



Colorado Mountain Club: Leadership Manual

Updated 2023

2023 UPDATES:

- *Title change from “Trip Leader Manual” to “Leadership Manual” to include Instruction / Field Days during classes*
- *First Aid Policy for Trip Leaders & Instructors (chapter 2, pg. 4)*
- *Avalanche Education for Leaders & Instructors (chapter 2, pg. 4)*
- *Hiker Classifications (Appendix A, pg. 58)*
- *Lightning and Wildfire Guidelines (chapter 6, pg. 41 and 42)*
- *Trip Difficulty Ratings (Appendix A, pg. 60)*

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CHAPTER 1 – CMC LEADER MANUAL INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Congratulations on your interest in becoming a CMC Leader or brushing up on the manual. While there are many different leadership capacities at the Colorado Mountain Club, a “Leader” in this manual is defined as a CMC member that is an active Trip Leader, Instructor or School Director. If you are already volunteering in one of these capacities, this manual will be both a resource and review for you. For new leaders, the manual will give you the valuable information to become a great leader.

The Colorado Mountain Club Leader Manual is meant to serve as a reference for those who volunteer their time to lead CMC trips, teach CMC classes and a resource for leadership trainers throughout the CMC. Reading this guide is another way to increase your knowledge of leader responsibilities.

Leaders will learn about duties and responsibilities, as well as a number of “tried and true” tips to lead safe and fun trips while adhering to CMC guidelines. The manual is organized into chapters with the following information:

- CMC leader requirements
- Information about planning and conducting a trip
- Safety management and emergency response
- CMC trip policies, guidelines, and insurance issues
- CMC history, structure, and programs

This manual does not cover technical information and may not cover all the information required by your local CMC group.

The Colorado Mountain Club urges all leaders to seek further knowledge and hone leadership skills through training, experience, and books on outdoor leadership. Many CMC groups offer leadership training, first aid training, and other types of training. Contact your group for more information.

Future revisions of the Leader Manual rely on feedback and ideas from volunteers who are leading trips, as well as best practices in the outdoor education field. Please contribute by submitting your suggestions to the CMC office (office@cmc.org).

CHAPTER 2 – LEADER ROLES AND QUALIFICATIONS

This chapter provides information about:

1. Statewide CMC Minimum state-wide standards for all CMC Leaders.
2. The roles and competencies of CMC trip leaders.

The following requirements apply to all Colorado Mountain Club leaders.

Additional leadership requirements may apply; please check your Group.

- Be a **Colorado Mountain Club member**.
- Be at least **18 years of age**.
- **Complete Leader Training and be proficient in the 15 Trip Leader Competencies (see table below in Chapter 2 of the CMC Leader Manual).**
- Have **mountain skills** adequate for the trip.
- Regardless of experience, complete a Leader in Training (LIT) trip. This means you need to **co-lead at least one trip** with an experienced leader and receive a positive evaluation by that leader for the specific trip classification. (Note: some groups have additional LIT requirements.)
- Receive approval or Trip Leader Certification by their CMC Group (See appendix for an updated contact list for each group)
- **First Aid Requirements**
Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification or higher. *WFA certification is valid for 2 years. CPR training is encouraged but not required. CPR is required of some CMC instructors teaching on public lands.*
- **Avalanche Education Requirements for leaders:**
 - Avalanche education is a necessary part of managing risk in outdoor recreation in Colorado. CMC recommends avalanche education for all trip leaders regardless of sport or season.
 - Any trip leader traveling on snow covered terrain at any time of year is required to have the following avalanche education based on the terrain.
 - **Avalanche Terrain Avoidance (ATA)** is recommended for all CMC trip leaders (regardless of sport or season) and required for leaders who travel in snow-covered areas but do not travel in avalanche prone terrain.
 - **AIARE Level 1** (or equivalent) is required for trip leaders who travel in avalanche prone terrain.
 - The CMC defines “*Non-avalanche prone terrain*” as *terrain with stable snowpack; slope angles not in the 25-45 degree range; that does not include terrain traps (e.g., stream beds, gullies, or steep road cuts) or snow pillows, roll-overs, cornices and subtle micro-terrain features; and that does not have avalanche prone terrain above the selected route.*)

Staying Current:

Leaders are required to keep their certifications current.

- **WFA** – certification of the 16-hour class every 2 years (*This is an international standard. CMC no longer allows for any form of “refresher” in place of a current WFA certification.*)
- **ATA** – Re-take 8-hour class every 5 years (to be made readily available to leaders with field days across the state)
- **AIARE Level 1** - AIARE Companion (Avalanche) Rescue 1-day course or equivalent every 5 years (no need to re-take Level 1)
- **1 Trip Per Year minimum:** In order to maintain your Trip Leader Status, each Trip Leader is required to Lead (or co-lead) 1 trip per year. A “Year” is based on the CMC Calendar which is October to October.

Types of CMC Leaders

- **CMC Trip Leader:** Activities include non technical and non-specialty activities such as hiking/walking/running based trips.
- **CMC Specialty Trip Leader:** Activities include specialized activities such as Backpacking, Flyfishing, Biking, Skiing, and Adventure Travel. These trips may require specific techniques and equipment.
- **CMC Technical Trip Leader:** Activities include technical activities such as Alpine/Multipitch/Top Rope Ice and Rock/Sport/Trad Climbing.
- **CMC Instructor:** CMC members that are involved in classroom and field-based classes. Within this designation, there may exist “Assistant Leaders, Co-Leaders, Primary Leaders”. Primary Leaders and Co-Leaders are able to fully execute the curriculum of the class as well as complete the required logistical planning to do so. Assistant Leaders may be at various levels of competency but are offering support to the Leader or Co-Leaders. The Primary Leader relates to the point of contact for a particular School.

Roles of a CMC Leader

The leader job description includes five key roles and related responsibilities:

1. Decision-maker

- Plan the trip goals, route, and logistics.
- Make appropriate decisions for changing situations.
- Use your experience to develop good judgment.
- Harness the strengths and knowledge of your group members to solve problems.
- Make focused decisions even when under stress.

2. Risk Manager

- Follow the CMC club-wide policies and your own group’s procedures.
- Be competent in technical skills needed for the trip, including first aid.
- Have an emergency plan.

3. Group Facilitator

- Communicate effectively with participants before, during, and after the trip.

- See the possibilities in any situation and find creative ways to move the group forward.
- Turn challenging situations into opportunities.
- Use humor to keep things in perspective.
- Role-model and teach outdoor skills.

4. Administrative Tasks and Follow-Through

- Post trip or course description.
- Complete required trip forms.
- Follow-up after an emergency.

5. Ambassador for the CMC Cause

- Be able to describe the mission and basic programs of the CMC.
- Present a positive perspective of the CMC.
- Respond constructively to feedback or criticism about the organization.

15 Leader Competencies

The following 15 competencies are important for CMC leaders:

Item	Training Topics	Leaders will be able to describe or demonstrate:
1	About CMC	Basic CMC organizational structure and programs
2	CMC Policy	CMC policies
3	Behavior	Acceptable and unacceptable behaviors of a leader
4	Liability Protections	4 types of liability protection for a CMC Leader
5	Waiver	How to fill out and submit CMC Release of Liability form
6	Planning	What to look for in advance of trip or field day
7	Gear and Clothing	What to take and to expect of participants including ten essentials and their importance
8	Screening	How to ensure each participant is qualified, aware, and prepared
9	LNT Principles	LNT principles and guidelines for the specific area
10	Meeting place	Responsibilities of leaders at the meeting place
11	Trail Head Orientation	How to ensure participants have everything, and know expectations
12	On Trail responsibility	What to do and watch for during the trip or field day.
13	End of trip or field day responsibility	What should be done back at the TH and before leaving the parking area
14	Dealing with emergencies	What to do and who to contact during emergencies and afterwards
15	Reports	How to fill out report forms and why they are important

CHAPTER 3 – BEFORE YOUR TRIP OR FIELD DAY

This chapter provides suggestions and guidelines for:

- Planning a trip using important information, including: CMC trip difficulty ratings, route selection and environmental considerations (weather, Leave No Trace, etc.)
- Developing a trip emergency plan
- Describing participant qualifications for the trip including experience/skills and equipment needed
- Screening trip participant qualifications prior to the trip

Planning a trip or field day requires several steps, beginning with the type of experience you want to lead. The CMC On-line Trip Schedule has many trips that have been developed in the past; these can be helpful guides, especially for new leaders.

Planning Your Trip

- 1. Create a profile for the trip with Routes and Places** by deciding on a location, the type of trip (e.g., backpacking, day hiking), how rigorous the trip will be, and how long it will last. Remember: Leaders generally move faster than participants. Add time for unforeseen delays (environmental and human), breaks, hydration stops, and elevation gain or loss.
- 2. CMC Trip Difficulty Ratings** Because the CMC offers so many trips, we use several criteria in our trip descriptions to classify our various types of trips, focusing on round-trip mileage and total elevation gain. No classification system is perfect, and trip difficulties can vary greatly depending on the season and other factors. See Appendix A for descriptions of the CMC trip difficulty ratings.
- 3. Define the participant profile** by estimating how many participants can safely take part in the trip, whether they need special outdoor skills or experience, and whether the trip will include minors. Consider the following: Will the trip be strenuous or more leisurely? Will beginners be welcomed or only seasoned participants?
- 4. Define the leadership profile** by deciding how many leaders the trip will have, what each leader's role will be, and whether the leader(s) will need any special experience, conditioning, or equipment.

Route Considerations

Become familiar with the route and its location. When leaders consider the route they would like to take, they should keep their trip and participant profile in mind. Also, check for location advisories or restrictions that might be associated with the area. Leaders should have a “plan B” for each trip or field day. Leaders should be respectful of the general public and let them have the right of way. Remember you and your group represent the CMC.

Route change considerations

When considering any changes to the planned route, either before or during the trip, be sure to consider the impact of these changes on the difficulty of the trip, participant expectations, and the emergency plan.

If a route change affects the difficulty of the trip, participants must be notified, further screening and/or discussion should be considered, and the emergency plan should be reexamined.

Scouting

It is a good idea to scout the route and look for hazards (trail conditions, recent snow, road detours, or closures) as well as good places to take breaks, eat lunch, and enjoy interesting vistas. If scouting is not feasible, use maps, guidebooks, other leaders, local sources, and other resources to obtain as much information as possible prior to the trip.

While scouting a route make notes of the location and travel time to possible rest spots, water sources, alternate routes, and escape routes rather than just noting the intended sites and routes.

- Consider the environmental impact: What effect will the larger trip group have on the terrain and the environment compared to the smaller scouting group?
- Consider aesthetic values: Look for the best vistas and incorporate them into your rests.
- Consider the psychological effect of the sequence of sites and events. It is important to note where the difficult portions of the trip are. Do they come early or late in the trip? Are they adequately balanced with rest periods?
- After your trip or field day, consider contributing a Trip Report for that location so that future Trip Leaders and Instructors can reference your experience.

Group Size

The CMC policy recommends that the minimum trip size is four people. The rationale is that in case of injury or accident, one person can stay with the patient and two people can seek assistance.

- **Exceptions include:** A minimum of three participants for trips or two participants for 5th class climbs with reliable communication (defined below).
 - a. 2-way satellite communicator
 - b. Verified* cell service coverage

**"Verified" = knowledge that leaders' cellular device on leaders' current carrier maintains service throughout the trip.*

- If your trip has cancellations or "no-shows" with a result of fewer than three total people or two for 5th class climbs (including you, the leader) the trip is not recognized as a CMC-sponsored trip. If fewer than three people decide to conduct the trip, you are responsible to inform the participants this is no longer an official Colorado Mountain Club trip.

Transportation

Consider the following when making transportation plans:

- Where is the meeting place? Do you have permission to park cars there while people are on the trip?
- How will the group get to the trailhead or trip location?
- Will carpools be used? If so, provide definitive directions.
- **Important:** The Colorado Mountain Club liability insurance does not cover drivers, vehicle owners, or passengers. Leaders must inform participants that the CMC trip officially starts at the trailhead, not at a carpool meeting location.

Leave No Trace Planning

Prior to the trip, leaders must understand Leave No Trace principles and their relevance to the trip location in question. Make sure the co-leader (if applicable) and participants understand these points before the trip begins.

CMC recommends that trip leaders seek out additional training in Leave No Trace practices. See www.lnt.org for more information.

Public Lands

The majority of CMC trips take place on public lands. These lands may be federal (USDA Forest Service, BLM, National Park Service) state, county, or city open space. Trip leaders are required to follow all of the established regulations when using public lands. Because different areas have different regulations, it is essential that the trip leader take personal responsibility to understand and practice the regulations specific to his or her trips. These include group size, permits needed, et cetera. These regulations are subject to change so the leader needs to check with the agency or its website.

Leaders are responsible to have a permit when they are required by the land agency. For example, Indian Peaks Wilderness Area requires permits during certain times of the year. Contact your group or the CMC office for additional information.

Special use permits for public lands

Special use or outfitter guide permits are required on many public lands if CMC charges a fee to the participants for a course or class. This applies to many CMC group schools. CMC trips are offered free of charge to members. If you are leading a field trip as part of a fee-based school or activity, be sure that you have the necessary special use permit. Contact your school director or the CMC Volunteer Programs Coordinator to find out whether your trip requires a special-use permit.

