



The Halton Outdoor Club

Things You Need to Know

2018

Best Practices for HOC Activities

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in consultation with the HOC Club Manager, Activity Directors, Communications Director, and all members of The Halton Outdoor Club Board of Directors

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Things you should know ... as leaders and participants

1. Background

As members of HOC we expect to be involved in great outdoor activities including cycling, paddling, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing. Enjoyment, exercise, camaraderie, safety, and new experiences are all part of the HOC plan behind providing the array of activities our club offers.

2. Fundamentals for Leaders and Participants

- safety
- responsibility
- due diligence
- duty of care

A set of best practices is outlined below, with a primary focus on safety for each activity. Best practices include the acceptance of responsibility on the part of both leaders and participants. While we expect our leaders practice due diligence, the duty of care rests on the shoulders of each of us. We need to dress appropriately for each activity with safety the foremost point of consideration. Our manner needs to be such that we follow the guidelines presented by the club and the trip leader, so that everyone can have fun and feel safe. We are a bunch of volunteers endeavouring to make great things happen for one another.

3. General Best Practices (All activities/sports)

3.1 Best Practices for Participants

1. follow the guidelines presented by the club and the trip leaders, so that everyone can have fun and feel safe.

3.2 Best Practices For Trip Leaders

1. Follow the best practices laid out by the Activity Director
2. Hold the appropriate qualifications or experience identified as necessary by the director.
3. Practice due diligence and address duty of care.
4. Bring a manifest list and several release and waiver forms with you for the activity.
R&W forms can be printed from our HOC website.

At the beginning of each event

Best practices will need to be outlined at the beginning of every event regardless of how often members have heard them.

Non-Members / Guests

Have non-members / guests fill out a release and waiver form.

Follow the guidelines listed here

1. Present the best practices for that particular event to the group of participants before the activity starts.
2. Take attendance, checking the manifest list for the event.
3. For activities where no payment is required, you may add HOC members and guests to the manifest list who did not register ahead of time. Give completed R&W forms to your director or to Bonnie, our club manager. Participants are welcome to attend two trips as non-members. After that they are asked to become members. Please pass on the names of non-members/guests who have attended two events to Bonnie.
4. Maintain a safe ratio of leader(s) to participants. For a large group, create two or three small groups. Request that an experienced participant lead the subsequent group(s).
5. Tell participants that it is their responsibility to complete the activity with the group. Point out that the leader is no longer responsible for a participant's well being if that person leaves the group before the completion of an activity.
6. Save opportunities to consume alcohol, perhaps at a pub, until after a club activity is completed.

4. Specific Best Practices

4.1 Skiing and Snowshoeing

Best Practices for Participants

1. Dress appropriately for the weather.
2. Be aware of bus departure times

Best Practices for Trip Leaders

1. Follow the set routines for ski/snowshoe day trips outlined on the provided materials found the the black bag.
2. Announce the guidelines to all participants on the bus for the ski/snowshoe day.
3. Be aware of the location for the day's event and be prepared to assist the bus driver with directions if necessary.
4. Carry a cellphone where possible.
5. For extended trips share your knowledge about the ski/snowshoe destinations, transportation systems and any other pertinent details.*

*More About Extended Trips:

Since activities on extended trips are not set up as guided excursions, participants are free to leave the group at any time. Participants are also free to choose to have an alcoholic beverage with their lunch on these self-guided excursions.

4.2 Paddling

Best Practices for Participants

1. Wear an appropriate personal flotation device during all HOC paddling activities.
2. Dress appropriately for the weather and the water temperature.
3. Carry enough water to keep you hydrated throughout the day.
4. Paddle between the leader, the sweep, and other assistants.
5. Successfully complete a basic kayak lesson which includes a wet exit and a rescue. Beginners without training are allowed to participate only when the activity is a commercially guided event offered by an outfitter.

Best Practices for Trip Leaders

1. Maintain a general ratio of one guide or instructor to every six participants.
2. Designate a sweep who is an experienced paddler, as well as other assistants as necessary.
3. Carry a cell phone and a first aid kit.
4. Be equipped with tow lines and spare paddles.
5. For multi-day wilderness trips, a VHF or PLB is recommended along with a cell phone. Wilderness First Aid or the equivalent experience is required for leaders or assistants on these trips.

4.3 Cycling

Best Practices for Participants

1. Wear a helmet on all HOC cycling trips.
2. Dress appropriately for the weather.
3. Carry enough water to keep you hydrated throughout the day.

Best Practices for Trip Leaders

1. Lead the way for the trip, communicate the route and convey information about any hazards that may exist.
2. Designate a sweep who is an experienced cyclist.
3. Maintain a general ratio of one leader to fifteen participants.
4. Carry a cell phone where possible and a first aid kit.

4.4 Hiking

Best Practices for Participants

1. Wear appropriate footwear on all HOC hiking trips. Hiking boots are recommended.
2. Dress appropriately for the weather.
3. Carry enough water to keep you hydrated throughout the day.
4. Hike between the leader and the sweep.

Best Practices for Trip Leaders

1. Provide information about the terrain, distance, speed of the hike, and hazards that may exist along the way.
2. Designate an experienced hiker as a sweep.
3. Maintain a general ratio of one leader to twenty participants.
4. Carry a cell phone where possible plus a whistle and a first aid kit.

Enjoy and be safe

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