Chapter Three: Safety Guidelines

The following section contains specific suggested guidelines for activity leaders. The first section contains guidelines that are general to all activities. Following this are guidelines specific to certain activities. Please familiarize yourself with those guidelines for the activities you intend to lead.

Most of these are *suggested* guidelines, not ***requirements.*** However, it is important to consider the risks that these guidelines are designed to manage. You should realize that, while you may not manage these risks in the way recommended here, it is your duty to manage them effectively, for the well being of your participants and the organization.

Requirements are in italicized, bold font.

Additions to these guidelines are welcome at any time.

Section 1: Guidelines Common to All Activities

Every activity that COP holds has its own specific risks and rewards. However, in a sense they are more alike than different. Many common elements should be considered no matter what activities the trip includes. Many of these points have already been discussed in this manual, but are repeated here for clarity and convenience. The common concerns include:

Setting up the trip

- State a difficulty level for the trip that accurately describes the terrain, speed, rapid classification, etc.
- ***Screen likely participants for experience and ability.*** Do they have a realistic knowledge of their own ability, and the ability of others on the trip? Are their skills are commensurate with the difficulty of the trip. Ask about participant's special needs or medical conditions before beginning the trip. As part of this process, you should try to ensure that all participants have appropriate safety equipment, have it with them, know how to use it, and use it when appropriate.
- Refuse to take people that are beyond their apparent ability. If you take participants on a trip beyond their ability, the whole group might not be able to do what was originally planned.
- Know the limits of ability (leader's and groups) and do not attempt activities that exceed this ability.
- Instruct all participants to bring appropriate clothing and equipment for the activity, season, and nature of the trip. This is particularly important with beginners. If sending out information in advance, include a checklist of suggested items to wear and carry with them.
- If headed to the backcountry, leaders should inform someone where you are going, your route,estimated return time, plus when and who to call to report you missing.
- Know how to deal with the most common injuries in your activity.
- ***Have an emergency plan.*** In emergencies, save people first. Rescue equipment only if it can be done safely.
- Know how to obtain local emergency help. When getting help - making sure the rescue plan is in writing including patient info, where, what is being done, what people on site plan to do, What do you need? Runners need written information about where they are going, what the message is, what they are supposed to do after contacting appropriate authorities.
- If splitting your group, be sure there are enough people with the patient to carry him if he passes out, and to send info back to the main group. Equipment goes with the patient.
- ***Know the state and local laws/regulations*** of the area to be visited and obey them.
- Check the weather forecast prior to leaving for the activity. Be aware of changing weather and terrain.

Before, or at the start depending on the circumstances

Be familiar with the necessary equipment and its capabilities and limitations. Remind your participants to check their own equipment. You may wish to instruct them about what to check for, and help them determine that they have the required gear. Group equipment should be suited to the activity and in good repair

At the start

- ***Tell all participants to read and sign the release. Be certain everyone signs them. Carry the release with you.*** You may need it before you return to your car.
- Be sure someone on the trip has a charged cell phone with them. Exchange cell numbers.
- Distribute maps.
- ***Conduct a group orientation*** as necessary about equipment, emergency procedures in case of an incident, and where lunch, rest and water stops will be. If the finish spot is different from the start, accurately describe it so all participants will meet at the same location.
- ***Either verbally or on the map, warn riders of known hazards*** such as railroad tracks, metal bridges, wood bridges, construction sites, etc.
- Emphasize to everyone the importance of self-sufficiency. Make sure all participants are carrying food and water. The amount of food, water and extra clothing should be proportional to how far into the wilderness the trip is going and the weather.
- Remind participants of general hazards common to the activity. For example, when hiking, warn them to avoid putting hands or feet where they cannot see, and to use a light when moving in the dark.
- Remind participants about the warning signs of weather related health problems they might encounter, such as frostbite, hypothermia and heat stroke.
- Inform/remind participants about pertinent laws and regulations and our expectation that they be obeyed.
- ***Inform the group about how you intend to lead;*** from the front, the back, or otherwise. If leading from the front, select a competent person to be the sweep unless a co-leader is sweep. The sweep needs to be carrying a first aid kit.
- Give details of leadership style, such as how close together

you will travel, how often you will stop, etc.