 **New request map** All instructors submitting **new requests** must also **submit a map** of their desired area. Caltopo is a great resource for this and the CMC has a [tutorial video](#). On the map, please indicate: where you will park the route or area you will occupy (highlighting camping spots, if applicable)

Questions?

Any questions regarding CMC permits for public lands can be directed to: CMC Permit Coordinator permits@cmc.org

Emergency Planning Before the Trip

Safety management is a state of mind and should be infused throughout the planning process for the trip. Leaders also need to make the participants aware of any risks associated with the trip. Good trip planning and anticipating potential incidents is the best way to prevent an emergency. Leaders should have an emergency plan before the trip begins. This plan should include the trip itinerary, emergency resources, and contingency/evacuation plans.

Emergency Information to collect: (See CMC website for many of the numbers below.)

- **Hospitals:** Know the locations of nearby hospitals and how to get to them.
- **Ranger Stations:** Know the locations of park ranger stations and if/when they are staffed.
- **Search and Rescue:** Note the contact information for the relevant providers of this service (i.e. Sheriff's office or park rangers), and most important, find out under what circumstances they will provide assistance and evacuation.
- **Phones:** Note locations of nearby pay phones; determine whether cell phones work reliably in the area. It is generally not a good idea to rely solely on cell phones as a critical part of the trip's safety management/emergency response plan.
- **Evacuation Routes:** Identify potential exits from the backcountry that may not be on your planned trip route.

Emergency Contact Information and Medical Information

Emergency contact information should be obtained from trip participants before the trip begins. All CMC members can update their emergency contact information in their on-line

member profile. This information is printed on the trip roster. Leaders should encourage participants to keep their information up to date.

Leaders should ask that participants inform of any medical conditions and/or special medication or medical equipment, such as allergy to bee stings, asthma (inhalers), heart conditions, etc.) that could affect their participation in the trip.

Equipment, Food, and Water

Food and water needs

Make sure trip participants know to bring enough food and water for the trip.

When planning a multi-day route, ensure there is sufficient water along the trail and remind participants to carry water purification methods.

Leader's pack

There are many variations of the “essential” items to carry, depending on the trip and the environment. Listed below are the concept-based “Ten Essential Systems” as adapted from the Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills, 9th edition by the Mountaineers. This is a good starting list of what leaders should consider bringing and expect their participants to bring:

- Navigation equipment (map and compass) And know how to use them
- Fire (matches or lighters)
- Signaling device (whistle or mirror)
- Sun protection (sunglasses and sun block)
- Insulation (extra clothing)
- Nutrition (extra food)
- Hydration (extra water and/or the means to purify more)
- Illumination (flashlight/headlamp)
- First aid kit (see below)
- Emergency shelter - Tarp (10' by 10' light-weight nylon tarp with grommets) or Tent.
- Bonus items: Trip-specific repair kit and tools (ski, pack, etc.), personal locator beacons, two-way radios, cell phones, GPS receivers.

In addition, leaders can consider bringing extras (may be left in the car) to loan to participants who may have forgotten an essential item, like sunglasses, mittens, etc. If these items are not discussed at the trailhead, leaders might consider carrying extras on the trail; having extras might save the group from having to turn around early due to an unprepared participant.

First Aid Kits

The leader's first aid kit will ideally include items necessary to address common wilderness-based emergencies:

Considerations when compiling a first aid kit:

- Leader's first aid training
- Environmental extremes (altitude, cold, heat, endemic diseases)

- Number of people that may require care
- Number of days the kit will be in use
- Distance from definitive medical care
- Availability of a rescue (helicopter, pack animal, etc.)
- Pre-existing medical problems of group members

Five Commandments of Wilderness First aid Kits From the Wilderness Medicine Institute

1. It is impossible to assemble the perfect first aid kit, but trip leaders should still try. Leaders should keep track of things they wish they had brought on previous trips, and things they wish they had brought more of, and reassemble their kit periodically.

2. Repack or recheck the first aid kit before each trip. Check the expiration dates on medications; make sure sterile items have not been torn open, damaged, or dampened; and consider the specific needs that special trips might require. Replace items when damaged by heat or cold. Remove unnecessary items (e.g., insect repellent when conducting a winter trip).

3. Leaders should not pack anything they do not know how to use. Before the trip, leaders should go through each item in the kit and familiarize themselves with what is there and how to use it.

4. Encourage, if not require, participants to pack and carry a personal first aid kit.

5. Remember that ultimately life and limb are not saved by a kit, but by knowledge and skill, so be sure to get properly trained.

Trip Advertising

The state office at the Colorado Mountain Club can offer assistance with marketing CMC classes and trips at your school. This specific method used depends on what is being promoted. Priority is given to classes and trips that are coming up (proximity) and that have remaining availability we are hoping to fill. In general it is best to contact the state office as early as possible so that multiple opportunities for promotion can be planned out. Office@cmc.org

A general timeline is as follows:

- **2-3 Months before the event:**
 - Make sure that the class or event is visible on the CMC website. Speak to your School Director about this if you aren't familiar with how to do that.
- **1 Month before the event:**
 - Link to event on the CMC calendar, any photos from previous events (or a stock photo of the Marketing Departments choice will be used.
- **2-4 Weeks before the event:**
 - Facebook event: This can be created using a link to the CMC calendar

- Social Media: Link to event on CMC calendar. This requires at least 1 high resolution action photo for an Instagram post.
- Blog post: This must be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance. It requires either a finished blog post or a draft that the Marketing Department can edit.
- **Week of the event:**
 - Social Media - Instagram story only: This requires all materials to be provided and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This requires a link to an event on the CMC calendar, images, and text.
- **Helpful reminders:**
 - Please send everything you need in one email when you submit things. Make sure your event name is in the subject line so that it's easy for the Marketing Department to find when searching.
 - Hunting for photos or trying to decide which text you want to use takes up a lot of time, so please submit things as closely as you'd like for it to appear.
 - Earlier is always better! Feel free to send anything in the list above earlier than the timeline dictates.
 - The more graphic choices, the better. If you need a stock photo, Canva is a useful source. All images need to be high resolution, or they will show up blurry on social/websites and won't be used.
 - If your event is canceled, please let me know as soon as possible so that it can be removed from anywhere it's promoted.
 - Promotion may change depending on scheduling, and any submitted text might be edited for brevity and/or clarity.

For questions related to marketing your event or class please connect with your School Director or contact the CMC office at office@cmc.org.

Pre-Trip Communication: Screening Participants

Participants sign up for trips in different ways, depending on the CMC group. Many participants contact leaders directly to sign up; therefore it is important for those leaders to have skills in screening participants' readiness to participate. The following are key areas to consider when talking with potential participants:

- **Fitness:** Participants should be physically (including conditioning and stamina) and medically fit enough to enjoy the trip and not compromise their or the group's safety.
- **Experience:** Participants should have the technical expertise appropriate for the type of trip, such as off-trail travel, or climbing.
- **Equipment:** Participants should have the necessary equipment to participate in the trip safely, such as food and water, or sturdy footwear.
- **Expectations:** Purpose of trip (e.g., social hike vs. peak bagging)

Screening and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

If a potential participant has a disability, there are additional criteria that must be considered according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

- Reasonable accommodation: Can the person take part on the trip without the Club incurring excessive cost or effort to allow participation?
- Safety: Can the person take part on the trip without endangering his or her own safety or the safety of others?
- Fundamental nature of the trip/activity: Can the person take part on the trip without fundamentally changing the nature of the activity?

Asking good questions

Ask open-ended questions with the goal of obtaining as much information as possible. It is the leader's role to judge the appropriateness of a trip for an individual, not to judge the participant by their general fitness and equipment. Here are some tenets of good questions:

- Screening participants off of trips is not the goal. Instead, the goal is to determine whether the trip is right for them. Consider framing the questions with, "In order to assess whether this is the right trip for you, I want to ask you a couple of questions."
- Asking a few good, open-ended questions solicits more information while putting the potential participants at ease. Open-ended questions tend to be the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" questions. They ask for more information than a simple yes or no.

Sample questions

The goal of these questions is to determine whether the trip or class is a good fit for participants physically. Here are some open-ended questions to help determine a participant's conditioning and stamina:

- "What is your hiking [backpacking, skiing, climbing, etc.] experience and how recent is this experience?"
- "How often do you do this activity?" If the participant has never done it before, ask, "What sort of exercise do you do to stay fit?"
- "Have you done a hike of this length and duration before?"
- "How is your general physical condition? Do you have any allergies or have had major injuries in the past?"
- "Are you willing to stay with the group, even if it's a slow pace for you, or we don't reach the destination?"

The goal of these questions is to help ensure that participants have the appropriate equipment for the activity (and not too much). A leader should use his or her creativity to describe to newer participants the value of and reasons for appropriate footwear, rain gear, etc. Speak of past experiences you've seen to reinforce your suggestions.

"I see you are here in sandals/tennis shoes/jeans; have you done a similar hike wearing them before? Can you describe the last trip where you used these and how they functioned?"

"Did everyone remember to pack food, water, etc.?" (See the Ten Essentials list.)

"Have you used this backpack [boots, tent, sleeping bag, etc.] on a trip like this before, under what conditions, and how did it work for you?"

Steering participants to more appropriate trips

As a leader, it is best to get the participant invested in screening him- or herself off a trip. The leader should paint the real expectations of the trip and how the participant's fitness or equipment may prevent him or her from having a safe and enjoyable trip. Here are some ways to discuss the suitability of the trip and to suggest alternative trips:

- "Generally this trip is more appropriate for people who are able to hike longer distances [for a longer time, at high elevations, in inclement conditions]."
- "I am concerned that this trip may be too long [hard, strenuous, etc.] for you and will not be enjoyable."
- "Though this hike does not seem like a good fit for you, Mary is doing a great hike on Sunday that I think you might enjoy."
- "I know that this weight in your pack is okay right now, but think how it will feel 10 miles in and 1,500 feet higher."

Chapter 3 Review: Before Your Trip or Field Day – A Checklist

Completed	Leader Responsibilities
	Create trip profile using Routes and Place; location, type, classification, length
	Define participant profile – skills, ability, certifications
	Route considerations; identify possible changes
	Scout the trip/activity
	Group size; minimum is 4 people
	Transportation – meeting place
	Obtain special use permits; if required by land managers where your trip will take place
	Emergency planning; hospitals, ranger stations, search & rescue, phones, evacuation plan
	Required equipment; the basics plus other as needed for trip
	Leader's Pack (including CMC forms: incident report, Emergency Contact Card, etc.)
	Pre-trip communication – screen all participants per participant profile

CHAPTER 4 – ON YOUR TRIP OR CLASS

This chapter provides suggestions and guidelines for:

- **Organizing the carpool**
- **Orienting participants at the trailhead**
- **Encouraging good trail etiquette and safety**
- **Ending the trip**

Organizing the carpool

Although leaders' responsibilities begin and end at the trailhead, it is customary for participants to carpool from town to the trailhead. Carpooling is defined here as the use of participant-owned vehicles, or a combination of participant-owned and leader-owned vehicles, for transportation to, from, and during Colorado Mountain Club trips.

Carpool transportation is the responsibility of the participants, both drivers and passengers, even if they are leaders or staff of the trips or activity. **If carpooling occurs, leaders are responsible for ensuring the following:**

- Leaders should advise participants that the CMC does not assume responsibility for carpools.
- Leaders should not assign participants to specific cars. They should limit their involvement in carpool arrangements to helping participants identify who needs and who are offering rides. This precaution limits the leaders' liability as a result of carpooling activity.
- Leaders should check that each carpool driver knows the directions to the trailhead.
- CMC suggests providing each carpool driver with a map of the driving route to the trailhead.
- If available, leaders should encourage the sharing of cell phone numbers from each vehicle.

At the carpool meeting place, typically at a convenient parking area, leaders should arrive 5-10 minutes before the designated meeting time and use this time to check attendance roster and facilitate car-pooling.

As participants arrive, leaders should:

- Greet participants individually and introduce yourself.
- Do a visual check of their required equipment and clothing. It may be helpful to remind them of essentials for the season such as wind gear, traction, sunglasses, etc. If someone does not appear to be prepared for the trip, this is the best place to let them know this is not the trip for them and to encourage them to leave the trip as they have transportation available to them.

Orienting participants at the trailhead

1. **Check that everyone arrived safely** and remind drivers to check vehicles for locked doors, lights off, etc.

