring outings but at a slower pace. It is unclear which factors best explain the decline in Angeles outings post-pandemic: natural attrition of leaders during a 15-month "layoff", leader dissatisfaction with the new requirements, reluctance to risk exposure to Covid or other causes.

This report summarizes the activities of the Angeles Chapter Safety Committee during a unique period – three months of outings at the beginning of 2020, a 15-month shutdown, and six months of outings in the last half of 2021. Rather than issue separate annual reports for 2020 and 2021, the Safety Committee chose to issue a single report covering both years. Fewer outings meant fewer accidents and incidents than we would typically expect to report. Unhappily, it also meant fewer provisional outings, so the Committee granted fewer new ratings at a time when the Chapter desperately needs new leaders.

I would like to thank the members of the Safety Committee for their help throughout my nine-year tenure as Chair and particularly during these past two difficult years. They have never hesitated to volunteer their time, energy and experience to improving Angeles Chapter outings.

## 8. SOME WEB LINKS OF INTEREST

Angeles Chapter forms including the Incident Report are available online. (Please use Angeles Chapter forms where such specialized versions exist.)

The Angeles Chapter Outings Management Committee (OMC) site is here:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/leadership-outings>

Find outings forms, including the waiver and the medical form, here:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/leadership-outings/forms-resources>

The online incident reporting form is here:

<https://sierraclub.tfaforms.net/297>

National outings policies and guidelines may be found here:

<http://community.sierraclub.org/section/outings/local-outdoors/about-local-outdoors>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are here:

<https://community.sierraclub.org/section/outings/local-outdoors/faqs>

An FAQ about the Waiver is here:

<https://community.sierraclub.org/section/capacities/finance-operations/office-general-counsel/participant-agreement-liability-waiver> (requires Campfire login)

While I stepped down as Safety Chair at the end of 2021, I would be happy to answer any questions or comments you have about this report. You can email me at [campbellr@verizon.net](mailto:campbellr@verizon.net) or call me at 714/425-5169.

Ron Campbell, Outgoing Chair  
Angeles Chapter Safety Committee

**Angeles Chapter Safety Policy (ACSP):**  
**Approved by Angeles Chapter Executive Committee 7/26/2020**

### **1.0 Purpose**

This policy applies to the Angeles Chapter outings program and provides specific requirements for groups, sections, committees, and task forces (GSCs) to assure that outings consistently meet participant safety expectations and Sierra Club risk-management goals.

### **2.0 Scope and Precedence**

This Angeles Chapter Safety Policy (ACSP) supplements national Sierra Club outings policies and the Angeles Chapter Outings Governance Policy and is applicable to all personnel involved in the Angeles Chapter outings program. This policy provides requirements for the Safety Committee to conduct its business and oversee chapter- and GSC-sponsored outings. This policy also provides detailed guidance for certain GSCs to prepare GSC Safety Policies and manage their outings program consistent with chapter and national requirements.

In any case where this policy is less stringent than national Sierra Club outings policies and the Angeles Chapter Outings Governance Policy, those policies have precedence. In cases where this policy is more stringent (e.g., the requirement for two leaders on outings), this policy shall apply.

### **3.0 Angeles Chapter Outings Ratings**

A system of classifying outings has been established in the Angeles Chapter according to 6 levels of difficulty (C, O, I, M, E, T). Five of these levels correspond to leader certification levels (O, I, M, E, T) as described below

**Level C (Conducted):** Certain outings are conducted almost entirely under external control, such as by a concessionaire or ranger. During a conducted outing, the Sierra Club leader has little responsibility beyond administrative matters. Organizers of conducted outings require only minimal leader qualifications and, therefore, conducted outings are not included in the leader certification system.

**Level O (Ordinary):** O-Level outings are trips on trails or off trail with no navigation or terrain difficulty (class 1) and require basic technical skills of outings leaders and participants. New leaders who have not led a backpack as a provisional leader are identified as O Level 1 (O-1) leaders who may lead day hikes and car camps but not backpacks. Such O-1 leaders may subsequently upgrade to O Level 2 (O-2) status by completing a provisional lead of a backpack.