- Inform participants about how the group will treat decision points on the route, such as intersections.
- Know in advance what your turn-around time will be if the event takes longer than expected and you will not be able to complete it as planned.
- Inform participants about how to leave the route for comfort stops or other personal reasons while remaining part of the group, such as: leaving a pack on the trail, or leaving a bicycle by the side of the road.
- If choosing to take beginners, make sure to teach basic skills to avoid injury.
- Never start if dangerous weather is imminent. Be prepared to modify plans if bad weather comes up during the trip.

On the trip

- Take appropriate precautions for the terrain, weather and animals.
- Try to avoid getting caught in the dark. Plan a turnaround time and keep to it, even if it means you will not complete the loop.
- Remind participants to pay attention to body signs such as thirst, hunger, fatigue, pain, etc. Watch for signs of deteriorating physical and mental condition, i.e. the "umbles". (grumble, stumble, mumble)
- Carry a first aid kit.

At the scene of an accident:

- Take charge unless someone more qualified has already done so.
- Secure the scene to minimize risk to everyone present.
- Appoint individuals to direct traffic, administer First Aid, and seek medical help if necessary.
- Do not move the injured person unless you are trained to do so, or he/she is in imminent danger.
- Gather as much information as possible for your incident report.
- ***Fill out an Incident Report.***
- Keep an eye on the rest of your group.

Getting help

- make sure the rescue plan is in writing including patient info, where, what is being done, what people there plan to do, what the runners are supposed to do after contacting appropriate authorities. Send a copy with the runners, keep one yourself.
- Equipment goes with patient. Always.
- Enough people go with the injured person to carry him if he passes out, and to send info back to rest of the group.

After the trip

- If possible, make certain that everyone is accounted for at the finish.

"Your skill level needs to be (at least) one higher than the level you are teaching" – *Doug Golding, ODNR Watercraft*

- ***Follow-up on any incidents, use the Incident Follow-up form.***
- Review the trip; make notes of suggested improvements for next time.
- Turn in releases, make deposits, submit pay orders, and send article/photos to newsletter.

Section 2: Guidelines for Bicycle Day Rides

Note: These suggested guidelines are intended to cover only those items pertaining to risk and liability in COP Day Rides. Anything ***bold & italic is a requirement.***

Planning a ride:

- Choose a route with low traffic levels, good road surface and wide shoulders— avoid heavily trafficked roads and intersections. If you aren't acquainted with the roads, drive them or ride them beforehand.
- Consider what traffic conditions will be like at the day and time the ride will take place.
- Schedule the ride with enough daylight hours for the slowest rider to finish and/or to accommodate repairs.
- Require lights and reflectors if riding after dark.
- Prefer clockwise routes to avoid as many left turns as possible.
- Plan for frequent rest/food/water/toilet stops en route.
- Provide a legible and accurate map and/or cue sheet with distances given; include emergency contact numbers on the map.
- Choose a starting point with ample parking and get permission to use it if it's not public property.
- Accurately classify and promote your trip with regard to skill level and difficulty.
- Please do not schedule a day ride on budget tour days.

At the Start:

- Distribute maps.
- Welcome everyone and let them know that safe riding is our primary concern.
- Talk about group riding ettiquette.
- Never start a ride if dangerous conditions or weather is imminent, such as thunderstorms or icy roads.
- ***Insist that all traffic laws be obeyed***
- ***Helmets must be properly worn whenever on a bike.***
- Warn participants that they should not try to ride beyond their ability or fitness level.

- Since the leader cannot be everywhere, riders should be reminded to be responsible for each other.
- Remind riders that the leader needs to know about any incidents that occur.
- Observe participant's equipment for obvious problems.
- ***Do Not leave maps for latecomers.*** Unfortunately, doing so leads them to think they are "on the trip" when they are not.

