



Columbus Outdoor Pursuits



Trip Leaders Manual 2011

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits Requirements for Trip Leaders

- *Be a member of COP*
- *Support the mission of COP*
- *Have the appropriate skill level for the activity*
- *Take COP Leader Training (1/6/11)*
- *Read the Trip Leadership Manual*
- *Be trained in first aid to the degree appropriate to the activity or have someone on the trip that is - see chapter 2, page 6 for more about this requirement*
- *Have a signed Liability Release from each participant and turn it in to COP within 7 days of the trip. Deposit funds collected within 7 days of receipt.*
- *Use the Incident Report Form when needed & send to Risk Manager within 7 days*
- *Do not accept or place guilt at time of occurrence*
- *Follow up with injured participants, and use the Incident Follow-up Form*
- *Ensure that all participants are equipped with the necessary safety gear/equipment as described in the Activity Guidelines*
- *Leaders are expected to implement safety guidelines, including safety gear use, as specified in the TLM Chapter 4 safety guidelines. (11/09/09)*
- *All COP Leaders and Instructors are expected to teach/model principles espoused by Leave No Trace®, consistent with circumstances. (11/09/09)*
- *Meet specific Activity leadership requirements if they exist*

The role of the trip leader,

in part, is to carry out the safety policies as approved by the Executive Board, consistent with circumstances, and safeguard Columbus Outdoor Pursuits-owned equipment.

The purpose of this Manual

Is to provide guidance, instruction and support to COP trip leaders in order to minimize risk of injury to participants and to maximize the protection of our leaders and our organization.

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The COP Trip Leader's Manual & You

Why Should You Read This Manual?

This manual is designed to help you in your efforts to run activities in a way that minimizes the risk of injury to your participants. The safety and well-being of our participants is paramount. This is a collection of your ideas and strategies for running activities, along with some basic techniques for managing risk. It will be revised as often as necessary to make sure new ideas that improve our trips are incorporated.

The information in this handbook will also help COP protect you. Although unfortunate and infrequent, lawsuits as a result of outdoor activities do occur. Therefore, we must plan together for the possibility that an injured participant might consider legal action. Following the steps in this manual will greatly help our efforts to support you as a leader by reducing the likelihood that lawsuits will be filed. If they are, these steps will greatly improve our ability to defend you and the organization. In either case, it is important that we work together as a team in this effort.

How to Read this Manual

This manual contains many suggested guidelines drawn from the combined experience of COP leaders, along with a few requirements. All COP leaders are responsible for knowing and following COP leader requirements, therefore, everyone should read the first five chapters dealing with information about Leading for COP, Risk Management, Safety Guidelines, Policies, and Navigating the COP Leadership Path. There is a great deal of additional information in the following chapters and appendices that you should read if you have specific questions or a general interest.

Requirements are just that; things that must be done on COP trips. The requirements are the minimum that must be done to manage risk to your participants. To do less puts you as a leader, and the rest of COP, at risk. For example, not having a signed liability release will make it very difficult to prove in court that your participant knew and understood the risks of the trip you led. This will make it difficult to defend against a claim. A case lost because of a leader's refusal to get signed releases could damage activities all through COP. We have attempted to keep requirements at a minimum, for we are confident that our leaders will continue to operate well run trips. See the checklist in the

Our Mission

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits is a volunteer-based, participatory organization created to provide opportunities and education for outdoor recreation and activities and thereby aid in acquisition of a greater knowledge and appreciation of the out-of-doors and to develop self-reliant, community minded citizens.

We:

- Provide outdoor recreation education to the public, including safety and technique
- Organize and lead outdoor trips
- Train our own outdoor leaders
- Purchase and maintain a limited amount of equipment for use in our programs and activities
- Define outdoor recreation as primarily non-competitive, self-propelled activities such as backpacking, bicycling, kayaking, etc.

preface of this manual for a list of these requirements. They are both boldfaced and italicized within the text.

The suggestions and guidelines are methods of running trips that COP leaders have found result in successful trips. You are not required to run trips in the way they suggest.

However, you are expected to manage the risk of injury on the trips you run. If you have other ways to reach these goals, please let us know so that we can include these as suggestions in the next edition of the manual.

Chapter One: Trip Leaders in COP

Section 1: Your Role as a Leader

As a trip leader, you represent COP to your participants. They depend on your expertise as they learn and perfect their skills. They look to you to help them explore and learn about the world and themselves.

You shoulder a great responsibility. It is up to you to carry on the tradition of the thousands of people whose work has built COP. It is also up to you to make plans and decisions that will minimize the risk of injury, and provide the experience that has made so many people value their connection with COP for over 70 years.