**Level I (Intermediate):** I-Level outings include cross-country travel and possibly class 2 terrain. Leader qualifications shall include demonstrated navigation, cross-country travel, and backpacking skills in addition to the O-level requirements.

**Level M (Moderate):** Outings that involve class 3 rock or snow travel requiring the use of an ice axe shall be classed as M. Technical training in rock climbing and snow travel is required in addition to lower-level requirements. Leaders may be rated full M (both rock and snow), M-Rock, or M-Snow.

**Level E (Exposed):** Outings that involve greater than class 3 rock or snow travel that requires the use of crampons in addition to ice axe for safety shall be classed E. Leaders are required to demonstrate more advanced skills involving rock climbing and snow travel than are required for level M. Leaders may be rated full E (both rock and snow), E-Rock, or E-Snow.



**Level T (Technical):** T-Level outings involve specialized technical skills (for example, sailing, kayaking, or ski mountaineering). These outings impose highly specialized leadership requirements, and certification of leadership qualifications shall be in accordance with the requirements defined by the entities that sponsor such outings.

#### **4.0 Related Committees**

In addition to the Angeles Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) and the GSCs, the Safety Committee relates to several other committees, notably the Outings Management Committee (OMC) and Leadership Training Committee (LTC).

#### **4.1 Outings Management Committee (OMC)**

The Outings Management Committee is the Angeles Chapter committee responsible for managing all aspects of the outdoor activities program of the chapter, including training and risk management. The OMC promotes outdoor leadership and provides support for entity outings chairs.

#### **4.2 Leadership Training Committee (LTC)**

The LTC provides training of potential outings leaders in technical and non-technical subjects. LTC recommends qualified candidates to the Safety Committee for certification as Angeles Chapter outings leaders.

#### **5.0 Angeles Chapter Safety Committee**

The Safety Committee manages all safety and risk management aspects of the outdoor activities program of the chapter, including safety policies, publication review, accident investigation, policy monitoring, leader certification, and leader database maintenance.

The Safety Committee is led by the Safety Chair, appointed by the Chapter ExCom Chair and confirmed by the Chapter ExCom. Other Safety Committee members include the OMC Chair, the LTC Chair, the Wilderness Training Committee (WTC) Safety Coordinator and any other members specified by the current Angeles Chapter Outings Governance Policy and other Chapter Outings Standing Rules. The Safety Chair shall appoint additional committee members as needed to enhance judgment, expertise, and liaison functions of the committee.

### **SAFETY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **5.1 Policy review**

The Safety Committee shall review the ACSP at least annually to reflect changes due to new situations or to capture chapter experience in operating under it. The Safety Chair shall propose ACSP revisions to the OMC. If the proposed revision is adopted by a vote of the OMC, it will become effective upon its confirmation by a vote of Chapter ExCom.

**5.2** The Safety Committee shall review and approve safety policies established by the GSCs. Policies judged inadequate by the Safety Committee shall be returned to the appropriate GSC for revisions.

#### **5.3 Outings review**

The Safety Committee shall monitor published outings that appear in all chapter media, including Campfire Events and its successors, websites, listservs, newsletters and the Southern Sierran. It shall also set standards for publicizing chapter outings on social media. It shall ensure that qualifications of leaders are appropriate for the outing and that mileage, elevation gain, and other trip characteristics are properly identified for participants. The Safety Committee shall communicate with the sponsoring GSC and request modifications of outings that exceed the qualifications of the leaders or participants. If the above is not successful, the Safety Committee shall direct the sponsoring GSC to cancel the outing.

**5.4** Outings write-ups approved by a GSC outings chair shall be provided to the Safety Committee for information as soon as possible (e.g., by email to safecomm@angeles.sierraclub.org if they are submitted for publication in Campfire or another chapter website or listserv). The outings chair of the sponsoring entity shall make suitable provision for seven-year archiving of the trip write-up if it is not published on Campfire; no archiving shall be required for outings published on Campfire.

