

# TRAILHEAD TALK

This information should be reviewed before every Sierra Club outing. While some topics might require less detail on a short hike, it is important that each topic is covered. Leaders should be sure to have all the required forms and to carry with them on the outing, e.g. waivers, patent response, minor forms if applicable.

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

- Gather the group together and introduce the trip, yourself/other leaders
- Set a warm, welcoming and inclusive tone by acknowledging everyone.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves and where they are from
- Consider an ice-breaker question or “name game” for longer trips

## 2. Roles and Expectations

- Explain the leader's role and responsibility to the group
- Set or reaffirm the leader's expectations for the outing
- Ask participants for their expectations and concerns

## 3. Complete Paperwork and Sign Waivers

- Have all participants read and sign the liability waiver.
- Note that for trips that include an online RSVP in Campfire Events, you may just be taking attendance and adding those who show up at the trailhead.
- Make sure that you have medical authorization forms for all unaccompanied minors

## 4. Introduce the Conservation Message and Relevant Topics

- Introduce the issue you plan to discuss, materials you may hand out, etc.
- Environment and history of the area you are traveling in
- Land acknowledgements relating to the indigenous peoples who lived there previously.

## 5. Route Plan and Trail Conduct

- Describe the day's route and travel plan including turnaround time, breaks and lunch.
- Designate “leader and sweep” and set rules for group travel, staying between the trip leaders.
- Explain "Pack it in/Pack it out" and other Leave No Trace highlights that apply to your outing.

## 6. Safety Issues

- Explain what to do if one becomes separated from the group
- Describe the inherent risks involved in this activity
- Describe environmental risks the group might encounter
- Briefly describe your safety management plan
- Make sure all participants are comfortable with the risks
- Explain why hydration is important.

## 7. First Aid

- Each participant should have some first aid supplies as part of their 10 Essentials.
- Ask if anyone has medical issues that you should know about; if so, to let you or the assistant leader know in private
- Remind participants about foot and blister care – treat hot spots immediately

## 8. Equipment and Food

- Make sure that all participants have proper gear, food, clothing and the **10 Essentials**

## 9. Are you ready to go?

- Answer any last-minute questions, then go for it!

## Ending an Outing – before everyone goes home, make sure to take care of these details:

- Double check the sign-in sheet or trip roster to ensure all participants are accounted for.
- Distribute outing evaluations to all participants, if your entity uses them
- Invite non-members to join the Club (have brochures with you)
- Distribute any other Club materials you have, particularly ones related to your conservation message.
- Ask participants if it is okay for you and/or Sierra Club to contact them in the future. If not, make note of it on sign-in sheet!
- Make sure everyone has a way home and that their cars start before you leave.
- Thank them for their participation, and invite them to join a Sierra Club outing again

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

## Scene Management:

1. STOP. Get calm and stay calm
2. Protect yourself and your group members
3. Establish primary leader and designate a first aid leader
4. Survey the scene (Is it safe? What happened? How many victims? Can bystanders help?)

## Patient Care/First Aid: (Stay within your level of training!)

1. Get consent to help the patient. (unconscious = consent)
2. Use protective barriers (gloves, breathing device)
3. Check the ABCs and address life-threatening problems
  - Airway: Is the patient's airway clear?
  - Breathing: Is the patient breathing?
  - Circulation: Is there life-threatening bleeding?
4. Do a secondary survey and record patient information (use the Patient Report Form as a guide)
5. Stabilize patient and scene before sending for help

## Develop an Evacuation Plan

(The Patient Report Form has an evacuation plan template on the back.)

- How are you going to safely get the patient help?
- Considerations: urgency, distance, terrain, group strength, route, communication devices.
- Write down the plan.
- If your group splits up, make sure each party has identical copies of the evacuation plan.

## Self-Evacuation (unaided by those outside your group)

- Never let anyone walk out unaccompanied.
- A leader should accompany the evacuation.
- A party of four or more is necessary for longer evacuations (longer than one hour).

## Sending a Messenger Team for Help

- Team size of four is ideal.
- Team should have necessary gear and food to be self-sufficient.
- Team should carry copies of the evacuation plan (see reverse) and patient report(s).
- The patient(s) and field group should stay in one place, so that a rescue team can find them.

## Who to Call

When your group can communicate with the outside world, do the following:

- **Frontcountry Emergencies (< one hour from help):**  
**Contact the local Emergency Medical System (i.e., 911)**
- **Backcountry Emergencies (> one hour from help):**  
**Contact the local search-and-rescue [this info should be in your Safety Management Plan], as well as the E.M.S.**

*See the LRB for more Safety policies (Chapter 3) including about early signing out of participants.*

**For all life-threatening emergencies or fatalities:  
As soon as possible, contact the Sierra Club Outing Department at:  
1-888-OUTINGS (1-888-688-4647) or  
001- 303-282-9914 if calling internationally.  
see incident reporting for more information.**