

# **Albany Chapter ADK**

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## **Trip Leader's Training Guide**

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## Thoughts on Leadership

- Your responsibility: help create an enjoyable trip, maintain safety, manage time, anticipate obstacles and dangers, know what your participants are doing and where they are; be ready, trained, prepared for emergencies; coach, share your knowledge, skills and enjoyment of the outdoors; don't do anything grossly negligent and make sure the group does not get lost.
- Everyone can be a good leader—just practice the skill your own way
- Leadership is learned over time. You won't be a genius on every trip; it's a learning process
- Leading can be lonely especially when making an unpopular decision: no one will remember you cutting a trip short because you deem it unsafe but they will remember the problems associated with continuing an unsafe trip
- Be flexible as conditions change. If a situation worsens or the ability of the group to respond deteriorates, consider a more authoritarian style.
- Don't let a situation dictate to you—stay within common sense and listen to your intuition
- Make good decisions. Consider your options, think outside the box, gather input from participants, assess risks, adjust as new information becomes available
- Be caring, sensitive to others, deal with conflict, listen
- Build a relationship with and among others
- If you are an experienced leader but on this trip as a participant, support the leader

## Planning a Trip

- Decide what trip you want to lead and be sure you are in shape for it.
- Is it one you have done before or will it be an adventurous exploring trip?
- Determine the length and difficulty, and the number of hours it will entail.
- Where will the trip take place?
- The Albany ADK requests that no High Peaks trips be scheduled during mud season (April and May) in order to protect the trails from greater erosion
- How far will the drive be? Copy the driving route . Determine a “car pool fee” (see page 8)
- Refer to trail books and maps; know what difficulties may be encountered
- Will there be enough hours of daylight? Remember that going with a group will take longer than going on your own. Plan for breaks.
- Know where the nearest medical facility is
- Think of the *Cloudsplitter* write-up—how will you describe it so that prospective participants know what to expect? Elevation changes, level of difficulty—use the charts that are included in the *Cloudsplitter* to determine a rating

## Details

- Where will the group meet? A “park & ride” en route makes a convenient and safe location. You can find locations of park & rides on [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)
- What size group would you like? ADK sets a maximum number of participants at twelve and recommends a minimum party of three (four during winter conditions)
- Determine if you need a co-leader
- Do the participants need any special gear? (see pages 5 and 6) Remind them to bring food and water
- Before you go, email the group to confirm meeting location, time, and warn them of any change in conditions or requirements. Also mention the need for volunteer drivers and tell them the suggested car pool fee (see page 8)
- Pack a First Aid kit (see page 7)

## Screening Prospective Participants

- You will have a mix of responses both by phone and email. Make sure each respondent knows what the trip entails based on the *Cloudsplitter* write-up
- Add any information that has come up since the publication, and add details that the description would not have had room for
- Tactfully determine the ability of the respondent—what have they done lately? Do they have appropriate gear? Medical conditions?
- Make sure you have a phone number, email address, and correct spelling of their name
- Minors must be accompanied by a responsible adult
- Go with your gut feeling if you think a respondent is not up to the trip. Be polite but firm
- Try to steer people that you feel are unqualified to another trip
- Tell respondents that you look forward to having them participate and remind them to let you know if they have to cancel

## Day of the Trip

- Leave a list of participants’ names, contact information, and trip route description with a spouse or friend
- Don’t be afraid to cancel a trip due to bad weather. If the forecast is dire, try to email participants a couple of days ahead that the trip is questionable.
- Make sure you have an adequate First Aid kit (see page 7)

## **At the Meeting Location**

- Greet arrivals, check their names off your list, and have them sign the waiver (see end pages)
- Make sure everyone has appropriate gear, food and water
- Organize who will drive and distribute driving maps (remember: if you are spotting cars, you have to fit everyone in the vehicles that will be at each end of the trail)
- Let them know if there are any planned stops on the road en route

## **At the Trailhead**

- Make sure everyone has arrived; take a head count
- Appoint a trail sweep (one of the more experienced people who has good interpersonal skills)
- Sign the trail register
- Remind participants that the group may get spread out, but that it is necessary for those ahead to wait for others
- If there are bathroom facilities, tell them so they can plan ahead. If there are no facilities, tell participants to let someone know if they step off the trail.