**5.5** Upon request by a GSC outings chair, the chapter Safety Chair may grant authority for an entity to employ the nationally-defined "Enduring" Waiver procedure for their regularly scheduled conditioning hikes. This authority must be confirmed by the national Program Safety Team to take effect, and be implemented with full adherence to the **"Enduring" Liability Waivers then current at the outings extranet of Campfire.**

### **5.6 Incidents investigation**

The Safety Committee shall investigate outing incidents and complaints involving outings leaders. Depending on circumstances and steps taken by the sponsoring GSC, additional action may be taken by the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee shall assure that incident reports are processed and that copies are retained.

**5.7** The Safety Committee shall monitor national outings policies and forms for changes and notify the GSCs.

### **5.8 Leader certification**

Upon leader candidates' satisfactory completion of the LTC training program, the Safety Committee shall grant leader certification. The Safety Chair may also directly certify leaders based on previous experience, proven capabilities, certification with other club chapters, etc. The Safety Committee shall notify sponsors of provisional outings of newly certified leaders and update the leader database to reflect new certifications.

### **5.9 Leader database**

The Safety Committee maintains a database of currently approved leaders, providing the leader's name, membership number and expiration date, leader certification level, first aid certification (date of course completion and type of course--standard or wilderness first aid), and date of policy knowledge renewal.

## **GROUPS, SECTIONS AND COMMITTEES (GSC) RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.0 GSCs**

Angeles Chapter outings are sponsored by regional groups, activity sections, committees, and task forces (GSCs).

### **6.1 GSC Organization**

Each GSC is recognized by the Safety Committee to lead outings up to a particular certification level. Each GSC shall establish an appropriate organizational structure, select officers, recruit leaders, and provide resources as needed to conduct safe and successful outings at the indicated level.

GSCs that offer T-rated outings, provide training or conduct proficiency exams at the I-level or higher, or permit leaders to lead routes that are rated higher than their leader rating shall prepare a GSC Safety Policy (GSCSP) to supplement this Angeles Chapter Safety Policy (see section 7). Each such GSC shall review its GSCSP at least annually or if any major changes occur in the level and nature of outings conducted. A copy of the GSCSP shall be submitted to the Safety Committee for review and

approval and subsequent archiving. Other GSCs that operate their outings entirely within the provisions of this ASCP have blanket authorization to operate their outings program and do not need to file a GSCSP.

Outings chairs shall use the Chapter Outings Chairs listserv (ANGELES-OUTINGS-CHAIRS@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG) or equivalent as needed to keep informed on matters of safety and on changes to club and chapter outings policies. Outings chairs without e-mail are to provide the OMC and Safety Chairs with an e-mail address of someone who will forward listserv messages to the outings chair.

## **6.2 GSC Outing Requirements**

With the exception of "conducted" events and certain outings as noted below, the GSC shall identify two appropriately rated leaders for each outing. If the GSC conducts outings that require additional leaders, the outings chair shall assure that additional leaders are provided.

The Safety Committee may sanction a GSC to lead specific outings (e.g., conditioning hikes with one leader per subgroup). If the GSC is so sanctioned, the GSC shall establish appropriate procedures for ensuring group control and safety.

If circumstances arise that impose greater difficulty (e.g., outings held in early spring), then the outings chair shall recognize these circumstances as the need arises and assign the outing a commensurately higher rating (e.g., an I-level outing with spring snow may become an M-level outing), and it shall be led only by persons qualified for the newly assigned higher level.

All snowshoe and cross-country ski outings must be led by two leaders certified at the I-level or higher unless a one-trip waiver is granted by the Chair of the Angeles Chapter Safety Committee for one or both leaders to be O-rated. Outings where the leader requires the use of traction devices such as Yaktrax or Kahtoola Microspikes are subject to the same restriction. Waivers will be based on such factors as the planned route and the experience of the leaders (e.g., have they led such trips and this particular route before?). Such waivers are required for any such trip published to be led by either two O-rated leaders or one I-rated leader and one O-rated leader. Any trip published to be led based on such a waiver must be canceled if there is heavy snowfall forecast on the day of the outing.

