

**LEADER'S GUIDE**  
**for Hiking, Skiing, Snowshoeing, Biking**  
**Penticton Outdoors Club**

This guide is a refresher for those who lead club activities, but particularly a manual for active members who would like to lead a hike\*, ski, snowshoe, or biking trip and aren't quite sure how to go about it. It is organized as a checklist so that you can run through the steps quickly once familiar with the contents. If new to leading, first find an experienced leader who will be glad to be a mentor and accompany you on a trial run.

1. Think of a location, where to go. It may be a place you or the club has already been to. Many of our hikes are repeats; the location doesn't have to be unique. The hike etc. could be a circuit, or have a different beginning and ending point. In the latter case, carpooling is probably needed, which means some organizing of vehicles before the hike begins. If it's a **new hike**, plan well in advance: you may need to reconnoitre the hike two or three times before you feel confident that you can retrace the route. It may not be advisable to commit to a specific new hike before you have evaluated its feasibility.
2. Pick a date and time for the hike. Most club events are on Saturdays, though Sundays are also a possibility. Hikes etc. are scheduled at planning meetings, which are advertised in the current schedule or by email.
3. At least a few days before the scheduled hike etc., organize a reconnoitre of the hike with your mentor or another person. Note the driving time to trailhead, and starting time of the hike. If possible, take along a portable saw to clear deadfall. Take flagging tape to mark the trail if there is likelihood of confusion for yourself. Identify good locations for a break and/or lunch. Note ending time and any particularly difficult spots, such as steep grades, rock scrambles, water, boggy areas etc. Ensure there is suitable access for vehicles to the trailhead as well as safe parking. Some trips may require hikers to carpool using AWD or 4WD high clearance vehicles.
4. Email the POC Secretary with the wording for a notice to go out the week of the hike, etc. Important information includes meeting place and time, location of hike, brief description of hike, degree of difficulty and estimated duration. (See General Information document for descriptors for difficulty levels.) Also note any particular items to bring, such as hiking poles, gaiters, waterproof boots.
5. People are encouraged to phone you ahead of the trip to register, and to ask if they can bring a friend or dog. The club allows two "free" hike for a guest. It is up to the leader to allow a dog on a hike. If dogs are to be allowed, for most events it would be appropriate to require that they be kept on a leash.

Sign-up: for **new participants**, question them to confirm that they are likely to be able to cope with the hike's degree of difficulty.

On the day of the hike.

5. Be at the meeting point early. Have a printed copy of the event signup sheet (available from club website). Bring along a first aid kit. Count the number of participants, and make sure the count matches the number of names on the sign-up sheet. Ask someone (such as your mentor) to be the “sweep”. Her or his task is to make sure no-one is left behind, or having difficulties. Make sure that all car-pool drivers know how to get to the trailhead, or are following someone does.

Introduce **new participants** to the group (e.g. when gathered at the trailhead). The leader sets the pace and maintains the right to ask any participants who are unprepared or not in healthy shape, to not take part, or to turn back. (If someone turns back, he/she should be accompanied back to the starting point.)

6. At the end of the hike, ski, snowshoe or biking event, give the sign-up sheet to the President or Secretary of the club, with any information that you think should be passed on. If you have pictures of the hike you would like passed on to others, email them to our Webmaster and to the Secretary.

NOTE: Sometimes, because of adverse weather, there is a need to make a change of location, meeting time or place, or to cancel the event. The leader then can phone those who have registered for the hike, etc. (which is why we ask members to phone ahead to register for events). If the group numbers are large, phone a few and give them the names and numbers of others registered whom they can phone (an on-the-spot phoning tree). Let the Secretary know also; that person often gets calls about scheduled events.

Good luck!

\* for “*hike*”, read “*hike, bike, ski or snowshoe*”, as appropriate throughout this guide. Not all of the guidelines will be applicable to all types of event.

(Revised December 6, 2012)