



Guide for trip leaders.

One of the main aims of the MTSC is to promote enjoyment in the outdoors. As a leader of an MTSC trip you are responsible for the enjoyment and safety of all the party members on your trip. Please remember that this is a club trip and *not* a private one and club leaders have duty of care towards their trip participants. These guidelines are designed to help you prepare for leading a club trip and to have a good time doing so. Remember prevention is still better than cure.

1. Before the trip

- Don't leave planning to the last minute.
- Become familiar with the area and route including wet weather options and escape routes. Don't be afraid to ask people if you are unsure. Got the latest map?
- Have you got all of the necessary party equipment? Tent fly; cookers; billies; mountain radio, ice axes; crampons.
- **Remember** even the most experienced members can fall over and break something like a collar bone. Although you might be planning to stay at the hut there are lots of reasons why you might not get there and you need to make sure that you have sufficient shelter, food and equipment if this eventuality occurs.
- What other experienced participants do you have on the trip and how might you utilise their skills. Are there any people with first aid certificates?
- Obtain permission to cross private land.
- Complete a trip preview and send it to the newsletter before the 15th of the preceding month. Remember to ask people to ring you by a certain night (e.g. Thursday)
- Try to go to the club night just before your trip so that you can answer any questions that people have and pick up the trip list. If you can't go then try and arrange someone else to go.
- Complete the written intentions form including the proposed route and alternatives, all participants' names, phone numbers and the details of their contact person in case of emergencies. Leave the details in one of the following places:
 1. The central Police station. (ideal).
 2. Peter Rawlins' letterbox (165 Albert St.).
 3. Hugh Wilde's letterbox (179 Cook St.).
 4. Your own letterbox (this is an absolute last resort if you really can't get to the others).(n.b. Wednesday and Thursday trampers leave their sheet at 'Hobbs Cobblers' on Main street).

2. Talking to your potential trip participants.

It is important to check the suitability of the trip to the potential participant and visa versa. This is especially true if you are not familiar with the person. It is

always difficult to discuss fitness and experience with people and you may feel like Clarke Kent trying to tell Superman how to stop bullets. Talk to them about:

- Their fitness level. This can be done by asking them about recent trips. When they were last out? How frequently do they get out? What are some of their recent trips? What length of day are most of their trips?
- Their experience level, again talking to them about the sorts of trips they have been on is always a good thing. Have they spent much time on the tops? Do they mainly stick to tracks? Do they feel confident with their navigation skills? What were some of their best trips? Where do they mostly like to go?
- Do they have any medical conditions or recent illnesses?
- The clothing and equipment that they will need for the trip. Do they have it all or will they need to get some of it. Do they have suitable wet weather clothing?
- The terrain and length of day that you are expecting. Will you be on tracks? Are you going onto the tops? What about rivers? Are you intending to stay in huts or are you going to camp? Don't forget hut tickets
- The food and drink arrangements for the trip.
- The meeting place, leaving time, estimated cost of the trip, expected duration of the drive to the road end, estimated time of return.
- Make sure that the **participants** next of kin, partner, flatmate etc. has the phone details of club overdue trip contacts given on the trip card. Please tell them not to ring until a time that you specify.

What you discuss with trip participants will depend on the sort of trip you are undertaking but it is better to know something than to find out about it at the wrong time.

3. At the meeting point

- Have everybody introduce themselves.
- Check that party members have the correct gear, especially that of newcomers.
- If you feel that the persons clothing and equipment is inadequate, the committee will support your decision to leave them behind.
- Check that all of the drivers know where they are going and swap cell phone numbers in-case someone gets separated on the way to the road end.

4. During the trip

Communication is the key here. Your aim is to make all participants feel that they are part of a team. Remember you are the leader but everyone has a responsibility to ensure the safe running of the trip and it is important to establish a 'team' atmosphere.

- Discuss the route and what people might expect to see.
- How long do you think it will take to the next hut, track junction, high point.
- Discuss any decisions with the party members. Alternatives to routes, when do they want to stop for lunch?

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- Remember that you will probably have other experienced people on the trip as well.
- Be aware of where every member is and how they are going on the trip. This does not mean that you have to be at the back of the party. In fact somewhere in the middle is usually better.
- Take a special interest in newcomers and people who seem to be struggling a bit. It is amazing how talking to people will take their mind off the fact that they are a bit tired. Buddy them up with someone else.
- Often groups will walk together and this is a very sociable way to enjoy the outdoors, but sometimes with larger groups the team breaks down into smaller groups. This can be fine but remember that there are some common sense considerations to ensuring everybody's safety and enjoyment.
- Ask someone to be at the head of the party and appoint a 'tail end charlie'.
- Remind people that it is best to look after the people **behind** them. In that way they won't walk too far ahead of the main group and no-one will get left behind.
- Do an occasional head count.
- Ask people to stop at predetermined places and wait for everyone to reassemble, at the bush edge or a track junction. Make sure that they have a bit of a rest. There is nothing worse than the group heading off just as the last ones get there. It is very demoralising.
- Make sure that people are eating and drinking sufficiently during the day. Have they got their sun-cream, sunhat on? Are they underdressed, overdressed?
- Correctly fill in hut log books.
- Take the opportunity to pass on your experience during the trip. Talk about navigation, river crossing, pitching a fly, use of the stove etc.

5. At the road end

- I know this sounds a bit obvious but make sure that you have everyone. Are you sure that John really did get in the other car or are they thinking the same thing and John has gone in the bushes for a private moment.
- Collect any club gear.
- Organise someone to write the trip report. People really like to read about these trips in the club newsletter.
- Collect and distribute any money.
- Bask in the glory as everyone tells you what a great trip it was and you did a wonderful job leading it.

6. After the trip

- Pick up your written intentions list so that we know you are back.
- Inform your overdue trip contact.
- Return any club gear.