If the GSC conducts outings that involve special difficulty or that require special skills or equipment, the GSCs shall document additional procedures for the selection of the outings chair, leaders, and participants in their Safety Policy. Mountaineering outings requiring the use of technical equipment (ropes, ice axes, or crampons) shall receive prior approval by the national Mountaineering Oversight Committee (MOC).

Some GSCs conduct technical T-level outings (e.g., ski mountaineers, river touring) that encompass a broad span of specialized skills and difficulties. Outings chairs involved with T-level outings shall document criteria for leader selection and participant screening for safe outings under normal and possibly adverse conditions.

Some GSCs conduct training outings (e.g., navigation, rock climbing, and snow climbing). GSCs offering training outings at the I-level or higher shall document policies to screen participants properly and to conduct training outings in a manner commensurate with the risk to ensure the safety of participants.

Some GSCs conduct proficiency demonstrations (e.g., Leadership Training Committee and Ski Mountaineers) and shall document their policies to screen participants properly and conduct proficiency demonstration outings in a manner to ensure the safety of participants.

A GSC that is allowed to offer certain outings rated higher than the rating of the leader shall document this arrangement and its implementation in a GSC Safety Policy. The document shall indicate the ways in which safety and risk management are maintained.

### **6.3 Announcement Processing**

Each Sierra Club outing shall be sponsored by a GSC and shall be published in an appropriate form in order for the outing to be sanctioned as an official Sierra Club trip. By sponsoring an outing, the GSC is giving its approval to the outing plan and the outing's leadership.

#### **Role of outings chair**

The GSC outings chairs shall be responsible for collecting announcements from leaders and seeing that they are published. Announcements submitted by anyone other than the outings chair shall be approved by the outings chair prior to publication. Restricted mountaineering outings shall be approved by the national Mountaineering Oversight Committee (MOC).

Outings chairs shall verify that each announcement lists a leader and at least one properly qualified assistant, contains an indication of the trip rating (O, I, M, E), describes the difficulty of an outing (such as elevation gain, distance, pace, etc.), addresses the general demands on participants and any special skills required, and provides contact information for the leaders.

On reserved outings, for which participants apply in advance for a spot, the trip announcement generally will not include the meeting time and place. On non-reserved outings, for which participants show up without a reservation, the meeting time and place must be included in the announcement.

Outings with multiple sponsors listed shall be approved in advance by each sponsoring entity and must comply with the outings procedures of each entity. The primary sponsor must be listed first in the header wherever the write-up is published. The primary sponsor is the one that would take the lead, in conjunction with the Safety Committee, to investigate any incidents that occurred on the outing.

#### **Outings publication**

Publication may be accomplished by GSC outings chairs submitting announcements to Campfire Events or its successor. Publishing in a GSC newsletter, website, or listserv also qualifies, provided a copy of the announcement is forwarded to the Safety Committee publications monitor. A complimentary copy of all GSC-sponsored publications shall be sent to reviewers designated by the Safety Chair and the Angeles Chapter office.

Any schedule announcements not published in Campfire shall be archived for seven years after completion of the outing. In the event an announcement is published only electronically (at a website or any other non-print medium other than Campfire), a hard copy of the announcement shall be archived for the seven-year period.

#### **Social media**

After publication in Campfire or a GSC newsletter, website or listserv, outings may be publicized through social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, Meetup or Craigslist) at the discretion of the sponsoring GSC. All such publicity shall mention "Sierra Club" or "Angeles Chapter" or the name of the sponsoring group, section or committee in the social media post or be prominently displayed in the account name for the posting. All such publicity shall also contain a hyperlink to the original publication

in Campfire or a chapter website; this link may be a “short link,” such as those provided through bitly.com and tinyurl.com.

#### **6.4 Verification of Leader Qualifications**

Outings leaders are trained and rated through a chapter-approved leadership training program conducted by LTC and structured to be compatible with the leader requirements for rating levels O through E. Experience and training other than that obtained through a leadership training course may be recognized as a partial basis for leadership certification. Leadership certification is done by the Safety Committee following a leader candidate’s completion of all appropriate training, demonstrations, and provisional leads.