2. **Gather the group to orient them to the trip and group safety guidelines:**
 - Ask people to introduce themselves, possibly including any special skills/interests or background.
 - Ask that people with special medical needs or conditions inform the leader.
 - Create opportunities for participants to come to him or her privately to discuss sensitive health and fitness issues, because asking personal questions in front of the group will likely not result in honest answers (e.g., “Does anyone here have a history of heart attacks?” “Who has absolutely no experience?”)
 - Always honor the participant’s dignity.
 - Questions to Avoid: Avoid highly personal or discriminatory questions
 - **Discuss trip goals** and emphasize that these goals may change due to weather or safety factors.
 - **Present a trip overview**, including mileage, elevation gain, and traveling conditions as well as expected pace, stops (e.g., clothing adjustment stop in 20 minutes), turnaround time, and return time to trailhead.
 - **Discuss the weather conditions** and their impact on the trip, if appropriate.
 - Identify lead and rear leaders
 - In smaller groups, a single leader can effectively monitor all participants, and may choose to be at the front, middle or rear of the group.
 - Larger groups may need a designated “front leader” and “rear leader” (or “sweep”). Either a trip leader or a capable and trustworthy participant can be designated as front or rear leader. The front leader keeps track of the route and sets an appropriate pace. The rear leader ensures that no participant is left behind by bringing up the rear of the group.
 - It is a good idea for front and rear leaders to carry a method of emergency communication, such as whistles or two-way radios.
 - Remind participants to stay within vision and hearing of each other.
 - Ask people to communicate if they need to stop or have any special needs.
 - Review applicable **LNT principles** and trail etiquette.

3. **Remember screening participants continues on the trip:**
 - While orienting participants, observe each person’s level of preparation, both their gear (e.g., look over their boots, packs, clothing, and pertinent equipment) and their physical and mental condition. Be sure to count the number of participants before leaving the trailhead for comparison with periodic counts during the trip and upon return to the trailhead.

Principles of good trail etiquette

- The front leader stays at the front and the rear leader (or sweep) is the last person in the group.
- Communication between the front and rear leaders is important, especially if a participant strays from the group.
- Assemble the entire group periodically, between every 15 to 60 minutes depending on weather, terrain, and strength of the group.
- Regroup at trail junctions and stream crossings.
- Step to the side or off the trail when stopping for breaks.
- If someone needs a bathroom break, be sure the rear leader is informed (e.g., tell another participant to tell the rear leader) so that no one is left behind.
- Observe and talk to participants to see if they are having problems with the pace or need more frequent breaks.
- Expect the unexpected, monitor the time, and be aware of changing group dynamics, group stamina, and weather.

Encourage participants to observe Leave No Trace Principles:

- Stay on designated trails and don't cut switchbacks.
- Avoid creating wider trails or multiple trails by walking through puddles on the trail, not around them.
- When walking on open areas where there is no trail, spread out unless it is necessary to walk single file (e.g., in thick brush and to maintain group proximity)
- Use the most stable route, avoiding loose scree unless it offers the safest path.
- Conduct bathroom stops at least two hundred feet from bodies of water.
- Pack out toilet paper in plastic bags.
- Pack out biodegradable food; don't throw it on the ground.
- Rest on rocks, not on vegetation.
- Leave what you find, including flowers and berries.

For more information on Leave No Trace ethics, visit www.lnt.org.

Leaving a Trip Early

It is the leader's job to keep track of participants from the start of a trip to the end. If a participant wishes to depart from the group before the end of a trip, he or she should be encouraged to clearly indicate that they are leaving the trip to the leader and another witness. Preferably, the statement will be in writing, which the trip leader can send to the office in the event of an incident.

Please see Chapter 5 for more information about group dynamics, and dealing with problems during the trip.

Ending the Trip

Before everybody goes home, make sure that you:

- Count the participants, checking the trip roster if necessary, to ensure that all participants are accounted for.
- Thank everyone for coming on the trip and invite them to join another CMC trip.
- Invite non-members to join the club and direct them to www.cmc.org (or have membership brochures available).
- Inform participants of upcoming club events (e.g., conservation projects, youth opportunities, volunteer opportunities, further training, etc.).
- Encourage anyone interested to look into volunteering with CMC to become a leader!
- Make sure everyone has a way home.

Chapter 4 Review: On Your Trip – A Checklist

Completed	Leader Responsibilities
	Organize the carpool
	Know your responsibilities – page 15
	Greet participants and visual check for equipment, clothing, physical limitations
	Guests must sign waiver form
	At trailhead – did everyone arrive safely
	Check vehicles – locked, lights out, etc
	Orientation to trip and trip overview to include distance, elevation gain, pace, stops
	Trip goals
	Weather conditions
	Assign sweep as needed
	Continue to screen and watch participants
	Trail etiquette
	Leave No Trace Principles
	If a participant leaves early – have witnesses. Signed statement may at leader’s discretion

CHAPTER 5 -- GROUP DYNAMICS, DECISION MAKING & PROBLEMS DURING A TRIP

This chapter provides suggestions and guideline for:

- **Characteristics of effective trip leaders, including communication**
- **Authoritative and facilitative leadership styles**
- **A model for decision-making**
- **Trip components that affect group dynamics**
- **Stages of group formation**
- **Conflict management**
- **Dealing with problems that commonly occur on trips**

The leader sets the tone for every CMC event. Either purposely or by default, the leader's attitude and behavior go a long way towards determining how the trip participants get along with each other. Even if your group makes the goal (summit, lake, etc.) poor group dynamics will limit the success of the trip.

Group leadership is an acquired skill, just like mountaineering and technical climbing. A few people have natural, charismatic leadership ability; however, research shows that most leadership skills are learned through exposure to leadership theory, experience, and practice.

Colorado Mountain Club leaders are much more than individuals with experience relevant to their trip. They are also responsible for:

- Effective communication of trip expectations to participants.
- Making sound decisions for (and sometimes, with) the group in a variety of outdoor conditions.
- Facilitating positive group dynamics and maintaining a good example.
- Decisively yet calmly dealing with conflict and/or emergency situations.
- Following established CMC trip procedures.
- Representing your club as a professional volunteer in the field.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

The CMC encourages trip leaders to obtain and continually improve these characteristics:

1. Self-confidence
2. Planning and organizing skills
3. Competence in required mountaineering skills
4. Compassionate Leadership: concern for other people and the natural environment
5. Ability to inspire others to aspire to reach both individual and group goals
6. Effective communication and group facilitation skills

Leadership Styles

The way that trip leaders communicate, make decisions, and interact with groups is their leadership style. Each person has a unique style of leading groups. While it might be easiest to rely on one's natural leadership style, trying different approaches to problems often provides additional and sometimes better options in given situations.

There are many ways to lead and times to employ different forms of leadership. Let's consider three main styles here. Leadership styles can be seen as **authoritative** (No Time to Burn, Autocratic, telling or selling ideas), **facilitative** (Time to Learn, Democratic, Participative, consulting) and **delegative** (Abdicratic, Laissez-faire, hands-off or lead from behind) . While each style is different, no style is "right" in all situations or for all leaders. In fact, flexibility in leadership style is important because each trip and each group is unique and changing. So are you. On any given trip various styles can be appropriate, but usually a combination of several is most effective.

Authoritative

The leader makes the decisions and tells individuals in the group what to do. This is the stereotypical leadership style associated with the military. While it is particularly important in emergency situations, and in laying the groundwork for the trip, this style can be a catalyst for passive dependency or conversely, competition, when it is a rigid style used throughout the trip. Also known as "No time to Burn", this is the fastest style for emergencies requiring quick, decisive decisions. This style should be used cautiously because it does not directly foster buy-in to group goals or learning by participants.

Facilitative

The leader sets the framework for the group to participate in decision making. The name comes from Latin, "to make easy". This approach encourages group members to develop their own outdoor decision-making skills because they are thinking and contributing, instead of just following what the leader says to do. Facilitative leadership gives participants a sense of being valued, acknowledged, and respected, which encourages sharing of information and skills. This style can help both leaders and participants develop better mountain skills as well as make the trip more fun for all. For example, flexible discussion of alternate routes and developing situations (e.g., weather) can allow the group to bond. However, there are times during the trip when this style may not be appropriate, such as during an emergency or when time is of the essence.

Delegative

The leader trusts and relies on participants to make decisions and use their own experience and creativity to guide goals and outcomes for the trip. Sometimes called "laissez-faire" this translates to "let them do" or "leave to do". This style of leadership is meant for high functioning groups in which all individuals are competent and can be hard to achieve on shorter trips. Also known as "lead from behind" this style works best

when you know the participants and are able to trust in their abilities. It can be used effectively to test an advanced group or for small sections of a longer outing (or towards the end of a series) to let a group try their skills with you taking a backseat or literally taking sweep as the trip leader.

Decision making

Leading a group of people in the backcountry requires constant decision making. Changes in weather, accidents, or other unexpected events often happen. The lack of standard emergency resources (which are typically available in populated areas) makes it essential for leaders to be well-versed in decision making.

Sample decision making scenario:

One way to approach backcountry decision making is to consider scenarios and evaluate possible consequences. For example, if a storm is building in the west, as you approach the final ridge to your peak, you realize you must make a decision about whether the group should continue toward the summit or turn back.

Event that sparks decision making process	Potential Group actions	Probability of Mishap	Potential Consequence(s)
Thunderstorm is building	Keep hiking toward summit	High probability the storm will cross the group path on an exposed portion of the ridge	Lightning strikes a person (Severe consequence) Person slips on wet rocks coming down (moderate to severe consequence, depending on the fall) Person panics because of severe weather (moderate to severe consequence, depending on the person)
	Wait in sheltered area where they are protected	50%/50% probability that the storm will pass, leaving time to still summit	Turnaround time missed; return to cars later than planned Potential for person to slip on wet rocks
	Turn around and head back to trailhead	High probability that the group would experience showers after they reach timberline and are hiking down.	1. Reach the trailhead ahead of time without incident. 2. Two people in the group are unhappy because they have tried to climb Dyer Mountain before without summiting.

Using a partly facilitative style, the leader would share this information with the group, gather input, and, taking the input into consideration, make a final decision. Note that the last step, the decision, is necessarily authoritative.

With a purely authoritative style (perhaps due to a need for an immediate decision), the leader would let that group know he or she has made the decision.

Remember that the trip leader has the ultimate decision making responsibility. Leaders must be prepared to be decisive, and even veto the group's consensus, especially when dealing with hazards like electrical storms and avalanche danger.

Communication

Communication allows us to interact with each other; the skill with which we communicate may improve, or even destroy, our relationships. The trip leader sends messages to participants through a variety of means: facial expressions (Smile!), words and vocabulary, eye contact, body position, handshake, etc.

Effective communication by the leader:

- Builds trust in group members. People will be more open to participation when you communicate that you are proficient, want to share your outdoor/leadership skills, and that you care about them.
- Helps group members establish connections and build relationships with each other.
- Sets the tone for inclusivity of all group members. Be aware of jokes or comments that stereotype or may offend people in your group. Remember, people have many “hidden” identities such as socio-economic background, race, politics, and family status.

Keys for effective communication:

Provide detailed information

1. Note things to tell the group during your trip planning.
 - For example, information about road construction on the way to the trailhead, recent route conditions, and the distance to a good lunch spot is important information to share so participants will know what to expect.
2. Outline your expectations for the group.
 - For example, explain that participants will hike together between the lead and rear leaders and ask everyone to communicate with you if they need to stop or leave the group for any reason.
3. Throughout the trip, communication about the time frame of events is important.
 - Each person in the group should know how long they will have to eat, go to the toilet, rest or explore. This is especially critical at the trip destination, such as a lake or peak, where people may be tempted to explore.

Target your vocabulary and information to your audience.

- Use common language, as you teach more technical terms. For example, on an “easy” or beginner hike it isn’t appropriate to use words like arête, carabiners, bivouacs, or other mountaineering terms that would be straightforward to climbers on a more technical trip or hike.

Remember non-verbal language.

- Body language is worth many words.
- Establish eye contact with each person and smile!
- Please realize that different people have different personal space – hugs are not always acceptable.
- Check-in often with participants to ensure they understand you.

Communication is a two-way mechanism:

Watch group member's body language and actions – how are they doing?
Listen to participants with a caring attitude.
Solicit feedback from the group members
Use this feedback to modify your approach to both the group and to individuals as well as improve your own skills.

Group Dynamics

Groups are made up of individuals, each with individual strengths, weaknesses, fears, abilities, etc.

The purpose of a group on a CMC trip is to accomplish a common goal together. While individuals may have unique goals for particular trips, they need to understand that these are secondary to group goals.

The leader should communicate the main trip goals (e.g. safely climbing Mt. Bierstadt at a moderate pace – a challenging (C) hike with 7 miles of 2,800 feet elevation gain.)

The trip leader should emphasize that on a group trip, the safety of all individuals in the group is foremost; emotional well-being is as important as physical.

Trip Components

These seven components affect each participant's ability to contribute positively to the group dynamics:

1. Pre-trip information:

The trip description and leader's notes in the schedule should fully explain any special equipment needed or conditions to be expected as well as meeting time and other details. Individual communications between the leader and participants are encouraged so that participants have the proper prerequisites and attitudes for the trip, as well as to address concerns that the participants might have. In addition, leaders can use these conversations as a way to identify people who can be resources in an emergency (e.g., someone with advanced first aid training).

2. Introductions:

The leader sets the tone by sharing relevant information and encouraging personal connections between participants. Having each person give a very short personal introduction fosters an environment of inclusiveness for all group members. Introductions help participants establish eye contact with each other, learn names, and begin physical recognition. Name recognition is important later in case of an emergency and lends enjoyment to the group. Remember, many people join CMC trips to meet like-minded people.

The leader can take this opportunity to set out the envisioned leadership format, such as the use of rear (or sweep) and forward (or scout) leaders, and their responsibilities. In many cases, the most effective leadership is inclusive, with different people rotating through different roles.

