

Hike Leader Guidelines

Below are the general guidelines that our Hike Leaders go by in the Club:

1. The leader is in charge of and responsible for the hike. However, each member and guest is responsible for his or her own behavior and safety.
2. **Scout the Hike:** Unless you are familiar with the hike you have volunteered to lead, you should scout the assigned hike prior to the scheduled hike. Locate the trailhead, determine parking capacity, assess trail conditions, and establish a lunch/break stop if that is appropriate.
3. **Leader Authority:** Based on the leader's best judgment that a hiker is not physically capable of completing the hike and/or the hiker is not properly equipped for the hike, the leader has the authority to deny a hiker the right to participate in the hike.
4. **Assign the "Sweep":** It is a good practice to count everyone at the beginning of the hike and again periodically to ensure everyone is still with the hike. Watch for hikers who are having difficulty and wait if hikers become too separated from the main body. Assign an experienced hiker to be the "Sweep" and request they remain the last person in the group.
5. **Maintain control of the Hiking Group:** On the trail, at every trail junction, make stops to insure that all hikers are still with the leader. It is the leader's responsibility to keep the hiking group intact between a leader and a sweep. If a hiker insists on hiking in front of the hike leader, that hiker may be informed that he/she is now on his/her own and he or she will no longer be considered as part of the hike group. The leader, at his or her discretion, may allow faster hikers to go ahead as long as there is a clear understanding between the leader and the fast hikers when and how they will link up. If it is apparent that someone cannot keep up, it is advisable to send him/her back to the trailhead with someone.
6. **Guns and dogs are not welcome on PHC hikes.** One exception is that on hikes connected with campouts, dogs may come along if they are within the control of the owner.
7. **Discussion of religion and politics should be avoided.** These topics may create intense personal feelings that are not conducive to enjoying good fellowship and a pleasant outdoor experience.
8. **Emergency Procedures:** It is recommended that all hike leaders should carry a first aid kit and a fully charged cell phone. It is suggested that hike leaders know the local emergency numbers and the local park contact numbers. It is also a good idea for leaders to use a sign up sheet with hikers' contact information in the unlikely event that a hiker gets lost or injured.
9. **Watch for lost hikers:** If any hiker is unaccounted for, the leader must assess the situation and is expected to use good judgment in determining the best course of action to find the lost hiker.
10. **Hike Cancellation/Re-rerouting:** Hike leaders may cancel their scheduled hike at their discretion. When cancelling a hike, contact the Webmaster and hike scheduler so cancelled hikes may be

posted on the Club website home page and members be emailed of the cancellation. When a leader intends to cancel a hike it is recommended that the leader drive to the meeting place in case hikers are there ready to hike. Hike leaders may reroute a scheduled hike at their discretion if there is some justification that makes this action advisable.

11. **Incident Reporting:** Hike leaders are requested to contact a member of the Steering Committee as soon as practical following any incident that occurs on a hike or other Club sponsored event that may concern the leader. This may include an accident, injury, possible crime or property damage.