Pre-Ride Equipment Check

Problems to Look For and Helpful Advice to Give:

- **Tires:** Casing – no cracks, no sidewall bulges, and no cords exposed; are pumped up, bead seated evenly all around
- **Wheels:** Rim in good shape and true (not rubbing brake pads). No missing or broken spokes. Wheel spins freely on axle, but not loose.
- **Quick Release:** Clamped on tight enough; NOT screwed on.
- **Brakes:** Thumb clearance when hand levers squeezed. Pads not worn too much. Cable not frayed. Brake block lever release closed. Both pads contact rim at about the same time.
- **Crank:** Arms tight on spindle (when pushed/pulled sideways). Spindle not loose in the bottom bracket shell.
- **Stem & Handlebar:** In line with front wheel. Stem tight inside the steering tube. Handlebar clamped tightly in stem.
- **Gears:** Many do not know how to shift. You may be able to teach some quickly in the parking lot, or on the road. Others, you may have to, for that day, put the bike in some appropriate gear for them.
- **Seat Height:** Many will have the seat too low. Advise them to raise it about a 1/4 inch at a time, and get used to that setting before raising it more toward the correct height.
- **Helmet Adjustment:** Level on head (not "easter bonnet" angle). All 4 straps from shell tight and meet under ear. Snug under chin.

Ride Leader's Tool List

On bike: Tire levers, patch kit, spare tubes, small screwdriver, small crescent wrench, needle nose pliers, boots (e.g. duct tape on pencil), metric hex wrench set, spoke wrench, chain tool, master link, brake wrench (for side pulls), shifting cable, pocketknife, Shrader-Presta adapter, rags, frame pump.

In Car if you motor to the ride start: floor pump, more wrenches and screwdrivers, headset wrench, water bottles, helmet pads, chain lube…

During the ride:

- Never confront drivers of motor vehicles; if being harassed, get full description of vehicle and driver and report the incident to the proper authorities ASAP. Don't forget to fill out a COP Incident Report too!
- Encourage participants who experience physical problems that may impair their ability to ride safely (such as severe dehydration, heat stress, hypothermia, etc.) to seek other modes of transportation back to the start. If you are not 100% confident they are competent to ride back alone, send a buddy or two, or the entire group. If they went alone, be sure to check later that they did indeed get back.
- Instruct riders stopping for repairs or other reasons to get fully off the road.
- Tactfully coach riders who do not follow the "Rules of the Road" about their transgressions. Remind them they should announce road hazards and signal and verbalize their moves (slowing, stopping, turning, etc.).
- Be watchful for potential equipment related safety problems such as loose clothing that could get caught in a wheel.

After the Ride:

If possible, make certain that all riders are accounted for, especially in more remote areas.

File an Incident Report with the COP Risk Manager if a reportable incident has occurred on your ride. Contact information is in your newsletter every month.

Make notes on the route/ride and suggestions for improvements the next time it is held.

"You can ride your bike without an organization, but without the organization to provide the structure, there is no ***ride*** (organized tour)" - Julia Schmitt, COP Member *(9/00)*

Section 3: Guidelines for Bicycle Special Events

Bicycle Special Events typically share these features:

- They incur a charge, and often serve as fundraisers for COP.
- They are open to the non-member public.
- Services are provided above those found on day bicycle rides: these may include food, sag support, repair support, painted arrows on the road, road marshals, communications volunteers and medical support.
- They vary in length from a few miles to hundreds of miles.
- They vary in duration from an hour to several weeks.
- They require special preparation, arrangement of facilities.
- They have management and support personnel that manage the experience, rather than share in it.
- They often do not include direct, personal leadership. Instead, they coordinate the event so that a network of support services and personnel supports the participant.
- They often reoccur yearly.
- They often include an element of unusual challenge (extreme distances, wilderness locations, challenges to endurance).

Cycling Special Events vary widely in size, scope and audience. Some of these guidelines will pertain more to larger than smaller events, and ways of addressing problems will differ depending on their scope. In all cases, however, you should be aware of the issues identified below and plan accordingly.

Operation of Cycling Special Events

A. Design a Route that Minimizes Risk

Every bicycle area has a different blend of conditions. Use these guidelines to develop routes in your area. Most tours have certain destinations of interest, which dictate part of the route selection. In designing this tour, ask the question: Are there unacceptable risks that cannot be avoided on this route? If so, your decision must be to not hold the tour on that route.

1) Look for good road conditions. When available, favor wide smooth roads. Avoid when possible, surface hazards, such as potholes, rough or acutely angled railroad crossings, pinch points, rough road surfaces, and narrow bridges.