3. Trip pace:

Typically, most of the challenges during trips come with the differences in individual paces. Pace has a large impact on group dynamics. Since the anticipated trip pace information is pre-trip information, participants can select trips that match their ability. A reasonably slow, steady pace at the beginning of the trip allows individuals to warm up their muscles, to converse, and continue with name recognition. Some essential components for establishing the pace for the trip include front leader and rear leader communication and frequent check-in with participants. The pace needs to be within the ability of all participants. Remember that the "slowest" person may have feelings of guilt for holding up the group and increasing anxiety. These feelings cause mental exhaustion which can transform into not taking care of their personal needs, leading to safety issues. Conversely, if the trip pace is too slow for most of the group, a variety of reactions may occur that also affect the group dynamics and safety.

One way to involve everyone in group leadership is to ask each person to keep the person behind them within sight distance. This can eliminate potentially dangerous gaps and allow the group to collectively establish a pace determined by the slowest person in the group.

The maximum pace should be kept to that advertised for the trip. If one of the participants has trouble keeping up with the advertised pace or appears not to be capable of this pace, the leaders must act. Likewise, a participant who is continuously pushing the pace should be encouraged to slow down.

If someone seems to be laboring inappropriately hard, a leader should notice, and engage them in conversation to establish the source of the problem. Possibilities include inadequate conditioning, equipment, or sickness.

One thing that you don't want to happen is for the group to split up without everyone having a clear idea of what is happening. Thus, it can be best to convene the entire group and explore options.

There are several options once the situation is clarified:

- Leaders can slow the pace to one which can be safely maintained by the stressed participant. You may want to put this individual right behind the front leader.
- If the participant is willing, leaders can arrange an escort of two strong and well-equipped people, preferably including an extra leader, back to the trailhead, if that is a place where the person can either return home independently or with one of the escorting people, or if it has a sheltered and safe location for the participant to stay until the trip returns.
- If there are sufficient well-equipped leaders, a decision to split the trip into two groups of different paces can be made. Both groups should have clearly defined plans and rendezvous points. For instance, in an out-and-back trip, the faster group may continue farther up the trail and rendezvous with the slower group on their way back. The slower group may want to turn around at a pre-set time so that both groups return to the trailhead at approximately the same time.
- Finally, the leaders may decide return to the trailhead.

4. Supportive/respectful atmosphere:

The leader is encouraged to demonstrate that they believe that all participants contribute to the group. The leader sets tone for respectful language, LNT practices, etc. The leader should proactively discourage any non-respectful actions and conversations; failure to respond to such actions/conversations gives the message that these are acceptable.

5. Challenge and stress:

There are two related issues that greatly affect group dynamics – challenge and stress. It is important that the pre-trip information provide an accurate indication of the physical challenge. Still, adverse conditions may make a trip more strenuous and stressful than anticipated. In addition, we allow CMC members to choose their own challenges, and sometimes participants overestimate their abilities, causing stress.

Research shows that too much stress often leads to poor performance, crisis, fear, and reaction instead of pro-action. The leader can reduce potentially stressful situations by providing information, compassionate reassurance and a reasonable level of personal choice throughout the trip.

Leaders should not allow themselves to become unnecessarily exhausted (e.g., taking most of the trail breaking duties) as the group relies on their decision making capacity.

6. Group goal accomplishment:

Everyone should know the group goals and acknowledge that these supersede their individual goals. It is important to emphasize to individuals that the group goal of reaching a published trip destination may change due to weather conditions or other factors.

7. Decision making:

The decision making process affects everyone in the group. Flexibility in decision making style can allow group members to contribute appropriately while the leader uses his/her experience and judgment effectively.

Group Formation Stages

Groups may go through identified stages. It is helpful for the trip leader to recognize these stages, as well as potential implications (e.g., emotions) to individual participants. This knowledge helps leaders plan actions that help facilitate smooth group formation. The identified stages of group formation include:

1. Forming:

Individuals need to feel welcome and that they are on the right trip. This starts with pre-trip information and being open to dialog with participants before the trip.

2. Sorting:

People are figuring out the group and what the group guidelines are, such as skills/experience of other trip participants, the leader's leadership style(s), trip pace, etc.

Personal introductions and a summary of trip expectations and goals at the trailhead give a reassuring jump-start to this process.

3. Norming:

Participants need to know the guidelines. For example, when at a rest stop, they know that the men go on one side of the trail and women on the other (or whatever other guidelines were established). Or, a participant communicates with the trip leader if she wants to explore during the lunch break, etc.

4. Storming or Differentiating:

This is an important stage for individuals in the group. One model of group development includes a “storming” stage, when group members experience conflict. However, many groups do not experience that level of conflict. Another model includes the differentiating stage where group members feel safe (emotionally and physically) enough to express their own needs, yet have the ability to be part of the group. Previous experience and readiness for the particular trip are important factors in each individual's ability to gain the comfort needed to differentiate.

5. Closure:

For many participants, some sort of gathering near or at the end of the trip is needed to fully complete the trip. This formalized conclusion may be a brief “thank you for participating”, or may include a quick sharing of trip highlights by each group member, or verbal/ written evaluations. This is a great opportunity to share plans for future trips and the opportunity to share addresses/phone numbers. It is important that everyone is back to the trailhead and that all of the cars have started before leaders leave the trailhead.

Dealing with problems during the trip

One of the biggest, and most rewarding, challenges for leaders is to take a group of individuals and have them form an effectively group that can travel together harmoniously. Occasionally problems arise on a trip related to differences in people's paces and personalities; it is helpful for leaders to be aware of this potential and have an idea of ways to lead the group effectively through difficulties. The following problems and strategies have been used effectively by leaders in the past.

Conflicts

Most people have experienced conflict during group situations on outdoor trips. However, communicating effectively throughout the trip and establishing a caring ethic among group members can prevent many conflicts.

The following are tips to help avoid conflict:

- Begin the trip at a reasonable, steady pace. Research shows that a slower pace at the beginning helps to facilitate positive group dynamics, allowing participants to talk and to feel a part of the group.
- Plan to take regular, short breaks, and communicate your plan to participants. At breaks, model outdoor "skills" such as drinking, eating a snack, adjusting your clothing, etc.
- Breaks offer you opportunities to share interesting tidbits such as names of visible peaks, signs of wildlife, et cetera, as well as important route information and/or instructions. (For example, "We are approaching an exposed ridge, please put on your wind gear now.")
- Share your thinking as the day goes along. For example, if weather is building, say to all that it bears watching, and may force an early turn-back time, or an alternate route. In the winter, be talking about avalanche hazard and your route selection.

Be aware that there may be an individual who appears to seek conflict; their need to make conflict can degrade the experience of other participants.

If conflict arises, the group can occasionally be effective in giving the necessary response. But more commonly, the leader needs to take action, using the following principles:

- Face the conflict. Generally, avoiding conflict does not make it go away and often causes escalation.
- Identify the underlying causes of the conflict. Often the key causes are not on the surface.
- Try to understand all of the sides of the conflict and the needs or desires of the people involved.
- Identify possible actions to resolve the conflict to the agreement of the parties involved.

Harassment and problem behaviors

Occasionally, individuals will exhibit inappropriate behaviors including harassment of other participants or actions seen as a threat to other participants and leaders. It is important to immediately address the problem behavior with the participant in the field.

While each situation is different, it is recommended that a leader pull the participant aside and speak to them in private. Diplomacy and peer pressure can be effective tools for resolving these types of issues. Be kind but firm in stating the problem (emphasize their behavior, not them as a person) and what needs to change in order for the trip to continue. When speaking to the participant:

- Identify the participant's inappropriate behavior.
- Listen to and acknowledge their concerns.
- Explain and discuss that the person's behavior has an impact on the group, that the behavior needs to change, and that there are specific consequences if the behavior is not changed.
- If appropriate, identify a way to have the participant invest in the group (for example, give them a task).

If attempts to deal with a participant's problem behavior fail, the leader should act. If the trip has not left the trailhead or if the trailhead is close by and the participant has the means to return home safely, a leader has the authority to remove the participant from the trip. Leaders should only do this if the participant's behavior is truly disruptive to the progress or safety of the trip. If possible, the individual should be escorted to their vehicle by at least two people.

If a participant insists on leaving on their own, try to have the participant sign out. This may be done by writing and signing a note saying "I'm signing off the trip." This note should be dated and signed by other trip participants observing the signing out.

If the leader thinks the person's safety is in jeopardy, the leader should try to dissuade the participant from leaving. If the person leaves anyway, the leader should make efforts to verify that the participant returned back to town safely.

If the person will not willingly leave, the best option may be to turn the group around to the trailhead, ending the trip early.

Reporting a problem behavior or incident on a trip

In case of a problem behavior, such as harassment, make sure to document what occurred on the trip or in the class. Write down what happened, including the names of the affected parties and their contact information. Have witnesses write their own account of what happened. For this type of reporting, use the CMC Navex Ethicspoint third-party reporting tool (coloradomountainclub.ethicspoint.com). For field related accidents, injuries, illnesses, or near misses: after the trip, immediately complete an [Accident/Incident Report](#) and send it to the CMC office.

Chapter 5: Group Dynamics, Decision Making and Problems – Review

This is not a checklist, per se, but a review of the chapter content. A leader knows and has reviewed the following:

Have reviewed / Know	Leaders are responsible to know:
	Characteristics of Effective Leaders – p. 22
	Leadership styles differ – authoritative vs. Facilitative
	Decision- making skills – how, when, conditions & circumstances that require decisions
	Components of effective communication skills
	3 keys to effective communication; providing detailed information, appropriate vocabulary, body language is 55% of communication
	Communication – a two-way mechanism
	What are the components of group dynamics?
	Pre-trip information – what do you communicate?
	Introductions – participants feel comfortable with each other
	Trip pace – define it and communicate the expected pace
	Always maintain supportive / respectful atmosphere
	How does challenge and stress impact group dynamics?
	Communicate group & trip goals
	What are the group formation stages?
	Dealing with conflict on trip
	How to avoid conflict on a trip
	How do you handle harassment, problem behaviors
	Report problem behavior – what is the process?

CHAPTER 6 – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

This chapter provides suggestions and guidelines for:

- Handling emergencies, including lost participant, and responding to accidents in the backcountry
- Evacuations
- Emergency communication
- Forms and Reports

Lost Participant

If someone on a trip becomes separated from the group:

1. Gather the rest of the group together and determine when and where the missing person was last seen.
2. Send two or more people to that location (hasty search), if possible. Before splitting up, agree upon a time and place to reassemble the group. Consider signaling with a whistle, or other means.
3. If the person is not found within two hours (or a reasonable amount of time deemed by the Trip Leader / Instructor) contact 911 who will activate the search and rescue system. Also call the CMC emergency call service at (269) 384-1056 as soon as possible.

LIGHTNING

CMC suggests the tried-and-true method of counting the seconds between flash and bang and dividing by five to get the approximate distance in miles from you to the lightning strike. CMC Wilderness Trekking School advises the 30/30 lightning safety rule: seek shelter (if possible in a vehicle or a building) or take precautions (lightning position described below) if the flash is less than 30 seconds away (six miles) and stay there until 30 minutes have passed since the last thunderclap.

Partial buildings, tents, shallow caves, lone trees, and ledges do not offer protection from lightning. You should also avoid streams, wet ground, wet snow, and long or tall conductors. A group outside should spread out at least 50 feet apart. If you have to stay put to weather a lightning risk, the Lightning Position or Lightning Squat is recommended to decrease your exposure. Sit or squat on a pad or backpack with only your bottom and feet (or just feet) contacting the pad/ground. You can minimize the current flowing through your body by keeping your contact points with the ground as close together as possible. Keeping your feet together will reduce the ground current flowing through you should there be a strike close by. Do not lie flat on the ground.

Protocol: On all overnight trips or field days, CMC Trip Leaders / Instructors will instruct participants in lightning drill procedures prior to the need for their use. CMC Trip Leaders /

Instructors will instruct participants regarding potential hazards of the given environment and recommendations for how to avoid or manage those hazards.

Guidelines:

1. Plan routes according to local weather patterns to avoid exposure in dangerous places.
2. Pick campsites with lightning safety in mind: among a uniform stand of trees or low rolling hills present less risk.
3. Seek a better location when necessary. Monitor approaching storms.
4. Avoid dangerous locations when storms approach: places higher than surrounding terrain (peaks, ridges, hills, lone trees), open terrain (meadows), large bodies of water, shallow overhangs and caves, places obviously struck before, and long conductors (pipes, wires, metal fences, wet ropes).
5. When it is not possible to move to a safer location, disperse individuals about 20 feet apart from each other and initiate lightning position as follows: insulate yourself from ground current, put your feet together, crouch, and do not touch long conductors. Keep metal objects away from body contact as they can cause serious burns if exposed to current. Avoid being a bridge between an object and the ground. Do not lean against tent poles, trees, vehicles, or boats. Account for all participants throughout the storm by conducting verbal head counts and listening as each participant calls their number.
6. Prepare for the potential of hypothermia by utilizing necessary rain gear, insulating clothing and snacks.

WILDFIRE

Wildland fires are becoming more frequent, more intense, and faster moving due to prolonged draught and more intense weather. Know where to find information and review [CMC's online resources](#) for managing risk in the event of a wildfire on your trip or field day.