Outings chairs shall verify that leaders meet the following criteria at the time of the outing:

- a. Current Sierra Club membership,
- b. Certification as a rated leader at or above the level of the outing,
- c. First aid certification that is valid within the dates stated on the certificate or card.
- d. Leadership “soft” skills competence demonstration (e.g., OLT 101 completion and having read the Chapter Supplement to OLT 101 – or the equivalent of these two as identified by LTC) within the last four years.

Any waivers to these requirements for specific individuals must be approved by the Safety Chair.

Outings chairs shall verify that leaders possess adequate knowledge, skills, experience, and mental aptitude commensurate to the outing and are capable of effective control of the group during the outing.

Outings chairs shall verify that leaders know the basic procedures for conduct of the outing and know Sierra Club emergency procedures. Sponsoring GSCs may elaborate upon the Chapter's Rules of Conduct in their safety policies to match their outings characteristics.

Outings chairs shall verify that leaders of proposed outings be in sufficient physical condition to complete the outing and handle emergency situations, be familiar with the areas to be entered, and have a good idea of the conditions to be encountered during the outing.

Outings chairs shall verify that leaders of technical outings (especially T-rated outings) have appropriate training and certification(s).

#### **6.5 Leader Responsibilities**

Once adequate information is gathered for an outing, the leader prepares an announcement and submits it to the outings chair. Following publication, interested participants evaluate their interest and suitability for a particular outing and may contact the leader for further clarification. The leader answers inquiries so that participants understand the demands of the outing and can make more reasoned judgments on whether they should attend.

#### **Screening before the trip**

On reserved outings, the leader shall perform screening in advance of the trip. Once screening is completed and the participant list takes shape, the leader normally sends out a trip sheet to participants, detailing where and when to meet, what to bring, how to prepare, and what to expect. The trip sheet normally includes participant contact information to allow participants to make individual carpool arrangements to arrive at the meeting point on time, fed, rested, and ready to go.

If two appropriately rated leaders are not available at the start of the outing, the outing must be re-planned at a level consistent with available leaders or canceled. Trips canceled for this reason may not be led as "private" outings, unless all participants are notified before leaving home.

### **Carpool**

The carpool to the trailhead is never part of the Sierra Club outing, and leaders should not suggest or imply that the outing begins with the carpool. Leaders shall avoid accepting responsibility for travel to, during, or from outings, leaving that to private, voluntary arrangements. If there is a carpool from the meeting point to the trailhead, the waiver should be signed before the carpool.

### **Epi-Pens**

An outings leader may seek approval from the Safety Committee to carry and use an Epinephrine Auto-Injector on a Chapter outing. To do so, the leader shall present to the Safety Committee a copy of the California Epinephrine Auto-Injector Certification Card. Approval will be given only to use an Epinephrine Auto-Injector in accordance with Health and Safety Code Section 1797.197a and the Sierra Club's Anaphylaxis Protocol. The leader is personally responsible for purchase and maintenance of the Epinephrine Auto-Injector.

### **Waiver and trip management**

A waiver is required for participation in any Sierra Club outing. Leaders are responsible for collecting waivers from all participants. At the start of the outing, leaders shall provide a sign-in/waiver sheet to obtain information on each participant, including name, car license, and emergency contact. Participants should sign the liability waiver at the initial trip meeting place, thus providing participants an opportunity to back out of the outing if they decide not to sign the waiver. Digital waivers can be accepted in accordance with National requirements.

Leaders should ensure that participants are prepared to follow the Rules of Conduct established by the Sierra Club and Angeles Chapter. During introductions, leaders shall inform participants of the rules that govern conduct on an outing.

The leaders shall check that all participants are properly equipped and qualified for the outing, either through pre-screening or at the trailhead or both. On non-reserved outings, the meeting point is the first opportunity to screen participants.

During the outing, the outing leaders shall exercise control of the group and are responsible for the outing's safe conduct. This includes compliance with the requirements and procedures established for safe outing conduct. Leaders shall keep the group together and under control at all times.

The leaders shall modify the outing plan as necessary to avoid exceeding the capability of the group. The leaders shall abort the outing objective if circumstances prevent its completion in safety.