2) Minimize dangerous intersections. Consider involving local law enforcement in route design to help determine this.

3) When possible, favor right turns, which do not require a bicyclist to cross in front of oncoming traffic. Be aware that sharp turns tax the cyclist's ability.

4) Look for roads with good sight distance.

5) Look for alternatives to congested roads.

B. Research the Route and Fix what problems you can

What you do to prepare a route for the tour depends greatly on who is on the tour. Preparations for a cross-country tour of 16 people will differ from a night ride through a large city for 6,000 riders. Nonetheless, you can take steps to minimize risks, and let the bicyclists know what to expect. These steps include:

1. Know the route. Ideally, travel the route at the same time of day and week the cyclists will, going in the same direction. Take notes of what you see that will affect the riders, such as adverse road conditions. If possible, travel the route again the day before the bicyclists will, to check for changing conditions.

2. Contact the road maintaining agency about significant problems found on the route. Ask them to address these.

3. In urban settings, if practical, ask that streets be swept in advance of the tour.

C. Warn Riders about Route Hazards that can't be fixed

1. When possible, verbally ***warn bicyclists of hazards*** before tour begins. Limit this verbal warning to the most hazardous situations, and be sure it is appropriate to the age of the riders. When it is impractical to verbally warn bicyclists, use handouts, signage and/or road marshals to accomplish this.

2. Post warning signs when appropriate. Tell the riders what they will look like, and tell them to pay attention to them.

3. When practical, sweep loose sand, gravel and glass from the road

4. Mark hazards such as bumps, potholes etc. with paint on road, where legal (many bike paths and some municipalities do not allow paint markings). Check with road maintaining agency for permission for this. If practical, warn riders of these verbally beforehand.

5. Consider using cones and barricades when faced with unusual problems, such as very large crowds, traffic congestion, or special road hazards. Request permission from local government beforehand.

6. When practical, station a road marshal on the approach to a hazard.

D. Devise a Sign Plan

Signs can be very useful to warn riders about specific dangers at the site of that danger. Use recognized traffic symbols where possible, and place them sufficiently before the hazard to give riders time to react. Keep a record of these sign placements. Signs are sometimes used to indicate route direction. Plan beforehand for the location of these, and inform the riders.

E. Make sure Riders know, understand, & appreciate the Risk

1. Consider printing a set of safety rules on registration forms, and safety reminders on all printed materials.

2. Describe the event. Give details on the terrain and mileage.

3. Provide a cue sheet, if practical. This is an explicitly written text describing the route with words instead of a map (i.e., at mile 3.2, turn left onto Roberts Road). This is an excellent place to put specific warnings of hazards (mile 46.5; speed bump on pavement; walk bicycle).

4. Make a route map to accompany the cue sheet. Make the scale such that the map is legible.

F. Use Ride Marshals

Large events can often benefit from ride marshals, who can warn riders of hazards and respond to problems along the route.

- Marshals should receive pre-ride training and be given as much information as necessary, including all of that given and told to the riders.
- Marshals should be equipped with a first aid kit, tools for simple repairs if they know how to and are willing to do them, water and food.
- Marshals are best placed before the approach to hazards.
- It is beneficial for the marshal to have first aid skills.

G. Follow the Helmet Policy

Helmets that meet CPSC standards are required on all COP rides. Make sure this requirement is on all applications and other literature. Make sure the release contains a helmet release statement, where the rider agrees to wear a helmet in order to participate.

If an event staff person notices a cyclist not wearing a helmet, make every attempt to issue a verbal warning, in front of witnesses if possible. If they refuse, record that number XXX was warned about the dangers of cycling without a helmet and informed about COP's helmet policy and that they may no longer participate in the event because they refused to abide by this policy.

H. Use the Forms

Use forms found in this manual. In a pinch, any scrap of paper can be used to gather this information, but you do need to know what information is needed.

Prepare to Respond to damages when they do occur

I. Know your management structure.

a. Know who is in charge. Usually the Tour Director is in charge and makes the final decision.

b. Know how to reach the person in charge. The Director must be visible and accessible throughout the tour, to give information and make decisions.

c. Know who makes decisions when the Director is unavailable. Have a clear chain of command. More than one person needs to know the operations plan and have the authority to substitute for the Director if necessary.

d. Make contingency plans. Assume that what can go wrong will go wrong, and plan to respond appropriately. Know beforehand who should be contacted, and who will do the contacting, who will gather information, and how.