Pre trip plan:

- Check the forecast and current wildfires (particularly in the summer and fall months)
- Identify "Safe Spots" along the trail (a meadow, talus slope, rockslide, or tundra) in your trip planning.
- Escaping a wildfire is extremely situational – it is imperative to have a plan, identified safe spots, and communication. Keep the group together.

Wildfire avoidance considerations in the field:

1. Attempt to identify an area with a radius six times the height of the tallest tree in the line of the fire. In calm conditions the flame from a burning tree can be twice the height of that tree. Winds can cause a plume of flame to trail downwind from a burning object considerably farther than twice the height of that object.
2. Areas that may be safer include:
 - a. Substantially fuel-less area such as alpine tundra or an extensive talus field.

- b. A previously burned area.
- 3. Water may not provide adequate safety. Bodies of water can be a barrier to fires, but not to smoke. Intense fires can create lethally superheated steam. Hypothermia is a possible result of even a brief stay in an alpine lake or stream.
- 4. Once in a relatively safe area, individuals should seek depressions in the ground, remain still, and if smoke is present breathe 2-3 inches from the ground (this is where there is the coolest, least smoky air). Should movement be required due to flame or smoke, individuals should crawl to where the fire has already burned or another relatively safe area.

If confronted by a wildfire in the field:

- Do not attempt to fight the fire.
- Evacuate and notify emergency services.
- Move away from the fire into the wind, avoiding being downwind from a fire.
- Avoid being at an elevation above a fire unless above tree line, without fuel between group position and the fire.
- When moving away from a fire, stay at the same elevation.
- Be aware that smoke tends to fill valleys.
- Be aware of wind direction and speed. Be aware that terrain features and the fire itself can substantially alter wind direction. Large fires can create their own local weather.
- Avoid saddles, chimneys, gullies, and steep slopes. Be aware that these terrain features can accelerate fire growth.
- Avoid areas of light fuels such as dried grasses and shrubs. These can easily flare up. Many fire fatalities occur in light fuel flare-ups.
- Be aware of flaming objects rolling downhill and airborne embers, which can start spot fires downwind.

Air Quality Guidelines

Guideline: If the Air Quality Index (AQI) is in the green (0-50) , no modifications are made.
Guideline: If the AQI moves into and stays in the yellow (51-100) for more than 12 hours, participants and/or staff who are “unusually sensitive” should consider modifications to avoid excessive hiking, especially challenging hikes, or especially steep terrain.
Guideline: If the AQI is forecasted or stays in the orange (101-150) range for more than 12 hours, consider modifying programming as follows: for expeditions: any optional hiking (day hikes, peak attempts, etc) is canceled, hiking routes are modified when possible to be less strenuous, and wearing a KN95 mask is recommended. For basecamp: the running portion of morning fitness is canceled, teaching time is moved indoors with air filters provided by CMC, and wearing a KN95 mask is recommended when outdoors. Consult CMC management for additional guidance.
Guideline: If the AQI forecast or report increases into the red (151-200) or purple (201-300) for more than 24 hours, participants will wear KN95 masks and arrangements will be made to evacuate in-progress trips or courses, reroute upcoming trips or courses to a less smoky areas if possible, and move all programming indoors.

CMC management will advise about any possibility of ending a course or trip early due to serious, ongoing air quality concerns.

Notes:

1. The EPA defines “sensitive” groups as people with heart and lung disease, older adults, children (less than 18 years old), people with diabetes, and people of lower Socio-Economic Status. The EPA cannot identify those who are “unusually sensitive”, but studies indicate that there are people who experience health effects when air quality is in the moderate range.
2. Staff should contact CMC Emergency Number if AQI is unknown or for any additional guidance.



Accident/Injury Response at Scene

Manage the situation in the field with human health, safety and well-being as the top priority. Work to ensure that scene is safe for all uninjured parties. If at any point managing the situation requires accessing outside assistance before notifying the CMC, use your best judgment.

1. Assess and stabilize the situation. Provide first aid accepted procedures for the level of training you have. Remember if you start first aid plan to attend to the patient until someone with more training takes over.
2. If outside assistance is necessary, call 911. The dispatcher will connect with the relevant emergency medical response. If you need to call 911, also contact the CMC emergency call service at (269) 384-1056 as soon as possible.

3. Comfort and reassure the patient and others present.
4. Assess the patient and begin a written documentation. Develop a plan. If planning for rescue and evacuation, make a backup plan as well. Do not assume immediate outside assistance.
5. If the patient is over 18 and refuses care that is apparently needed, have the patient sign a release acknowledging their refusal of care. Minors cannot legally refuse treatment.
6. If unable to call from your location: send at least two people to initiate outside assistance.

People going for help should take the following:

- Emergency report (may include copy of patient information; names of all persons with patient; condition of group, time, temperature, map marked with patient's location; and other pertinent information regarding location and state of patient's condition).
- Pertinent information from patient's medical form (if applicable) including emergency contact information.
- Necessary equipment, food, water, maps and other items to maintain health and well-being of the "runner" team.

Documentation is important. The Accident and Incident Reports begin with and are based on what is written on the scene. Start taking notes immediately. If it is necessary to send for help, take a copy of the first aid treatment and pertinent information from the patient's medical form so that responders know what to expect.

Evacuations

Evacuations are usually conducted by trained and equipped rescuers. Evacuation of participants may be considered for medical or behavioral reasons. When considering an evacuation, the following items should be analyzed and performed in an attempt to match the evacuation method and expediency with the nature and severity of the problem:

Work to ensure the participant's condition is stabilized as much as possible.

The well-being of the patient should be a priority.

The type of evacuation should be determined by:

- Patient's condition – Can they walk out or do they need transport?
- Group location.
- Availability of outside help if required.
- Group condition, resources and equipment.
- Terrain and weather.

Some evacuation options include:

- Participant walks out escorted by a self-sufficient evacuation team.

- Patient is carried out in a litter by group or by a rescue team.
- Patient is carried to helicopter landing site and evacuated from there.

The mode and urgency of the evacuation should be appropriate for the injury, illness or problem. Trip leader must use their judgment to determine the seriousness of each situation; however, the following conditions require evacuation from the field and follow-up medical care.

- Head injury or blow to the head resulting in loss of consciousness or altered mental status
- Any injury or illness related loss of consciousness
- Seizure
- Suspected spinal injury
- Use of epinephrine
- Near drowning
- Lightning strike

If a participant is 18 years of age or older and chooses to leave a trip, it is their right to do so. However, efforts should be made to address issues that are contributing to the participant's desire to leave. If these efforts fail, the participant should be encouraged to remain with the group until reaching the most ideal evacuation point.

In the event that an adult participant chooses to self evacuate from the group and the trip leaders have (a) made all attempts to convince them to stay with the group and (b) determined that it is not in the best interest of all of the participants to evacuate the entire group, trip leader should attempt to obtain written refusal of treatment and desire to leave the trip, signed by the patient and a witness.

Fatality

In the event of a fatality, the primary job of the trip leader is to work to ensure the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the rest of the participants. Do not disturb the scene of the incident or move the body. Keep someone in the vicinity of the body unless the scene becomes unsafe. Send for assistance (stick to the facts only), and wait for legal authority before moving the body. The trip leader should contact the CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER through the emergency answering service (269-384-1056) and direct all media inquiries to the CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

In case of a fatality (or involving potentially life threatening or disabling injuries), the emergency communication procedure outlined in the CMC Emergency Action Plan must be used.

Emergency Communication -- CMC Emergency Call Service

Please take this information with you on your trips.

CMC has an emergency call service: (269) 384-1056. Call anytime, day or night. Collect calls are accepted. If you need to call 911, also contact the CMC emergency call service at (269) 384-1056 as soon as possible.

The call service will take a message and relay it to the CMC's Chief Executive Officer (Chief Education Officer, or president if EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR is not available.) This may take several minutes; stay on the line if possible. CMC will follow-up if you get disconnected, wait by the phone until you hear from the CMC or call again.

Communication with the family (life-threatening injury or fatality)

CMC's Chief Executive Officer will communicate with the family in case of life-threatening injury or fatality of a member or guest.

Media response

Please remember the CMC's Chief Executive Officer (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR), is the only spokesperson authorized to speak with the press. Do not answer questions or comment to the press without the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR's approval. If a reporter approaches you, simply say that you need them to speak with the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, who will answer their questions as soon as possible.

Incident, Injury, or Illness Reporting

An incident is defined as an event (action or situation) or sequence of events or circumstance that results in a potentially dangerous situation, an injury, an illness, damage to property or a near miss, for our purposes, the terms accident and incident are often used interchangeably. The term incident has broader application. [Click here to enter text.](#)

CMC Trip Leaders are required to complete and submit an '[Incident/Injury/Illness Report Form](#)' if in the course of any CMC activity, an injury or incident occurs that meets any of the following criteria:

1. The accident or incident response involves the use of Emergency Medical System (police, hospital, emergency response, search and rescue, etc.)
2. A participant involved in the accident or incident receives professional medical care to the knowledge of the leader, is recommended professional medical care by the leader, or refuses the offer or recommendation of professional medical care.
3. The accident results in a fatality, either at the accident scene or later as a result of the accident.

Failure to complete required forms may affect CMC liability coverage for the leader.

CMC Trip Leaders are encouraged to file an [incident report](#) under other circumstances, including minor injuries, incidents, and "near misses" when an accident did not actually occur.

The CMC State Safety and Leadership Committee collects the incident information from all CMC leaders and compiles an annual analysis. By making incident information available, the CMC can provide a valuable learning experience for all leaders. The review of case studies based on real incidents has proven to be a useful tool in improving both participant safety and enjoyment on CMC activities. Leaders should be assured that the confidentiality of participant and leader names and other details is maintained.

Another reason for completing an incident report is to ensure leader liability insurance coverage for consequences from an accident or incident that the leader may not have been aware of at the time.

Chapter 6 Review: Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Know what to do in case of the following emergencies. If you are unsure, review the content in the chapter.

Know what to do	Emergency situation
	Lost Participant
	Lightning – considerations and guidelines
	Wildfire – considerations and resources
	Accident / Injury response at scene
	Evacuations – plans and execution
	Fatality procedures – who to notify, who to talk with, who not to talk with
	CMC Emergency Call service numbers: 269-384-1056
	Call EMC Emergency Call service after you have called 911
	Do not communicate with family – responsibility of CMC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
	Media response – CMC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR is ONLY spokesperson authorized to speak with media following an emergency
	Answer questions of those in authority – ONLY
	When and how to fill out the CMC Incident/Injury/Illness Form

CHAPTER 7 --CMC RISK MANAGEMENT & LIABILITY PROTECTION

Anti-Harassment/Non-Discrimination

The Colorado Mountain Club does not discriminate in accepting individuals or families for membership based upon race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, gender, gender identity, gender variance, sexual orientation, age, physical handicap, veteran status, or political service or affiliation. [Passed October 2007]

All persons participating in CMC activities are expected to treat all other with respect and concern. The CMC will not tolerate abusive, sexually harassing, or discriminatory actions or communications. Anyone experiencing or witnessing such behavior is invited to submit a written complaint to the CMC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR or President for investigation. Consequences of inappropriate behavior may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension, or expulsion from the CMC. [passed January 2000]

Code of Conduct Policy

Organizational ethics defined: Sets of formal and informal standards of conduct that people use to guide their behavior in a professional setting. These standards are partly based on core values such as honesty, respect, and trust, but they also can be learned directly from the actions of others. For example, what people see their organizational leaders, managers, and co-workers do on the job can influence their own views of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior. When interacting with one another at the Colorado Mountain Club, we should ask ourselves several important questions to determine if a specific action is proper:

- Am I adhering to the spirit, as well as the letter, of any law that may apply to my situation?
- Are my actions consistent with the overall principles set forth in this Code as well other CMC policies?
- Would I want my actions reported publicly?
- What would my family, friends, manager, or co-workers think of my actions?
- Will there be any direct or indirect negative consequences for the CMC?

Standards of Conduct For anyone in a leadership position at the Colorado Mountain Club (paid, unpaid, elected, volunteer, trip, group, board, committee)

These standards are intended to encourage discussion of issues pertinent to the CMC in a civil manner. The behavior expected of Club leaders as well as unacceptable behavior.

Affirmative Standards of Conduct

Serving in an appointed to or elected position of leadership is a privilege that can be lost either by ignoring the duty of loyalty expected of all Club leaders or by violating the following affirmative standards of conduct.

Club leaders have an obligation to meet the following affirmative standards of conduct, and to hold other leaders accountable to them as well, in all Club interactions with others, including in person, in writing, on email, or on the phone.