During the conduct of an extended outing, if two rated leaders are not available for any part of the planned outing, a fully-rated leader may appoint an experienced participant to assist in conduct of that part of the outing. Such a participant must be a Sierra Club member. Before doing so, the leader must make the determination that the outing plan may be safely completed with the remaining group. Following any outing during which a fully-rated leader appoints a participant to assist in conduct of part of the outing, the leader shall report the circumstances to the outings chair and to the Safety Committee Chair.

Any participant leaving the outing before its completion shall be signed out, consistent with national policy ("Early Sign-Outs"). Sign-out of all participants at the end of an outing is at the leader's

discretion but is particularly prudent in the case of more remote outings to ensure no one is left behind.

### **Archiving sign-in/waivers**

Following an outing, sign-in/waiver sheets shall be archived by the GSC outings chair for a period of seven years.

For a normal outing without accident or incident, no further follow-up is required.

### **6.6 Accident/Incident Procedures**

If an accident occurs during an outing, the leader is expected to limit the situation to avoid any further injuries, appoint someone to document the events, then render assistance to the injured. Often an incident necessitates holding the group together for a prolonged period and may involve the entire group missing work the next day or until the situation is remedied. It is important that the vitals of the patient(s) be recorded at regular intervals and that injuries and treatments be recorded. In medical and legal parlance, if it isn't written down, it didn't happen. Also, a written record may prove vital to defend the leader's actions months or years later during an investigation.

Following an accident/incident, the leader shall file a report with the Safety Committee and National.

Subsequent to filing the incident report the GSC shall investigate all accidents and complaints, take action as appropriate, and file their analysis with the Safety Committee. The GSC shall support the Safety Committee investigator as needed.

### **7.0 GSC Safety Policies**

The following guidance is for GSCs that need to maintain a GSC Safety Policy. While adherence to the structure suggested below for a GSC safety policy is not a requirement, GSC safety policies shall be audited for content in each of the following areas. Therefore, policies that are structured with the following points in mind will be much easier to evaluate and approve.

#### **GSC Organization**

- A1 Indicate the GSC name and highest level of outings the GSC is authorized to conduct;
- A2 Indicate the title of the person(s) responsible to write and approve the GSCSP;
- A3 Indicate the outings chair selection criteria;
- A4 If applicable, if the outings chair does not use the listserv, indicate the person responsible for forwarding listserv messages to the outings chair;
- A5 If applicable, indicate whether the GSC has any special approvals on file for one-leader outings;
- A6 If applicable, indicate whether the GSC has any special approvals on file for outings that involve special difficulties or special skills and equipment;

#### **GSC Outings**

- B1 Describe the types of outings conducted by the GSC;
- B2 If applicable, describe how waivers and sign-in sheets are handled before, during, and after the outing;
- B3 If applicable, describe any large group events that require more than two leaders;
- B4 If applicable, describe any one-leader outings;
- B5 If applicable, describe any outings that involve special difficulties, skills, or equipment;
- B6 If applicable, describe procedures used for any restricted trips, including MOC coordination;
- B7 If applicable, describe any criteria for upgrading the level of an outing due to adverse conditions;
- B8 If applicable, detail any T-rated outings including leader selection, participant screening, and any special grading systems used;

B9 If applicable, describe any outdoor training conducted by the GSC, including qualifications of leaders, instructors, and participants and how risks to students are controlled;

B10 If applicable, describe any outdoor proficiency demonstrations conducted by the GSC, including qualifications of leaders, examiners, and participants;

B11 If applicable, describe any arrangements whereby a leader of a particular rating may lead a route at a higher level.

### **Announcement Processing**

C1 Describe the method(s) used by the GSC to satisfy the publishing and archiving requirements, especially if electronic publications are used;

C2 If applicable, detail any special rating systems, other than mileage and altitude gain, used in the publication of outings to indicate strenuousness or technical demands;

C3 If applicable, describe procedures for any jointly-sponsored outings;

C4 If applicable, list any outings-related books, manuals, or newsletters published by the GSC, and frequency of publication.