## **During the trip**

- Safety is your first concern
- Set a pace that all can handle. If you have co-leaders, appoint one to be with the faster or slower group.
- Take a head count often
- Stop for breaks periodically and wait for the last of the group to have sufficient rest before you begin again
- Be flexible about your goal
- The Trip Leader makes the final decisions. While okay to take advice from participants, in the end you determine the solution to a problem.
- Stay aware of attitudes—is everyone doing okay?
- Is the weather or environment changing? Is there adequate remaining daylight? Should you make a change? Turn around?
- Be wary of anyone who wants to take a side trip by themselves. They came to hike with the group. If they insist on splitting off, consider all the conditions and make sure they have maps, head lamps, and know whether they expect you to wait at the cars for them.

- If the group wants to add a side trip and you decide to go with the group's decision, remember that someone may not want to do more and may feel group pressure to "add another mountain." Try to stick with the description you wrote up in the *Cloudsplitter*.
- If someone cannot continue the trip, he/she must be accompanied back to the starting point to wait for the group. Do not let anyone return alone.
- Enjoy the trip! Have some laughs and a sense of humor

### **At the end of your trip**

- Take a head count—be sure everyone is out of the woods
- Thank participants for coming
- Make sure all cars leave the parking area safely
- Assess your feelings about the trip and any feedback you might have received
- Send in liability form
- If someone was injured, follow up and see how he/she is doing (see page 7)
- Send in your trip report for inclusion in the next *Cloudsplitter*
- Start planning your next trip

## **Hiking Gear** (modify for paddling and biking trips)

### **Basic essential items for a day pack (summer/all season)**

- comfortable sturdy boots
- adequate food and water
- extra shirt, jacket or sweater
- hat, gloves or mittens
- extra pair of socks
- long pants and long-sleeved shirt if bushwhacking or if you are anywhere other than the High Peaks. Ticks carrying Lyme disease are present in most areas. Long clothing offers protection from ticks
- rain gear
- first aid kit
- water purification tablets
- headlamp or flashlight
- wrist watch
- pocket knife
- topographic map
- guidebook
- compass
- small notebook with pen or pencil
- waterproof matches and candle
- toilet paper
- small trowel to dig cathole latrine
- whistle
- sunscreen
- camera and personal items

### **Add for Spring or Fall:**

- instep crampons
- snowshoes if needed
- sunglasses
- bug dope
- extra layer of clothing for upper body

**Add for Winter:**

- snowshoes or skis
- full-boot or instep crampons
- ice axe
- polypropylene (or equivalent) long underwear, top and bottom
- face mask or balaclava
- wool or pile hats (2)
- mittens or gloves (2 pair)
- extra layer of clothing for upper body
- ski poles or hiking poles with basket
- water bottle insulator
- extra socks
- goggles (for exposed peaks)
- spare batteries for headlamp
- space blanket
- small closed-foam pad to sit on
- thermos with a hot drink

Hiking conditions do not always coincide with the calendar seasons. Hikers and trip leaders must be prepared for adverse conditions that may suddenly occur. Weather and trail conditions are especially difficult to predict in early spring, and in early fall.

## **First Aid**

- It is recommended that leaders learn First Aid. The Red Cross and the ADK have ongoing opportunities to become certified
  - Find out if any of the participants have any special medical skills
  - Suggestions to include in your First Aid Kit:
    - Tweezers, or small scissors
    - Space blanket
    - Knife
    - Unbreakable mirror for signaling for help
    - Assorted wire, tape
    - Flashlight, extra batteries
    - Matches, lighter
    - Whistle
    - Pain relievers (aspirin and non-aspirin)
    - Ace bandage
    - Band-aids
    - Gauze bandages
    - Ammonia inhalant
    - Bug bite/sting medication
- Put emergency kit in plastic waterproof zip-lock bag

## **In Case of Injury:**

- Stay calm
- Assess extent of the injury and resources (is a doctor/nurse available?)
- Stabilize patient
- Check vital signs
- If patient can't be moved, send for medical help making sure someone stays with the patient at all times
- Don't be afraid to overrule group sentiment even if it means canceling the remainder of the trip
- If it is okay for the rest of the group to continue, clearly establish leadership, head count and time due back
- Make sure you have sufficient help and equipment to get injured person to treatment and make sure someone stays with the patient during treatment and ensures the patient can get home safely
- If professional medical assistance is required, complete an injury report and get it to the Outings Chair immediately (see end page)