- A. Communicate and work together with common courtesy and collegial respect; disagree without being disagreeable.
- B. Create a welcoming environment for new members and volunteers; avoid cliquishness, and language or behavior that offends others.
- C. Always represent the Club and its mission in a positive and professional manner; keep disagreements within the Club.
- D. Accurately present the Club's policies and positions when communicating on behalf of the Club; don't use a Club leadership role or title to advance personal views that are not the Club's position.
- E. Respect your obligation to the Club's members; use member lists and information about members for Club purposes only.
- F. Use Club resources wisely and in keeping with the fiduciary responsibility of all leaders.
- G. Foster an open democratic decision-making process; respect decisions once they are made.
- H. Within the Club praise publicly; criticize privately and tactfully.
- I. Respect the policies and procedures that have been established by and for members engaged in specific Club activities; when in doubt, ask.
- J. Maintain confidentiality about all matters that are considered in closed door meetings.
- K. Do not engage in conduct that would compromise, discredit, or diminish the integrity of yourself or the Colorado Mountain Club.
- L. Respect the authority and operational decisions of the Executive Director and other members of the Management Team of the Club.
- M. Respect and be sensitive to the considerable workload of the staff when making requests for assistance.
- N. Presume positive intent in interactions with others; find out all the facts and circumstances; give others the benefit of the doubt first.
- O. Remain respectful in dissent; promote healthy discussion; allow for all opinions to be aired.
- P. Keep personal attacks, slurs, and insults out of the conversation. Aim to offer positive alternatives or suggestions for furtherance of overall Club goals.

Serious Misconduct

The following actions constitute serious misconduct:

- A. Physical or sexual assault or violent threats toward others.
- B. Embezzling or misdirecting Club funds, membership lists or other assets for activities not authorized by the responsible entity.
- C. Use of racial slurs or other derogatory language regarding gender, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
- D. Fraud, libel, defamation or illegal activity of any kind in the conduct of Club business.

- E. Illegal or unethical professional conduct outside the Club if that misconduct could significantly damage the Club, its staff, its members or its assets.
- F. Harassment, threats or any action directed toward Club employees that violate Club employment policies or are covered by law.

Dealing With Disruptive Personal Behavior

- A. The chair of the relevant Club entity has an obligation to deal quickly and decisively with violations of the affirmative standards of conduct. Disputes over personal behavior may warrant the removal, suspension or barring the member from leadership positions or participation in certain activities. A [Navex Ethicspoint report](#) should be completed either by the chair of the relevant entity or directly from the person witnessing/experiencing the behavior. coloradomountainclub.ethicspoint.com
- B. Any actions that constitute serious misconduct will be immediately referred to the Executive Committee.
- C. Formal actions to remove, suspend or bar members from leadership positions (except members of the Board of Directors) or participation in certain activities should only be undertaken when a member's personal behavior is clearly disruptive, repeatedly violates the affirmative standards of conduct, impairs the work of the Club, or constitutes serious misconduct.
- D. Immediate Suspension
 - a. The Executive Director and Board President, or their acting designee, together have authority to immediately suspend a member from leadership positions (except members of the Board of Directors which can be done only at the board level) or from participation in specific Club activities for serious misconduct. Any Club member who believes that a member has engaged in serious misconduct can make a written request to the Club's Executive Committee for the immediate suspension of that member from a leadership position (excepting members of the Board of Directors) or from participation in specific Club activities.
 - b. Any action to immediately suspend a member for serious misconduct must be based on a fair assessment (clear documentation, multiple reports, and direct communication with the person involved) that creates strong reason to believe that serious misconduct occurred.
 - c. In cases of the immediate suspension of elected leaders, the Executive Committee can determine whether the suspension should be extended for a specific period of time, or made permanent. This must be initiated within three weeks of a suspension.

Leader Suspension

- Any leader named in a legitimate written complaint may be suspended until investigation is completed by the group or state safety committee. Investigations must be completed as promptly as possible. [Passed October 2004]

- All complaints of this nature must go through the Navex Ethicspoint reporting system to be filed by CMC state office. [update 2022]
- coloradomountainclub.ethicspoint.com
- The state office will handle prompt investigations. One or more verifiable complaints may result in permanent leader suspension within all CMC groups.
 - Chief Education Officer is direct contact as of 2023.
- The leader of any CMC-scheduled trip on which there is a fatality or serious injury will be temporarily suspended from leading trips, pending a prompt investigation of the accident. [Passed October 2004]

Resolving Disputes

A) Policy Disputes.

When there is a dispute regarding interpretation, application or disregard for Club Bylaws, this Code of Conduct Policy, policies, guidelines or other governing procedures, leaders should seek clarification from the relevant staff entity, for referral or appeal if necessary to the Executive Committee. No leader should act in violation of a policy interpretation that has been provided by the appropriate staff entity. If the leader believes the interpretation is incorrect, he or she should appeal or seek clarification from the Executive Committee, but shall not act in violation of the interpretation the leader has received.

B) Decision-Making Disputes

All Club leaders involved in a contentious decision-making process are nevertheless expected to behave according to this Code of Conduct. This includes decisions regarding priorities for action, strategies and tactics, and the allocation of resources where differences of opinion can be heated.

All disputes among volunteers should be resolved at the most local level possible. If these disputes cannot be resolved locally, the State leadership is available to offer assistance and guidance.

Authority

Authority is delegated to the Executive Director from the Board to develop and adapt, as needed, guidelines for resolving disputes over this Code of Conduct.

The CMC Board resolves to delegate any adjustment to existing policies regarding CMC education or member trips to the Executive Director. The CMC Board of Directors also delegates all future policy development for CMC education or member trips to the Executive Director. [Passed November 2022]

Board Discretion

These procedures shall not deprive the Board, at any point in the process, from taking such actions as it may deem necessary or advisable for the best interests of the Club. Adopted by Board of Directors July 17, 2010

Drugs and Alcohol

The CMC does not permit the consumption of alcohol on single day trips. A trip begins at the trailhead and ends upon return to the trailhead. The CMC affirmatively disclaims any duty of care to anyone concerning the use of alcohol by its members or guests while those individuals are not on single day CMC trips.

Alcohol use on multi-day trips is based on the principle of personal responsibility.

In cases where a trip leader believes that alcohol consumption is imprudent under the circumstances, the trip leader is authorized to prohibit its consumption during any portion of a CMC multi-day trip/course.

This policy is silent as to consumption of alcohol on CMC social activities not fitting into either category above, other than to leave such consumption as the sole responsibility of the consumer and to otherwise comply with applicable law. [passed July 2008]

There shall be no charge at any CMC event where alcohol is served, unless alcohol is served by an entity that has liquor license and liquor liability coverage. [passed July 2003]

Leave No Trace

Since the Colorado Mountain Club is the premier organized user of the Colorado back country, and the concept of “Leave No Trace/An Outdoor Ethic” parallels the basic concept which the Colorado Mountain Club needs to follow now and in the future. The Colorado Mountain Club wholeheartedly supports and pledges to carry out the concepts of Leave No Trace. [Passed April 1997]

Trip Size

This CMC policy recommends that the minimum trip or field-day size is four people. The rationale is that in case of injury or accident, one person can stay with the patient and two people can seek assistance.

Exceptions include:

1. A minimum of three participants with reliable communication
 - a. 2-way satellite communicator
 - b. Verified* cell service coverage

2. A minimum of 2 participants for 5th class climbs** with reliable communication
 - a. 2-way satellite communicator
 - b. Verified cell service coverage

[Passed October 2022]

*"Verified" = knowledge that leaders cellular device on leaders current carrier maintains service throughout the trip.

**CMC still requires the leader must be approved to lead multi-pitch climbs (TLCS or equivalent, plus trip leader training and WFA) and the second member must have taken RSS, BMS, or equivalent

If your trip or course has cancellations or "no-shows" with a result of less than three total people or 2 for 5th class climbs (including you, the leader) the trip is not recognized as a CMC-sponsored trip. If a group of 2 or less people decide to conduct the trip, you are responsible to inform the participants that the Colorado Mountain Club is not liable for any injury or mishap that may occur.

CMC General Liability Insurance

General liability insurance is purchased to protect against losses from acts that are unusual, unintentional, and catastrophic. The Colorado Mountain Club insurance does not protect an individual against actions that violate Club policies or when driving a vehicle.

Commercial General Liability Insurance

Commercial general liability insurance provides coverage against claims for bodily injury, death, damage to property of others, or infringement on others' personal and property rights. It is not a medical or accident policy to insure leaders or participants against losses from injuries. It does insure the Club, its employees, and its volunteers against liability to third parties for unintentional negligence and provides a defense against such claims.

For insurance coverage to apply, the following conditions must be met:

- The person must be an employee or a volunteer of the Club while acting within the scope of his or her authorized duties.
- The trip or activity must be a Club function that has been officially authorized or sponsored by the Club or one of its entities.
- The trip or activity must comply with all applicable Colorado Mountain Club policies and insurance requirements.

LEADER LIABILITY: PROTECTIONS AGAINST LAWSUITS

By Rolf Asphaug, CMC Legal Committee Member

Persons thinking of leading CMC trips often ask: “If something happens on my trip, can I get sued?” The answer to that is, frankly, yes, you can get sued! In this day and age, people get sued at the drop of a hat; it seems, for any old thing. Nothing the Club can do prevents you from getting sued.

But the important question is: “Am I protected against suits?” There again, the answer is yes! If you’re sued as the result of an injury caused by your good-faith mistake while leading a CMC trip, the lawsuit should be tossed out right away, and you won’t even need to retain your own lawyer.

You are protected in at least four different ways:

1. The CMC Liability Waiver. Every CMC member signs a release, promising not to hold the Club or its leaders liable if something goes wrong. This is your and CMC’s **first line of defense** against a lawsuit, and it is a strong defense. Colorado and other states recognize the validity of releases like these. In a famous lawsuit against the CMC a decade ago (*Voight v. CMC*), CMC got in trouble because we were unable to locate a release for one of the persons filing suit. The CMC is doing a far better job of filing releases now. Remember: Always have any non-CMC members on your trip sign releases before the trip begins! Send in such releases with your trip reports!

2. The CMC’s liability insurance. This insurance protects the CMC and its volunteers against liability claims. Just as importantly, it insures against the costs of hiring a lawyer and defending against a lawsuit. Nowadays, it can cost \$100,000 or more to defend a case through trials and appeals. Without insurance like the CMC’s, litigants could try to force us into settling bogus claims to avoid high legal costs.

3. The “Colorado Volunteer Service Act”. This Colorado state law (CRS § 13-21-115.5), enacted in 1992 in part as a response to the CMC lawsuit, provides sweeping legal protection to CMC trip leaders and other CMC volunteers. The law starts out by recognizing that “the willingness of volunteers to offer their services has been increasingly deterred by a perception that they put personal assets at risk in the event of tort actions seeking damages arising from their activities as volunteers.” The law then declares that a volunteer for a nonprofit entity like CMC is “immune from civil liability” (i.e., can’t be successfully sued) for any acts or omissions by a volunteer “acting **in good faith** and **within the scope of such volunteer’s official functions and duties** for [the] nonprofit organization.” The only exceptions are that (1) the law doesn’t protect volunteers causing injury or damage through “**willful and wanton misconduct**,” (2) if the accident was caused by the volunteer’s negligent operation of a motor vehicle, recovery isn’t completely barred but is limited to the extent of the volunteer’s auto insurance coverage, and (3) under a 1999 revision to the law, if you’re sued for performing medical care as a volunteer licensed physician, you’re protected from suit if you obtained written consent before starting the care.

To qualify as a “volunteer” under the act, you must be performing your services “**without compensation**,” other than reimbursement for actual expenses incurred.” That’s one important reason why the CMC doesn’t want to pay its trip leaders or school instructors.

What’s “willful and wanton misconduct”? It’s more than a mistake, negligence, or even gross negligence. It means, “Conduct purposefully committed which the actor must have realized as dangerous, done heedlessly and recklessly, without regard to consequences, or of the rights and safety of others.” (CRS § 13-21-102(1)(b).) In other words, you have to practically **want** the person to get hurt!

4. The Colorado Good Samaritan Statute. Another Colorado law (CRS § 13-21-116) says that a person voluntarily providing service or assistance to another can’t be held liable for acts or omissions done in good faith. This statute can further protect you even in some situations where the Volunteer Service Act might not do so.

So basically, if you (1) use your common sense, (2) think before acting, and (3) don’t do anything so stupid as to be considered “willful and wanton,” you needn’t worry about being held legally liable for your actions as a trip leader! Have good, safe fun out there, and THANKS for being a CMC trip leader!

Chapter 7 Review: CMC Policies and Liability Protection Check List

Do you know the following policies and liability protection issues? See Appendix D for any not listed above.

Yes, I know the policy or issue	Leaders are responsible to know
	How to file an accident report
	Know the anti-harassment / non-discrimination policy
	Leader qualifications and responsibilities
	What are CMC restricted activities? (water sports)
	CMC Social Activities – where can they take place
	Minimum number of participants on a trip (3)
	What is CMC’s commercial general liability insurance – what does it cover?
	What is a leader’s liability – can you be sued? Are you protected against suits? - Read p. 51 and p.52 if you are unsure
	Avy Policy: avalanche education for leaders/instructors
	Climbing Helmets – Rated 4 or above
	Dogs on trips
	Drugs and Alcohol policy
	Guest fees
	Leave No Trace / An Outdoor Ethic
	Policy for 2-member multi-pitch rock climbing trip / certification requirements
	Rear leader / Sweep

CHAPTER 8 -- ABOUT THE COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

This chapter includes information about the Colorado Mountain Club that all CMC Leaders should be familiar with and have the ability to

Mission

The Colorado Mountain Club is organized to:

- Unite the energy, interest and knowledge of the students and lovers of the mountains of Colorado.
- Collect and disseminate information regarding the Rocky Mountains in behalf of science, literature, art and recreation.
- Stimulate public interest in our mountain areas.
- Encourage the preservation of forest, flowers, fauna and natural scenery.
- Render readily accessible the alpine attractions of this region

History

The Colorado Mountain Club is organized to unite the energy, interest and knowledge of the students, lovers and explorers of the mountains of Colorado. The club is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with more than 7,000 members statewide.