J. Plan Medical Support

On very small tours that cover great distances, this may mean informing the bicyclist how to get help, who to contact, researching the hospital locations, etc.

On tours with large numbers of participants, it is prudent to assign a medical support team to cover the route, if possible. This could be a hired ambulance crew or a group of qualified volunteers.

K. Suggested Medical Team Checklist

Special events differ in magnitude, and the medical services provided reflect this. Among the medical support that would be helpful are:

Medical Technician: An EMT, Paramedic or Red Cross Advanced First Aid volunteer

Driver: A person familiar with the area and competent in driving a large vehicle among cyclists.

Supplies: A large first aid kit equipped for immediate care.

Communications: A radio, cellular telephone, or other means.

Vehicle: Preferably a van marked to be recognizable as a Medical Support Vehicle, with enough space to treat patients in private and out of the elements.

L. Plan Mechanical Support

Have an experienced bicycle mechanic attending the event to assist with mechanical problems. It is a common practice for a bike shop to provide a person and van free of charge with the understanding that the participant will pay for necessary parts. This mechanic may be located at the mid-checkpoint or be mobile depending on the route.

See additional information in Office Information for Event Leaders, Appendix 12. This is updated often and posted online.

Section 4: Guidelines for Whitewater & Flatwater Boating

Planning the Trip

See Chapter 4 Policies for Whitewater Boating Policy concerning non-members.

Be familiar with the waterway to be paddled, or have someone along who is, or be sure to carefully scout each rapid. Know and respect the difficulty classification of the river and how water levels and weather conditions affect this.

At the Start

- If your trip is going out of state, try to have participants sign the liability release/waiver in Ohio.
- ***Conduct a group orientation;*** include information about river etiquette, regrouping and safety.
- Be aware of the effects of cold water and weather extremes and be prepared to take appropriate action.
- ***A suitable personal flotation device must be worn by all participants when on or near the water.***
- ***Helmets*** are recommended when on or near the water. They ***are mandatory for closed boaters on swift moving water and all others on class III rapids and above, and when conditions warrant, like rocky areas.***
- Helmets and pfds stay on until you are seated.
- Assign a lead and sweep boat as necessary. Verbalize this to all participants.
- Be sure boats are appropriate for the type of water to be paddled and are properly outfitted.
- Bring along first aid and rescue equipment. Know how to use them and make their location known to all participants
- Participants should be familiar with AWA Universal River Signals.
- Boating trips need to have enough experienced boaters to provide safety for the group. The number required depends on the experience and skills of the paddlers and the water involved. As a guideline, think 3 boats capable of helping if someone is swimming.
- In Ohio, look for boat registrations. The fine for unlicensed boats was $95.00 in 2007.

During the trip

Be sure that everyone understands that, despite the mutually supportive group structure described here, individual paddlers are ultimately responsible for their own safety and must assume responsibility for their decisions. Decisions such as, but not limited to:

- The decision to participate on any trip. This includes an evaluation of the expected difficulty of the trip under the

"Risks can never be eliminated and there is no such thing as 100% safe but that doesn't mean that simple and painless precautions shouldn't be taken that improve your chances when Murphy's Law strikes." - *Radar, PCT-L*

"I don't want to scare ya, but I want to prepare ya" - *John Lane, May 20, 2009 COP Quickstart Kayak Class.*

conditions existing at the time of the put-in.

