



COP Trip Leaders Manual

Chapter 3

Section 7: Backpacking and Hiking safety guidelines

Planning the trip



See Chapter 4, Policies, for the Backpacking Policy concerning non-members.

When possible, know the trails you intend to hike.

- Check trails out in advance by hiking them before leading a trip or, using guide books that rate trails for hiking when they are available.
- Know about the area where the group will go including the level of difficulty, access points, alternate routes, shelters and emergency help locations.

Planning the trip continued



- If possible, call or email local land management agency (USFS, NPS etc. *) for last minute trail/area updates or closures.
 - * take it with a grain a salt - desk jockeys often have no idea of the conditions out in the backcountry.
- Be sure to have adequate maps to navigate the area.

During the trip



- Leader should carry, or make sure others are carrying, other emergency supplies, such as: repair kit, compass, pen and paper, and guidebook.
- Remind participants of problem spots such as steep rocky ledges and stay near the group to teach people how to get over them.
- Make sure all participants are carrying extra food and extra water “in case”.



“I hike alone sometimes. It’s during these solo hikes that the number of arrogant and ignorant people I have to deal with is reduced to one.”

– *anonymous*

Happy Trails!