Founded in 1912, the club's early members included Enos Mills, "the father of Rocky Mountain National Park"; Roger Toll, former superintendent of Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone National Parks; and pioneering Colorado climbers Carl Blaurock and Bill Ervin, the first men to climb the then-known 14,000-foot peaks of Colorado; Mary Cronin, the first woman to climb them; and Albert Ellingwood, for whom many mountain features are named, including Ellingwood Peak.

Education, the primary focus of the CMC, has been accomplished through schools and publications. Our schools, established in 1939, teach skills necessary to recreate safely and responsibly in a mountain environment. The increased popularity of mountain recreation has magnified the need for education about the protection of our fragile mountain and wilderness resources as well as safety issues.

Since 1912, the Colorado Mountain Club has published books, circulars, pamphlets, journals and magazines. These publications are invaluable resources for people who visit Colorado's mountains.

The CMC has been a leader in issues, environmental education and volunteer service. In the early 1920's, the CMC took an active role in the establishment of Rocky Mountain National Park, the protection of the Colorado columbine, and the posting of educational signs at campsites. CMC also played a major role in the enactment of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and has sponsored a series of open space conferences.

Each year, CMC's volunteers spend thousands of volunteer hours planting trees, maintaining trails, and supporting the efforts of other organizations such as Leave No Trace, Inc. and the Colorado Fourteener's Initiative.

In 1994, the Colorado Mountain Club partnered with The American Alpine Club (AAC) to purchase the old Golden High School, creating the American Mountaineering Center (AMC). The Colorado Trail Foundation is also located in the AMC.

The American Mountaineering Center is a national and historic resource. Currently club members and the general public have access to the largest mountaineering library in the Western Hemisphere and the Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum, attend events in the beautiful 350-seat auditorium, and climb on the indoor rock climbing wall. The AMC has hosted numerous meetings, conferences, and performances including world class mountain climbers, cultural performances, and conservation speakers.

In keeping with the tradition of the CMC, the primary focus of The American Mountaineering Center is education. After numerous requests from youth groups and schools to provide an alternative learning venue, CMC developed the award-winning Youth Education Program. The program was designed primarily to educate youth about conservation and recreation in Colorado's mountain environments through science, geography, literacy, and mountain recreation.

CMC Structure and Programs

The Colorado Mountain Club is a nonprofit charitable organization, with an obligation to serve the public as well as our members. The CMC headquarters are located in the American Mountaineering Center in Golden, CO. Additional offices are staffed in Carbondale and Boulder. The Boulder office/club room is operated by the Boulder Group.

The Colorado Mountain Club seeks a culture of cooperation and civility. We want the member, volunteer and staff experience to be positive, supportive, and rewarding.

Board of Directors

The Club is governed by a Board of Directors. Directors are elected by the CMC State Council which is made up of representatives from the groups. The Board meets four to five times a year, at various sites around Colorado.

Groups

The Colorado Mountain Club is comprised of groups throughout the state of Colorado. In addition, a Friends of Colorado Group is organized for non-Colorado residents. Regional groups are primarily responsible to provide services to their members through education, recreation, and conservation activities. Each group has a council of representatives elected by their membership, as well as a variety of volunteer committees that implement programs and activities. Groups conduct trip leadership training and approve their trip leaders, following the organization-wide policies and procedures.

Staff

The Chief Executive Officer reports to the board of directors and is responsible for the operations of the CMC. The CEO supervises professional staff members who implement operations, membership service, CMC Press, the Conservation Program, the CMC Youth Programs, fund development, and group education support (Adult Education).

Adventure Travel

Colorado Mountain Club Adventure Travel Trips take members and guests to the world's incredible destinations. These trips are organized through the CMC's Adventure Travel Committee. Skilled leaders are invited to learn more about leading Adventure Travel trips.

American Mountaineering Museum

The Mountaineering Museum opened its doors in February 2008 as the first and only museum in the United States dedicated to the heroism, technology, culture and spirit of mountaineering.

The museum brings visitors into the world of mountain and rock climbing and honors the achievements of mountaineers from America and around the world. Exhibits on climate, science, cultures and the humanities as they relate to mountains promise to make the visitor experience rich, exciting, and interactive. www.mountaineeringmuseum.org

Conservation Program

Since its founding in 1912, the Colorado Mountain Club has been an unwavering advocate for the protection of Colorado's wild, remote, and quiet places. CMC was instrumental in landmark achievements such as the designation of Rocky Mountain National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and the passage of the Wilderness Act.

Today, CMC continues this tradition by working with land management agencies, partner organizations and coalitions to permanently protect our last remaining roadless areas and wildlife corridors, protect and restore the quiet experience, and protect the ecological integrity of our region by reducing the impacts of recreation on the natural environment.

CMC Youth Programs (YP)

The Youth Programs (YP) present an opportunity for Colorado's youth to learn about and experience their surrounding environments. Since its development in 1999, YEP has filled a unique niche in Colorado's environmental education community by offering classes focusing on mountain science topics. Inspiring lifelong stewardship and exploration of the mountains through hands-on learning activities, CMC teaches more than 5,000 youth each year.

CMC Press

The Colorado Mountain Club Press signs authors, edits, designs, coordinates manufacturing and markets books that support the club's mission and values, and increase CMC's recognition and influence in the community.

CMC Press primarily publishes hiking and climbing guidebooks such as *The Colorado Trail, seventh edition*, and *Flatiron Classics: Easy Rock Climbs Above Boulder second edition*; field guides on natural science topics, such as *Rocky Mountain Flora* and *Rocks Above the Clouds: A Hiker's and Climber's Guide to Colorado Mountain Geology*; and Pack Guides to the best hiking trails near the major cities and towns in Colorado.

Please see www.cmc.org/books for current titles and remember that members get an automatic 20% discount and certified leaders get a 40% discount by emailing an order to cmcpres@cmc.org or calling 303-996-2743.

CMC Resource Development

Membership dues do not support many of the valuable and effective programs of the Colorado Mountain Club. To offset this gap, the club engages in annual fundraising activities, and seeks support from local government, corporations, foundations and individuals. Designated by the federal government as a public charity, the CMC has a long history of financial support from its volunteer leadership, and is fortunate to receive annual donations from 100% of its board members. As such, CMC donors receive a valuable tax deduction for each contribution and are recognized in the club's annual financial report.

APPENDIX A -- CMC TRIP DIFFICULTY RATINGS

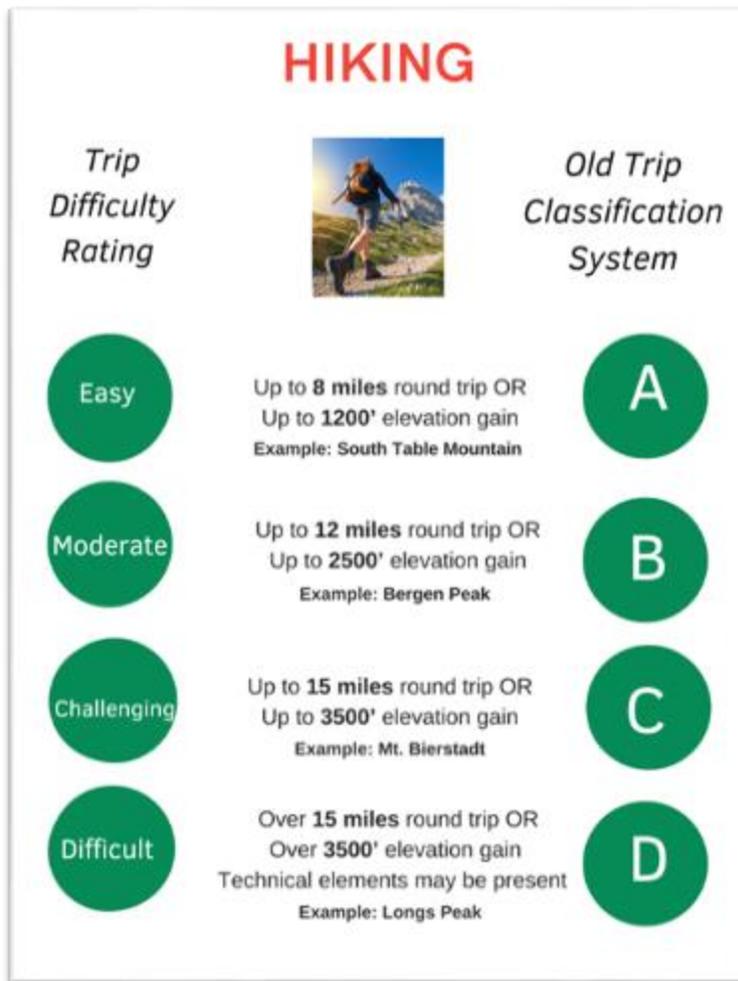
To rate the difficulty of the trips CMC offers, we use round-trip mileage and total elevation gain. No rating system is perfect, and trip difficulties can vary greatly depending on the season, weather, and other factors. If you have questions about the difficulty of a particular trip you are joining, contact the trip leader to get clarification.

As of 2023, the CMC is using a new rating system of **Easy, Moderate, Challenging, or Difficult** for all our trips by activity type. This new rating system aligns with the old lettering system of A, B, C, and D. Our goal with the new terminology is to create a better user experience and to help members understand the difficulty of the trip they are signing up for. You can write a more detailed description of the difficulty of your trip when creating a trip on the website. There is only a difficulty rating for trips, not a difficulty rating for a Route & Place.

Each rating system by activity is shown below:

Hike Difficulty Ratings

Hiking trips can be rated as **Easy, Moderate, Challenging, or Difficult**.



Additional Terms Used in Hike Descriptions

The following shorthand descriptions may also be used to describe the difficulty of the terrain on a hike:

- **On Trail:** The trip is mainly on improved trail in reasonable condition. Any portion of the trip not on trail is easy "trail like" conditions.
- **Off Trail:** Below timberline (about 11,600 feet in Colorado), the trip may involve bushwhacking or travel through forested terrain. Above timberline, the trip may cross open tundra or involve Class 2 hiking under the Yosemite Decimal System: i.e., moving on or around small boulders where the use of hands may be used, but only to maintain balance. No special hiking or climbing skills are required. Exposure is usually minimal or nonexistent.
- **Scrambling:** The trip involves Class 3 climbing: i.e., climbing that is relatively easy with plentiful handholds. Although a rope is rarely required, Class 3 climbing may be intimidating for less experienced mountaineers. Always consider bringing and wearing a climbing helmet to ensure your own safety. A fall on a Class 3 route usually results in a minor injury, but on occasion can result in serious injury or death.

- **Semi-technical:** The trip involves Class 4 climbing: i.e., within the realm of technical rock climbing, but with relatively plentiful handholds. Some people will desire a rope, but usually just for protection on the descent. Participants must wear climbing helmets. A fall without the protection of a rope on a Class 4 route usually results in serious injury or death.

Technical Climb Difficulty Ratings

Denver Group trip leaders usually classify the difficulty of technical climbing trips according to the standard Yosemite Decimal System (e.g., a "5.9 Climb"). The Boulder Group has a more extensive classification system for Boulder Group rock climbs.

Backpack Difficulty Ratings

Backpacking trips can be rated as **Easy, Moderate, or Difficult**.

BACKPACKING

*New
Rating
System*



Easy

Up to **5 miles** OR **1000'** elevation gain per day. The trip is on trail.

Moderate

5 to 10 miles OR **1000- 2000'** elevation gain per day. May have some off-trail.

Difficult

More than 10 miles OR more than **2000'** elevation gain per day. The trip is physically demanding and may involve some off-trail travel, and/or steep slopes or rocky areas.

Ski Tour Difficulty Ratings

Nordic ski touring (cross-country) trips can be rated as **Easy, Moderate, Challenging, or Difficult**. The rating system is used to describe the skiing skills and stamina required for

participation on a trip. If you are unsure whether your skiing abilities (especially turning and stopping skills) are suitable for a trip, please contact the trip leader.

In addition to the [CMC essentials](#) , you should carry a shovel, avalanche beacon, and any extra items required by the leader on all ski trips.

NORDIC SKIING

*New
Rating
System*



*Old
Classification
System*

Easy	1 to 8 miles round trip OR 600-800' elevation gain.	Easy I, II, & III
Moderate	8 to 12 miles round trip OR 800-1500' elevation gain.	Moderate I & II
Challenging	12 to 15 miles round trip OR 1500-1800' elevation gain.	Moderate III
Difficult	15 to 20 miles round trip OR 1800-2500'+ elevation gain. To go on a Difficult ski trip, you must be able to break trail for 3 miles and must have excellent nordic downhill ability.	Advanced I & II

Downhill Ski Difficulty Ratings

Downhill ski trips can be rated as **Easy, Moderate, Challenging, or Difficult.**

DOWNHILL SKIING

*New
Rating
System*



*Old
Classification
System*

Easy

Skier should be able to ski proficiently on beginner slopes at downhill ski areas. Skier can make a solid stem turn and traverse via kick turns off-trail on untracked slopes.