### **Leader Qualifications**

D1 Describe the GSC criteria for approving a leader (especially one with previous accidents, complaints, or disciplinary action) to conduct a particular outing;

D2 If applicable, describe any GSC-specific directives that elaborate upon the chapter's Rules of Conduct and how leaders become aware of any such GSC specific directives;

D3 If applicable, explain how any T-rated leaders receive technical training and certification.

### **Leader Responsibilities**

E1 Describe or provide representative example(s) of trip sheets provided to participants before the outing to help them assemble their equipment and prepare for the outing;

E2 Indicate how trip participants are screened to assure that they have the skills required for the trip and to identify those with medical conditions or a previous history of complaints or disciplinary action;

E3 If applicable, describe any special procedures used to assure the technical skills of participants (e.g., the mountaineers list).

### **Accident/Incident Procedures**

F1 Describe how the entity is set up to handle emergencies, reports, and follow up activities and how these procedures are coordinated with leaders before an outing;

F2 If applicable, explain any special emergency procedures employed by the GSC for the scope of its outings.



**ACCIDENTS 2020-21**

Date	Entity	Activity	Injury	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes
1/18/2020	Wilderness Adventures	Day hike	Slip and fall	Loose terrain	Calcite Mine	A participant was walking down a dirt road from the Calcite Mine to the cars when she slipped on a sandy spot and fell, injuring her leg near the knee. She could walk without help following the incident. She iced it later that day. She stayed in camp the next day to rest her knee and was able to participate in the hike two days after the incident.
1/30/2020	Griffith Park Section	Day hike	Twisted ankle		Griffith Park	Towards the end of the conditioning hike participant twisted her ankle. She made it back to the car without assistance. She went to urgent care the next day and was informed that no breaks were found.
2/2/2020	WTC	Day hike	Bee sting		Lawlor and Strawberry peaks	Participant was stung on hand by a bee approximately 2.5 miles into hike of Lawlor and Strawberry Peaks. She easily removed the stinger, applied ointment and continued the hike without incident.
2/2/2020	WTC	Day hike	Cut finger	Obstacle – downed tree	Josephine Saddle	While descending Josephine Saddle, participant cut his finger while climbing over a downed tree. The cut was cleaned and bandaged.
2/8/2020	WTC	Day hike	Tick bite		Mt. Lowe	While descending from Mt. Lowe, participant noticed he had been bitten on his thigh by a tick. He removed the tick using tweezers and kept the tick in a vial.

Date	Entity	Activity	Injury	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes
2/15/2020	WTC	Day hike	Leg, ankle injuries	Damp ground	Condor Peak	While hiking down from Condor Peak, participant slipped on a damp root and injured her ankle. After determining that self-rescue was not feasible, leaders contacted LA County Sheriff via InReach, and a helicopter was sent for air evacuation. Patient was taken to hospital and diagnosed with a dislocated ankle and broken fibula requiring surgery.
2/15/2020	WTC	Day hike	Leg, ankle injuries	Loose soil	Condor Peak	While hiking up to Condor Peak the group stopped to do a Navigation exercise. Participant dropped his hiking pole and when trying to retrieve it slipped and fell down the slope next to the trail. Leaders assisted him back up to the trail and determined it was possible to self-evacuate. His carpool person drove him home. That night he went to hospital where it was determined he had a left ankle avulsion and a fractured fibula.
2/22/2020	WTC	Rock scramble	Twisted ankle	Fall/slip	Joshua Tree	While rock scrambling during Joshua Tree weekend, participant slipped and turned her ankle. She was able to return to camp and to participate in a navigation exercise the next day.
2/23/2020	WTC	Cooking in camp	Burn	Fuel leak	Joshua Tree	While preparing breakfast during the Joshua Tree weekend, participant's stove began leaking fuel and then caught fire. Two leaders were able to shut off the stove. Participant thought she might have burned her hands. Subsequently there was no blistering, only redness. She was able to participate in the weekend activities.
12/11/2021	Natural Science	Car camp / day hike	Sprain/strain	Obstacle on trail	Near Ridgecrest	While hiking on a trail in Red Rock Canyon State Park, a participant stepped on a loose rock and slipped and reported feeling a pop and pain in her ankle. She