- The selection of appropriate equipment.
- The decision to scout any rapid, and to run or portage according to their best judgment.
- Other members of the group may offer advice but paddlers should resist pressure from anyone to paddle beyond their skills. It is the individual's responsibility to decide whether to pass up any walk out or take out opportunity. The leader should be sure struggling participants know their options.
- All trip participants should constantly evaluate their own and their group's safety, voicing their concerns when appropriate and following what they believe to be the best course of action. The leader should facilitate this. Paddlers are encouraged to speak with anyone whose actions on the water are dangerous, whether they are part of the group or not.
- The leader should make it as easy as possible for paddlers to share ideas and concerns, and also for a participant to make the decision to not paddle "today" or "this stretch."
- Never boat alone. Participants should be encouraged to keep track of the boat behind them and communicate concerns with the rest of the group. Keep the group together but not so close as to be a hazard.
- In the water when you didn't mean to be? Swim aggressively for the boat, nearest shore, throw rope, eddy or place of safety. If near your boat, stay at the upstream end and try to get in or on the boat. Do not grab a kayak or canoe until the paddler directs you to. Be sure to follow their directions. Keep your Kick. Be an active participant in your rescue! Keep your feet up!
- Do not attempt to rescue another paddler unless you are qualified to do so, and can do it without undue risk to yourself or others.
- Be aware of, and on the look-out for hazards such as strainers, waterfalls, dams and high rapids.
- At rest stops, remind participants to keep PFD's and helmets on until they are seated.
- Anyone who swims three times in one day warrants an evaluation as to whether they need to be removed from the experience.
- On the Yough, no one runs Dimple Rock without having seen it at least once.
- ***A Liability release is required on all rentals.*** *(12/6/07)*

"My definition of a great team is one that continues to function when the leader goes down…The leader's role is to pick a team, train them , and then make himself irrelevant." *Pasquale Scaturro, The Decider, Outside Magazine, April 2008*

Section 5: Rafting Guidelines *(11/10/08)* - ***This is in addition to Section 4: Guidelines for Boating***

The following is the representation COP made to our insurance company on July 29, 2008 in order to obtain coverage for our rafting program. Based on this information, we now have coverage for rafting on rivers up to and including Class IV rapids. (Note the rating if for the rapid, not the river.) Now we need to live by the following:

COP is one of the few organizations in this country where a person can learn the skill of rafting without becoming a commercial company employee.

* Our rafts are manufactured for whitewater.
  1) The Avon is suitable for the New River Gorge and Lower Gauley (14', two thwarts, big tubes, and several inches of kick).
  2) Our AIRE E143 (the "Tomato") is built for big water like the Upper Gauley (14'6", three thwarts, big tubes, and several inches of kick).
  3) The Dibs are used mostly on the Yough, being of old technology (12', medium size tubes, 1 thwart, no kick). We would like to replace them in the next few years with a 12'equivelant of the AIRE E143).
  4) All of our rafts are self bailers and either have tubes/ thwarts in reach of most feet, or foot cups.

* ***Throw ropes are part of our standard gear.***
* ***All rafters are required to wear a boating helmet on class III or higher rapids, and also when the river is rocky. In short, everywhere except deep, calm water.***
* ***All rafters are required to wear a class III or V PFD when they are in the boat.***
* ***Helmets and PFDs are worn on shore near the river or scrambling over rocks.***
* ***We give a safety talk before getting in the boat*** *(admittedly a tad shorter on Sunday if everyone was with us Saturday.)* Even if everyone has been rafting with us before, we go over it before getting into the boat.
* ***First time rafters are encouraged to take the Rafting 101 course***. Held on flat water in Columbus, the curriculum includes: what to wear, what to bring, how to inflate/deflate the boat, how to stay in the boat, what to do if you don't and basic paddle strokes
* ***We aim for each trip to have a minimum of three boats capable of helping a swimmer.***
* ***COP Leader Training, Swift Water Rescue training and Wilderness First Aid are all skills that are considered when we approve a trip and its leader. A leader who does not have these skills must provide them.*** All of our members are encouraged to get these skills.
* ***Our rafting program has been a members-only activity*** for at least 15 years. We created this policy to weed out people who are looking for a commercial raft experience on the cheap.
* In addition, raft captains must have demonstrated skill at handling the boat on the river in question.

* **Note the word "Captain".** "Guide" seems to bring out an attitude in the paddlers that someone else is responsible for their safety. Captain also implies teamwork and skill development, rather than just supplying power occasionally.

* Ohio has no licensing requirements for raft guides, probably because we have no suitable whitewater.

* Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Washington and California all require that Guides be licensed, but only allow them to do so through employment with a commercial rafting company.