## Emergency Phone Numbers

- DEC Emergency Dispatch: this number is good throughout the state in case of an emergency (518) 891-0235
- DEC Ray Brook: call this number for emergencies and conditions in the Adirondacks (518) 891-1370
- Adirondak Loj: for emergencies at Heart Lake and the Garden (518) 523-3441
  
- New York State Police:
  - Ray Brook: (518)897-2000
  - Glens Falls: (518) 745-7803
  - Catskill: (518) 622-8600
  - Newburgh: (914) 778-7111
  
- Hospitals:
  - Adirondack Medical (518) 523-3341
  - Glens Falls Hospital (518) 792-3151
  - Albany Medical (518) 262-3125
  - Ellis Hospital (518) 382-4124
  - Columbia Memorial (518) 828-7601

Remember that there are still many areas where cell phones do not work. Phones often get reception on mountain summits, but not on the trails. It is always wise to know where the nearest ranger station is, and how to physically get there.

## Car Pool Fee:

The ADK does not have any written rules about how to set a car pool fee. In my experience, most drivers are glad to receive money for transporting riders, others feel awkward about the whole topic of accepting or requesting a cash donation, and some drivers do not want any compensation.

As a leader, you can solve these dilemmas by setting an amount before the trip, based on the mileage from the meeting location to the trailhead. To find the mileage, [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) or [www.googlemaps.com](http://www.googlemaps.com) works well for determining this if you are unsure. Remember to double the number for the round trip. When I lead an outing, I use the Schenectady ADK's formula for a dollar amount which is:

If gas costs \$3.50/gallon – ask for 7 cents per mile  
\$4.00/gallon – ask for 8 cents per mile  
\$4.50/gallon – ask for 9 cents per mile...and so on

When you send out your final email to your participants, tell them what the suggested car pool fee is. That way both drivers and riders know what to expect.

## **Thank You!**

Your help in leading outings means a lot. Please let us know if there is anything you need help with.

The Albany Chapter ADK has the rare location between the Adirondacks, Catskills, and Berkshire/Taconic areas. We are able to offer a superb variety of outings. We hope that our leaders and our participants will take in the beauty and richness of these areas, and have fun in nature.

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Phil Seward, Albany Chapter Chair -- 527-1851, [pseward@nycap.rr.com](mailto:pseward@nycap.rr.com)

This Training Guide is based on the 1999 guide written and printed by Carl Klinowski and Barb Traver, Outings Co-chairs of the Albany Chapter ADK at that time. I thank them for providing a guide for ten years. I also included aspects from the Schenectady Trip Leader Training Guide written by Mac Stafford in 1998. Many thanks to everyone who helped compile these texts in past years.

-- VBT, July 2008

Cover Photo: Looking down on Giant's Washbowl on Ridge Trail of Giant Mt. Photo by Virginia Boyle Traver

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB, INC.  
814 Goggins Road, Lake George, NY 12845-4117  
(518) 668-4447

TRIP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE of TRIP \_\_\_\_\_

TRIP LEADER \_\_\_\_\_

CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE OF LIABILITY – GROUP FORM**

By signing below, I acknowledge that the outdoor recreational activities associated with the above described trip to be conducted by the Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc. (ADK) and its chapters are rigorous outdoor sports activities which may involve the risk of personal injuries or death:

I hereby agree for myself, all of my family members and heirs, to be effective to the greatest extent permitted by law, to release ADK and any of its employees, officers, directors, governors, members, trip leaders, chapters, or agents from any and all liability claims, losses, and/or damages for personal injuries or death which may occur during participation in the above-named trip and the outdoor recreation activities associated with said trip.

I hereby agree for myself, all my family members and heirs, to be effective to the greatest extent permitted by law, not to sue or make any negligence claim against ADK, or any of its agents, employees, officers, instructors, guides, directors, governors, trip leaders and members for personal injuries or wrongful death suffered as a result of participation in the above-named trip or activity.

I intend this release and agreement not to sue to be effective whether or not the injury or death results, in whole or part, from the negligence of the ADK, or any of its agents, employees, officers, instructors, guides, directors, governors, trip leaders and/or members.