						was escorted back to the cars and driven by her carpool partner to Ridgecrest where she had the injury X-rayed and put in a cast. She stayed the night there and returned home the next morning. She did not require surgery.
Date	Entity	Activity	Injury	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes
12/18/2021	Hundred Peaks	Backpack	Twisted knee	History of knee problems	Rabbit and Villager Peaks	A participant on a backpack to Rabbit and Villager peaks twisted her knee during the night while in her tent. She wears a knee brace while hiking. She did not tell the leaders. While hiking from Villager to Rabbit she had to stop, waiting for the group to return from Rabbit. While hiking slowly back to the cars, she informed the leaders about her knee pain but made it back without incident.

## ***INCIDENTS 2020-21***

Date	Entity	Activity	Incident	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes
1/25/2020	WTC	Day hike	Aching leg	Steep terrain	Sturtevant Trail	While hiking up the Sturtevant Trail, participant complained that her leg was hurting. She returned to the trailhead. She went to urgent care and was told there was a possible stress fracture and to stay off it for a few days.
1/25/2020	WTC	Day hike	Knee pain		Mt. Wilson	Hiking to the top of Mt. Wilson, participant's knee started hurting. He thought he could hike back down using trekking poles but changed his mind when he reached the parking lot at the top. He rode back to the trailhead with one of the leaders.

Date	Entity	Activity	Incident	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes
1/25/2020	WTC	Day hike	Threatening behavior		Griffith Park	While hiking in Griffith Park up to Cahuenga Peak, other hikers informed the group there was someone with a knife threatening people. With the exception of 2 nervous hikers, the leader kept the rest of the group together to await law enforcement. Shortly a police helicopter and police cars arrived. After the suspect was taken into custody the group returned safely to the trailhead.
2/1/2020	WTC	Day hike	Exhaustion		Millard Canyon	While hiking up Millard Canyon, participant had trouble keeping up and was feeling weak and tired. She decided to return at that point to the trailhead and was walked out by an assistant leader.
2/9/2020	WTC	Day hike	Knee pain	Past injury	Sam Merrill Trail	While descending the Sam Merrill trail, participant complained of pain in her knees. Indicated this was a past injury from running. Leaders wrapped each knee with ace bandage, and she was able to make it back to the trailhead.
2/22/2020	WTC	Snow hike	Nausea	Altitude, exertion	Icehouse Canyon	While engaged in a snow hike in Icehouse Canyon, participant began to feel nauseated and lightheaded. Two other leaders escorted him back to the cars where he reported feeling improved.
2/23/2020	Wilderness Adventures	Day hike	Weakness, repeated falls	Exertion	Hondo Canyon	Participant, 88 years old, complained of feeling weak and being shaky. Leaders tried to support her, but she fell about 4-5 times without serious injury. Leaders assisted her back to trailhead and drove her home in her car. She emailed that after taking a shower she was feeling okay. Leaders recommended that she go on easier hikes.
Date	Entity	Activity	Incident	Contributing Factor	Where	Notes

3/8/2020	WTC	Snow Camp	Cold toes	Snow, cold weather	South Lake	Participant complained of cold toes on Sunday morning during a snowshoe hike. Assistant leaders brought her back to camp where they helped warm her feet. She remained in her tent until the group returned, and they all hiked back to the bus without incident.
3/22/2020	WTC	Classroom, outing	Covid		Various	Participant, a WTC student, attended the Feb. 26 lecture in West LA and the Feb. 29-March 1 OC Area Joshua Tree outing. She was not feeling well but attended the March 3 and 10 classes in OC. She initially tested negative for Covid but was notified on March 22 that she had tested positive. Leaders have notified all potentially exposed individuals.
9/24/2021	Local Hikes	Day hike	Covid		Mt. Lowe	During a hike to Mts. Lowe and Muir, participant felt he had cold symptoms. After the hike, he got tested for Covid and got positive result. The leaders notified all the hike participants; everyone reported that they tested negative.