COP aims for their Raft Captains to be able to meet the 2007 standards of the states of Washington and California. both of which required that the training include a minimum of

> 50 hours on the water,

> Wilderness First Aid *(16 hours, available through COP, we encourage, and occasionally offer, Wilderness First Responder [80 hours])*

> Leader Training *(COP offers this several times a year)*

> ACA Swift Water Rescue *(COP subsidizes members who take the class through ACA or ODNR)*

> A minimum of three runs down a river including a "check-out" run with an experienced raft captain before being captain on that river

> Ability to pass a written test such as the one published in *The Guides Guide.*

Safety talk

a) explanation of risks involved, potential river hazards eg. strainers, high water, importance of maintaining visual contact with other boats;

b) correct adjustment of life jacket, helmet

c) footwear and other appropriate clothing

d) How to stay in the boat - sitting position and bracing

e) dangers of kneeling and loose T-grips,

f) General float plan – lead and sweep boats, regrouping

g) river etiquette

h) AWA "Universal River Signals."– come ahead, stop, pointing towards where the person should go, not the problem, etc.

i) What to do if you fall out

* Swim aggressively for the boat, nearest shore, throw rope, eddy or place of safety

* defensive whitewater float position ie. feet up, on back, looking downstream, (mentioning strainers, if applicable), throw bags, other rafts (if applicable). If near your boat, stay at the upstream end and try to get in or on the boat. Consider doing a flip drill in calmer water.

* Do not grab a kayak or canoe until the paddler directs you to. Be sure to follow their directions. Kick!

j) What to do if someone else falls out: paddle reach, chase, throw bag, extended paddle,

k) Hypothermia

It is amazing what a Snickers, hydration and 15 minute break can do in otherwise dire (or even inconvenient) seeming situations! - *Paul Magnanti, PCT-L*

Section 6: Climbing

Climbing equipment will only be rented to persons that have demonstrated a sufficient skill and experience in Rock climbing. The climbing chair shall have sole discretion on determining experience and capability. ***A Liability release is required on all rentals.*** (12/6/07)

Leadership: "It's all about Attitude." - *Patrick Smith, COP Member*

Section 7: Guidelines for Hiking and Backpacking

Setting up the trip

State a difficulty level of the trip that accurately describes the terrain. Give as much information as possible, i.e." 3,500' of climbing in 1 mile", rather than "hilly".

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. The leader should know the area where the group will go including the level of difficulty, access points, alternate routes, shelters and emergency help locations.

If possible, call or email local land management agency (USFS, NPS etc. *) for last minute trail/area updates or closures.

Be sure to have adequate maps to navigate the area.

Running a hiking/backpack trip

Emphasize to everyone the importance of self-sufficiency. Make sure all participants are carrying extra food and extra water. The amount of food, water and extra clothing should be proportional to how far into the wilderness the trip is going and the weather.

Leader should carry, or make sure others are carrying, other emergency supplies, such as: repair kit, first aid kit, compass, maps, pen and paper, cell phone 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.

The leader should plan a trip that can easily be finished by all participants before dark.

** take with a grain a salt - desk jockeys often have no idea of the conditions out out in the backcountry.*

"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*

"Accidents don't just happen. They are a series of poor decisions compounded over time—too many hours on the road, a different route home, freezing weather, etc. " — *Lisa Haffenreffer, NOLS, The Leader*

Section 8: Guidelines for Cross-Country Skiing

The leader should know the area where the group will go including the level of difficulty, access points, alternate routes, shelters and emergency help locations.

The leader should plan a trip that can easily be finished by all participants before dark.

On the trip

The leader should:

- Ensure that everyone in the group is fully apprised of the level of difficulty and trail conditions of the area. Participants should be cautioned not to ski trails beyond their ability. Beginner trips should not go far from a warming hut or car, so consider a touring center. Intermediate and Advanced trips may go miles into the wilderness.
- For trails not adequately signed, provide participants with an accurate and legible map.
- Teach basic skills to beginners in order to avoid injury, such as how to fall.
- Suggest that participants wear bright clothing. They will be easier to keep track of in a white out, easier for snowmobilers to spot from a distance, and will help avoid injury during hunting season.
- Have skiers travel in groups of three or more in remote areas so that in case of injury one person can go for help while another stays with the injured party.
- Be watchful of weather changes and be ready to modify plans if necessary. Have an alternate plan if the snow conditions do not allow planned activity.
- Ensure that everyone on the trip carries food, water and extra clothing (including a warm hat).
- Also encourage them to check frequently for frostbite.
- Know the trails you intend to ski. Check them out in advance by hiking them in the summer or using books that rate trails for skiing.