We also recognize that the benefits flow both ways. Developing leadership skills allow the organization to maintain a healthy network of leaders, while giving leaders the chance to grow, gain self-confidence and expertise.

Because you, as a leader, are representing everyone in the COP organization, it is important to us all that you maintain the high standards participants have come to expect from us.

This manual is one tool to help you deal with these responsibilities. The support and expertise of the organization is another. Risk reduction measures and liability insurance provide a final net of support.

Section 2: Requirements to be a Leader

Since COP is committed to providing high quality activities, it comes as no surprise that we have established some basic requirements for our leaders. You will find these requirements on the inside of the front cover of this manual.

Section 3: Position Title: Trip Leader

Reports to the Activity Leader and Sometimes To the Risk Manager

Position Description

- Leads trips for Columbus Outdoor Pursuits
- Program Responsibilities
- Carries out the safety policies for that activity
- Responsible for the logistical and safety plans for the trip
- Responsible for the physical and emotional well being of the group
- Screens and educates participants
- Responsible for attempting to use the vehicles available efficiently in terms of mileage, capacity and safety
- Expected to have appropriate first aid and rescue skills

Benefits of Leading

- Personal satisfaction
- Get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want
- **Organization could not exist without us**

The Downside

- Responsibility
- Phone calls/paperwork

- Obtains releases and incident reports. Follows up on incidents and files reports.

- Checks membership status, on trips that allow non-members, encourages them to join COP

- Presents COP in a positive manner

- Models the Guiding Principles of COP

It is distributed to 2694 members. An additional thousand newsletters are distributed to libraries, high schools, bicycle shops and outdoor stores in central Ohio.

Members: 2694. 2,168 in the 430,431 and 432 zip codes, 405 in other Ohio zip codes, and 121 out-of-state.

Staff: Three Full Time Paid Staff: (1) Office Manager (2) Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure Director and (3) Bike Event Coordinator. There are a few, part-time and/or seasonal workers, e.g., bookkeeper, GOBA Assistant, GOBA data processor. All others are volunteers.

Bike Routes:

COP maintains 8 cross-state bicycle routes. Maps are made available at a nominal price.

Trip Program

The Columbus Outdoor Pursuits trip program includes: bicycling, flat and white water boating, caving, backpacking, hiking, rock climbing, and cross country skiing

Volunteers run most of our programs. Most participants pay only the costs of the trip. Special Events and schools are priced to raise money to cover our programs. Every effort is made to keep them affordable while raising funds. Most are less expensive than comparable programs elsewhere. Members are given a discount on these events.

During the 12-month period from July 2009 to June 2010, we offered 749 day trips, 43 weekend trips, and 8 extended trips, 2 of which were international. That's 800 trips total! In addition, we offered monthly program meetings and activity planning meetings. We had 36,450 participant days during this period. One hundred thirty four leaders made this happen.

Major Events:

Tour of the Scioto River Valley (TOSRV) – the longest running, largest two-day bicycle event in the country. Cyclists ride 105 miles each day every Mother's Day Weekend from Columbus to Portsmouth, Ohio and back. Started in 1962.

Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) – a weeklong loop cycle tour in Ohio. 3,000 cyclists explore smaller communities in the state. Started in 1989.

Across Ohio Bicycle Adventure (XOBA) – a weeklong cycle tour from one side of Ohio to the other. Different route each year. Two hundred participant limit. Started in 1998.

Bike Tours (2) are full-service day rides from the central Ohio area, generally used as training rides for the larger, more difficult tours.

Budget Tours (10) offer cyclists minimal services for a minimal price. E.g. painted route, map and limited sag service.

Educational opportunities with COP:

- Leadership Training (4-6 times a year)
- Wilderness First Aid (February or March)
- Wilderness First Responder (occasional)
- Red Cross Standard First Aid
- Basic Canoe School (on demand)
- Intermediate Canoe School (occasional)
- Kayak I (winter)
- Kayak II (early spring)

Trip Leader Rights

A trip leader has the right to be treated with respect by the trip participants, other trip leaders, COP members and the Executive Board.

A trip leader can reject a participant if the leader feels that, from past experience, the person would constitute a safety hazard or diminish enjoyment of the trip. The leader should inform the rejected participant of the reasons for the rejection.

Administrative Responsibilities

- Get Activity Leaders approval for the trip
- Send newsletter schedule item to activity schedule volunteer before the deadline
- Submit a budget request if needed
- Liability Releases must be returned to the office and funds deposited within 7 days after the trip
- Notify your Activity Leader and the COP Risk Manager of any incidents that happen on your trip. Send the incident report, follow-up form, and release to the Risk Manager.