Green

Moderate

Meet **Easy** requirements & be able to: Ski moderate terrain (slopes of up to 25 degrees with trees and other obstacles) at a reasonable speed without frequent falls.

Blue

Challenging

Meet **Moderate** requirements & be able to: Ski difficult terrain (slopes steeper than 25 degrees), make linked turns in difficult terrain, and ski treed slopes, gullies, couloirs.

Black

Difficult

Meet **Challenging** requirements & have: Considerable experience in route finding and trail breaking. Experience with winter camping. Completed Basic Mountaineering School and avalanche training.

Ski
Mountain-
neering

Snowshoe Difficulty Ratings

Snowshoe trips can be rated as **Easy, Moderate, or Challenging.**

SNOWSHOEING

*New
Rating
System*



*Old
Classification
System*

Easy

Up to 5 miles round trip and
600' elevation gain.

Basic

Moderate

5 to 8 miles round trip OR
600-1200' elevation gain.

Intermediate

Challenging

Over 8 miles round trip OR
over 1200' elevation gain.

Advanced

Special Denver Group Trip Classifications

In addition to the standard trip descriptors, the Denver Group may employ additional trip ratings and descriptive terms. For example, many Denver Group trip descriptions indicate whether the trip will be led at a Casual, Moderate, or Fast Pace. If you are concerned that you just aren't fast enough for a trip, try a Casual Pace trip. Alternatively, if you're always passing people on the trail, try a Fast Paced trip. Remember that for all CMC trips, the leader will try to keep the group together and travel at the pace of the slowest participant.

APPENDIX B -- LNT PRINCIPLES

The CMC has a long, proud tradition of supporting environmental ethics. We have an active partnership with the nonprofit organization Leave No Trace, Inc. to support "Leave No Trace" (LNT) principles. Please be sure to follow LNT principles during your trips and activities with the Club, so that future generations can continue to enjoy the Colorado Rocky Mountains. The classic summary says "Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints."

CMC trips are limited in size to reduce environmental impacts and disturbances to other visitors. Please travel reasonably quietly in the backcountry to allow others to appreciate its solitude and you will be more aware of your environment and have a better chance to see wildlife.

CMC members should always hike on existing trails where possible. Walking outside the main trail to avoid rocks or mud breaks down the trail edge, widens the trail, and leads to the creation of additional paths, destroying vegetation. Shortcutting switchbacks cause erosion. If a trail is impassable, walk on hard surfaces such as rocks, sand or snow, and notify the agency officials responsible for the area. When taking breaks during a hike, rest on durable materials such as stones or sand. Avoid trampling greenery.

Avoid camping close to water and trails, and select a site that is not visible to others. Even in popular areas, screening campsites and choosing a more out-of-the-way site can enhance the sense of solitude. Also, be sure to obey any regulations in the area related to campsite selection. Allow enough time and energy at the end of the day to select an appropriate site. Tiredness, bad weather, and lateness of the day are not acceptable excuses for choosing a poor or fragile campsite.

Generally, it is best to camp on sites that are so highly impacted that further careful use will cause no additional impact. Avoid sites and trails that show slight signs of use. In remote pristine areas, camp on previously-unused sites; in popular areas, select well-established campsites. In popular areas, impacted sites are obvious because they have already lost their vegetation cover. It may also be possible to find a site naturally lacking vegetation, such as exposed bedrock, snow or sandy areas. When leaving camp, make sure that it is clean, attractive, and appealing to other campers.

Pick up and pack out all of your litter. Burying or leaving trash and litter in the backcountry is unacceptable. On the way out, when your pack is lighter, try to pick up litter left by others. Consider the words "Leave No Trace" a challenge to take out everything that you brought into the backcountry.

Leave natural flowers and plants, architectural artifacts, and rocks. "Take only pictures; leave only footprints." The CMC strongly discourages campfires.

Visitors to the backcountry create certain types of waste that cannot be packed out. This includes human waste. Proper disposal of human waste is important to avoid pollution of water sources, avoid the negative implications of someone else finding it, minimize the possibility of spreading disease, and maximize the rate of decomposition. Burying human feces in the correct location and manner is the most effective method to meet these objectives. Consider packing it out in a triple bag method as required by heavy use areas. Check with land manager to confirm requirements where you will be recreating.

"Cat holes" are the most widely accepted method of human waste disposal. Locate cat holes at least two hundred feet (about seventy steps for an adult) from water, trails, and camp. Select a site that is inconspicuous, where other people will be unlikely to walk or camp. With a small garden trowel, heel of boot or stick, dig a hole 6 to 8 inches deep and 4 to 6 inches in diameter. When finished, the cat hole should be covered and disguised with natural materials. If camping in the area for more than one night or if camping with a large group, cat hole sites should be widely dispersed.

Use toilet paper sparingly, and use only plain, white, non-perfumed brands. Toilet paper must be disposed of properly. It should either be thoroughly buried in a cat hole or placed in plastic bags and packed out. Burning toilet paper is ineffective and can start a wildfire. For more information on Leave No Trace ethics, visit www.lnt.org

APPENDIX C -- HOW TO BECOME A TECHNICAL TRIP LEADER

In an effort to promote growth of technical climbing activities at the CMC, Denver Group transferred responsibility of technical climbing schools and trips to the State Technical Climbing School Committee in 2019. The procedures and guidelines below are for Denver Group Trip Leaders who want to lead technical climbing trips for the CMC:

Standards for Technical Trip Leaders (TTL)

The following requirements apply to State CMC Technical Trip Leaders:

- Be a **current CMC Trip Leader** in good standing with your CMC regional Group.
(Please contact Denver Group about Trip Leader School.)
- Have the **mountain skills** adequate for the discipline for which approval is sought
([links to corresponding activity standard](#)):
 - a. Top Rope rock and/or ice climbing
 - b. Sport climbing
 - c. Traditional rock climbing
 - d. Multi-pitch rock climbing
 - e. Ice Lead climbing

- f. Alpine climbing
- Submit an application (see below) to the CMC State Technical Climbing School Committee and receive approval to proceed with a Technical Leader In Training (LIT) trip.
- Regardless of experience, a **Technical Trip Leader In Training (LIT) will plan, manage, and demonstrate good technical and leadership skills on at least one technical trip, with an approved Technical Trip Leader Evaluator acting as a co-leader, and receive a positive evaluation for the discipline(s) covered by the technical LIT trip.**
- Receive approval from the Technical Climbing Schools Committee. Evaluations are reviewed monthly by the TCS Committee.

How to apply

- The Technical Trip Leader Application can be found at [cmc.org>members>leader resources>Denver group forms](http://cmc.org/members/leader/resources/Denver_group_forms):
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpZRzvxzgzEcqal_AdgyAg1ndk_ICtOFGJpQBxfpDK_ALR5uA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0&usp=mail_form_link
- State TCS Committee will review and vote on applications monthly.
- Technical Trip Leader In Training (LIT)/co-lead technical trips will be scheduled with applicants, based on availability of evaluators. The TCS Committee will provide applicants a list of approved Technical Trip Leader Evaluators and contact information with whom they can communicate to arrange an LIT trip. Applicants seeking approval in multiple disciplines are encouraged to complete LIT trips with different Technical Trip Leader Evaluators to benefit from different perspectives, insights, and feedback.
 - It is often possible to schedule a co-lead that combines related disciplines.
 - Example 1: Sport and Trad climbing could be combined in a trip to a crag that has a mix of both climbing types, e.g. North Table Mountain, Boulder Canyon
 - Example 2: Trad and Multi-pitch climbing could be combined in a trip to Eldorado Canyon State Park.
 - A Trad LIT/co-lead that requires construction of a cliff-top anchor may also qualify an applicant to lead Top Rope trips.

Staying Current

- TTLs agree that they will lead trips at or below their current level of ability.
- State TTLs must maintain standards that apply to Trip Leaders statewide. (WFA, Avalanche/AIARE, etc.). These are outlined in the State Trip Leader Manual.
- TTLs will stay up to date on current CMC trip and operating policies.
- TTLs must lead a technical level trip once every year for State to retain TTL status. This trip can be offered to the general membership OR a trip while teaching in CMC Schools.

Adding Technical Trips to www.cmc.org

Technical Trips Leaders should select “State CMC” as their Group, when entering trips into the CMC trip database.

Technical Trip FAQs:

Q: What if I’m already a technical trip leader for Denver Group? Is there anything else I need to do?

A: Denver Group Technical Trip Leaders who were ‘grandparented’ in by DS&L in 2018 may continue to lead technical trips. Please enter these trips as “State CMC” into the CMC database moving forward.

Q: I’m a Denver Group member, but I’m only interested in leading technical trips. What does this mean for me?

A: This is ok! You still need to take Trip Leader School, have current WFA, and Avalanche Education (if applicable), etc. Please reach out to the Technical Climbing School Committee for your LIT(s)/co-lead(s). Nearly all climbing trips involve an approach hike. We can assist with paperwork needed to update your Denver Group hiker classification and/or general trip leader status.

Q: I still have questions... who may I contact?

A: Please contact TCS Committee member: [Brian Le Blanc](#) (2022) or Instructor and Technical Schools Support Manager [Graham Ottley](#).

APPENDIX D – POLICY HISTORY

Trip Planning, Descriptions, and Substitutions

Trips can be questioned by the group’s safety chair if trip descriptions contain omissions or inaccurate information, if trips are unsafe, or are scheduled for too short a period of time.
[Passed October 1974]

The following information is required in all trip descriptions: trip name, Easy-Difficult classification (can also contain A-E class, or Yosemite Decimal System), general trip description, round trip distance to be traveled, elevation gain, party size limit, trip leader name, trip leader’s phone number, special participant requirements, special equipment requirements, name of the

topographical map for the trip area, and any pre-trip meeting information. [Passed October 1974]

Climbing Helmets

Students and instructors in schools and all participants in CMC climbs rated 4 and above in the Yosemite system are required to wear helmets. [Passed April 1990]

Avalanche Transceivers

The CMC shall not rent avalanche transceivers. [Passed July 1996]

Leave No Trace

Since the Colorado Mountain Club is the premier organized user of the Colorado back country, and the concept of “Leave No Trace/An Outdoor Ethic” parallels the basic concept which the Colorado Mountain Club needs to follow now and in the future. The Colorado Mountain Club wholeheartedly supports and pledges to carry out the concepts of Leave No Trace. [Passed April 1997]

Guest Fees

In order to assure continued compliance with Forest Service guidelines and to encourage new memberships, no CMC group shall assess and collect guest fees [passed July 1998]

Alcohol

There shall be no charge at any CMC event where alcohol is served, unless alcohol is served by an entity that has liquor license and liquor liability coverage. [passed July 2003]

Release of Liability Form

All trip participants must sign a liability waiver. [Passed October 2004]

As of 2022: Participants must sign up through the cmc.org website which will require a waiver (even for guests). Trip leaders have no direct responsibility for getting waivers signed.

Leader Qualification and Responsibility

Leaders will be assigned to trips on the basis of leadership skills demonstrated on CMC trips of a type similar to that of the type being led. [Passed October 1975]

Sufficient leader records will be maintained by each group to assure that only qualified leaders are assigned to trips. [Passed October 1975]

Each leader is responsible for the safety of their party and will have commensurate authority. [Passed October 1975]

All trips and leaders shall be approved by each group prior to submission for group schedules. [Passed October 2004]

Each group shall ensure that all leaders meet CMC requirements and are kept informed of current CMC policy for leaders. [Passed October 2004]

Complaints Handling

The CMC Chief Executive Officer and CMC Safety & Leadership Chairman shall be notified by the group chairman of any leader suspended from that group. [Passed October 2004]
(this has been updated with Navex Ethicspoint third-Party reporting system 2021)

Each trip must have a designated rear leader. [Passed October 2004]

This can be any member of the trip but should not just be the “slowest person”.

Communication between front and rear leaders is imperative.

The leader of any CMC-scheduled trip on which there is a fatality or serious injury will be temporarily suspended from leading trips, pending a prompt investigation of the accident. [Passed October 2004]

Vehicle-Supported Dispersed Camping on Forest Service Lands

Forest visitors must park a motor vehicle within one vehicle length from the edge of the road where it is safe to do so and without causing damage to the Forest Service resources.

Motor vehicles may access signed campsites via designated camp spur routes that are signed and demarcated on a travel management map. [Passed April 2007]

Trip Size

This CMC policy recommends that the minimum trip or field-day size is four people. The rationale is that in case of injury or accident, one person can stay with the patient and two people can seek assistance.

Exceptions include:

1. A minimum of three participants with reliable communication
 - a. 2-way satellite communicator
 - b. Verified* cell service coverage

2. A minimum of 2 participants for 5th class climbs** with reliable communication
 - a. 2-way satellite communicator
 - b. Verified cell service coverage

[Passed October 2022]

**“Verified” = knowledge that leaders cellular device on leaders current carrier maintains service throughout the trip.

**CMC still requires the leader must be approved to lead multi-pitch climbs (TLCS or equivalent, plus trip leader training and WFA) and the second member must have taken RSS, BMS, or equivalent