I understand that negligence means failure to do an act which a reasonably careful person would do, or the doing of an act which a reasonably careful person would not do, under the same circumstances, to protect another from injury or death.

I agree to be solely responsible for my own safety and to take every precaution to provide for my own safety and well-being while participating in the outdoor recreational activities of the ADK.

I knowingly assume the following risks, which include but not limited to, the risk of personal injuries or death, which may occur during participation in the above-named trip and the outdoor recreation activities associated with said trip.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

IF UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST READ AND SIGN BELOW: I am the legal guardian of the above minor and have read the above RELEASE. I hereby consent to the terms of the RELEASE on behalf of the above-named minor, and give my consent to the participation of the above-named minor in the outdoor recreational activities of the ADK and I hereby give my consent to the participation of the above-named minor in all the activities of the ADK on the terms stated above.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

<--- COMPLETE THIS PORTION, SEND WITH MESSENGER PARTY --->

ACCIDENT Day/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm \_\_\_\_\_  
OCCURRED EXACT Location (include marked map): \_\_\_\_\_

Terrain: Steep/Ice/Snow/Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Weather conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

VICTIM Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address(City/State) \_\_\_\_\_  
Height&Weight: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe Accident/Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe size/severity of each injury  
and each body part affected: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT Date & time of exam: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm \_\_\_\_\_  
CONDITION Pulse: \_\_\_\_\_ per min. Strong/weak \_\_\_\_\_  
OF VICTIM Respiration: \_\_\_\_\_ per min. Weak/gasping/painful \_\_\_\_\_  
Alert/confused/semiconscious/unconscious \_\_\_\_\_  
Skin color: Normal/pale/bluish/red \_\_\_\_\_  
Temperature: Normal/hot/cold \_\_\_\_\_  
Overall condition: Stable/worsening(how fast?) \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST AID Airway/CPR/Bleeding stopped/Shock treated  
DONE/IN Hypothermia treated/Splints applied  
PROGRESS Shelter made/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

EQUIPMENT First aid kit/Tent/Sleeping bag/Food/stove  
AT SCENE Extra clothing/Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# of others at scene: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

PLANS Will stay put/Will evacuate to \_\_\_\_\_  
AT SCENE via (describe route EXACTLY) \_\_\_\_\_

EQUIPMENT Tents/Stove/Sleeping Bag(s)/Food/For how many?  
NEEDED Stretcher/Backboard/Splints/Bandages  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSISTANCE Please meet us at: \_\_\_\_\_  
REQUESTED Need help to walk out \_\_\_\_\_  
Need stretcher \_\_\_\_\_  
Send specialized medical help to scene \_\_\_\_\_

<--- KEEP THIS PORTION AT SCENE & RECORD VITAL SIGNS ON BACK --->

1. Assess the scene; no one should approach the victim until  
it is clear there is no immediate danger (rock slide, avalanche).

2. Provide first aid to the victim:

A. Check Airway/Breathing/Circulation

B. Check entire body for ANY other injuries

C. Treat injuries and also for shock

D. Continuously monitor for changes in condition

E. If it is generally safe to give fluids in small amounts  
to an alert, fully conscious victim without abdominal injury

3. Send messenger party for help:

A. Send two people if at all possible.

B. Leave one person with the victim.

C. Carry completed accident report and map showing  
EXACT location of victim.

D. Carry map, compass, food, flashlights, water, matches  
and extra clothing (be prepared for bivouac).

E. Mark route to scene clearly so a rescue party  
can follow it back in.

F. Do not split up. Don't travel so quickly as to become  
lost or injured.

G. Report accident to authorities. Try to meet rescuers  
at trailhead if possible.

4. At scene:

A. Make victim comfortable. Maintain body temperature.  
Protect victim from the elements.

B. Set up a temporary camp.

C. Prepare food/hot drinks for all group members.

D. Assign a person to remain with victim at all times.

5. Observe victim CONSTANTLY until rescue party arrives. Record  
vital signs and changes in condition. Watch for:

A. Cessation of breathing/heartbeat

B. Blockage of airway

C. Recurrence of bleeding

D. Signs of shock or other changes in condition

6. It is generally safest for the victim to be evacuated by  
stretcher. Consider walking or carrying out the victim without  
assistance only if the distance to be travelled is short, terrain  
and weather are not severe and if there is adequate manpower and  
equipment available.