Section 4: Guiding Principles of Columbus Outdoor Pursuits

COP Guiding Principles can be found on the inside of this manuals back cover.

Section 5: Who We Are

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1937 to promote greater understanding of the world and its people by providing low-cost recreational and educational travel. Today this volunteer-based organization continues its devotion to noncompetitive outdoor recreation and world travel. While Columbus Outdoor Pursuits is best known for its bicycle mega-tours - The Tour of the Scioto River Valley (TOSRV) and The Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) - we feature a comprehensive program of bicycling, flat and white water boating, caving, backpacking, rock climbing, cross country skiing & snowshoeing, and other outdoor recreation. We offer extensive education in these activities including kayak schools, backpacking schools, Wilderness First Aid and Leadership training.

Tax Status: Columbus Outdoor Pursuits has 501(c)(3) status and contributions to COP are tax deductible. This status brings us some privileges, but also some obligations to the community.

Newsletter: Columbus Outdoor Pursuits publishes a monthly newsletter, Columbus Outdoors, as a benefit of membership.

- Eskimo Roll School (winter)
- Rafting 101 School (occasional)
- Beginning Backpack School (spring)
- Intermediate Backpack School (occasional)
- Snow travel (March)
- Compass Class (occasional)
- Map Reading Class (occasional)
- Bicycle maintenance (occasional)
- GOBA includes safety cycle program, and interpretive guide
- XOBA includes interpretive guide
- Rock Climbing Orientation
- Informal instruction on all trips

Section 6: Information About The Office

The office was opened on May 1st, 1989. It was originally a 6-month experiment with a 30 hour per week secretary. The original office space was in the basement of the Lumberman's Association, 41 Croswell Road and was shared by Director of the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure. After three years, we moved up to a larger space on the second floor.

After fifteen years at the Lumberman's Association, we moved in January of 2004 to the Ohio Restaurant Association's building at 1525 Bethel Road, Suite 100. There is a full time Office Manager, Full-time Director of the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure, a Part-Time As-Needed GOBA assistant, a Part-Time GOBA Registration Clerk in the spring and occasionally some volunteers who handle membership processing and copying/collating type work. We also have a Part-Time Bookkeeper who is an independent contractor.

The office runs on an appointment only basis. It is never appropriate to tell members/event participants to "just stop in the office and talk with Ann". The Office Manager has tasks that take her out of the office and also works evenings and weekends sometimes to accommodate volunteers. You should always call first before going to be sure someone is there, or to get the key code if appropriate.

Keys to the building are held by the Board Members, Employees and any member who needs to work in the office on a regular basis. The office suite itself has key pad entry, so we can make arrangements for people to access the facility during normal business hours even if the staff is out. Security is a concern of our neighbors in the building so please DO NOT put anything in the door to prevent it from closing and locking. It is important that you call and reserve space for meetings.

The Office Manager works at the direction of the President. All tasks from board members must go through the President.

Some of the things the office accomplishes are:

- Leadership training
- Answering the phones and sending out information packets
- Opening and routing the mail
- Processing memberships and renewal notices
- Paying the bills

"Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part"

We are not a club!

Clubs are responsible only for the well-being of their members.

We are a 501(c)(3) organization.

As such, we are responsible for contributing to the greater good of the community

- Bike tour and some school registrations
- Maintaining the Board Notebook
- Maintaining the Trip Leaders Manual
- Keeping the Board informed
- "Plugging the gaps"

Our employees work 40 hours a week in the office. They also do a lot of volunteer work for the organization and participate in many activities. It is inappropriate to ask them to handle work matters out of the office. Example: don't send people over to talk with the office manager about their address change at a meeting. Tell them to call the office.

It is inappropriate to call employees at home about work unless it is an emergency.

General Information

The Columbus Outdoor Pursuits address and phone are as follows:

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits
1525 Bethel Road, Suite 100
Columbus OH 43220-2054

Phone: (614) 442-7901

Fax: (614) 459-8044

E-mail: office@outdoor-pursuits.org

This is not a walk-in office. Do not send people here to pick-up/drop off applications. Volunteers should call before coming to make sure that someone is here and that the item you are coming for is here.

The manager has duties outside the office and is sometimes scheduled to be off/come in late to compensate for evening meetings/weekend work, so do be sure to call first.

The Office Manager works at the direction of the President. It is not appropriate to assume that she is your secretary.

You are responsible for making deposits of any money collected for your trip within one week of the event.

Once you decide to be leader, you take on a legal obligation to do your job. That means you are expected to:

- act prudently
- to think your trip through
- make and implement good plans
- and keep on top of the trip during its course.

The law does not care if you are being paid to lead or not; the standards are the same.

Section 8: Organization Structure (as pertains to leading trips)