Reference books:

Backcountry Skiing, Sierra Club, Wilderness Skiing, Sierra Club, AMC Backcountry Skiing in New England

Remember what Bradford Washburn, global expolorer whose winter travels have taken him from Mt. McKinley toAntarctica, said, "I hate to use myself as an example, but the reason I've gotten to be 83 years old is I've done an awful lot of turning back in my time"

Section 9: Guidelines for Caving

Planning a cave trip

- Leaders should be aware of potential dangers common to caves: areas of falling rocks, routes along or over pits, cliffs, or rock piles and areas susceptible to rising water.
- ***A minimum party should be three or four*** (depending on experience level).
- ***Vertical caving*** requires more skill than horizontal caving. It ***should only be attempted by those with previous training in vertical caving and single rope techniques.*** Adequate equipment recognized by the N.S.S. Vertical Techniques Section must be available for each caver in all rope work situations.

At the beginning of the trip

- ***Ensure that each person has three sources of light.*** Two primary sources are to be helmet mounted, each with a reserve power source to last twice as long (if different types) as the anticipated stay in the cave. Extra batteries and a spare bulb and/or carbide lamp (with repair parts) are customary. The third source may be a waterproof flashlight, candle and matches in a waterproof container or chemical (cyalume) light stick.
- Ensure that the protective equipment to be used by participants includes:
  - Hard hat with light mount and chin strap
  - Lug-soled sturdy shoes that cover the ankles
  - sturdy clothes suitable for cave temperatures
  - "wicking" or wool undergarments
  - wool or "wicking" socks
  - jeans and jean jackets or coveralls will be adequate for most caves
  - Wet suits or dry suits are to be worn when cavers are exposed to deep-water situations for more than few minutes.
  - pack or bag with body straps for hands-free carrying of gear
  - adequate water supply for drinking and carbide lamps, in a metal or a plastic container
  - food, quantity depending on length of time in the cave

Other recommended items include:

- gloves, knee pads, personal first aid kit
- handline suitable for belay
- heat source to treat hypothermia

Inform participants that:

- running and jumping in caves is prohibited
- cave diving is prohibited.
- each person is responsible for the person behind him/her.
- How to protect the environment.

"it is experience and the sense to use the wisdom gained from it, not gear or theory that will keep major risk at bay."
- *Jeffrey Olson (Jeff, just Jeff), Santa Rosa, CA PCT-L*

Section 10: Guidelines for In-Line Skating

Planning an Event:

- Choose a route on bicycle paths or other very low traffic, good surface roads with bicycle lanes or wide, clean shoulders. Avoid urban areas, heavily trafficked roads, intersections and hills. Consider using only flat paths for inexperienced skaters.
- Consider the traffic, even on bike paths, for the time of day and day of week that event will take place. In general, early mornings are much quieter than any other time of the day
- Schedule skating with enough daylight hours for even the slowest skater to finish.
- Require lights and reflectors if skating after dark or before sunrise.
- If using roads, avoid left turns by going clockwise.
- Plan for frequent rest/water/food/bathroom stops. Require all skaters to carry water and food, even for short trips.
- Make a legible map and/or cue sheet with distances given; include emergency contact numbers, rest and lunch stops, and location of known hazards such as railroad tracks.
- Choose a starting location with ample parking and get permission if it is not public property.
- Describe the trip accurately for mileage, pace and terrain.
- Require everyone to wear helmets (same rules as for bicycle helmets). Strongly recommend everyone to wear all protective gear; wrist guards, at the minimum, should be worn.
- For beginning skaters, consider suggesting they carry a knapsack or large fanny pack, with extra shoes, in the event of blisters, tired ankles, etc.

At the Event

- Never start skating if inclement weather exists. Never skate in the rain (it ruins the bearings in the skates) or on icy pavement.

Welcome everyone and remind them:

- Safety should be considered at all times.
- All traffic laws should be obeyed where appropriate.
- ***Helmets must be worn at all times while skating.***
- Why protective gear should be worn.
- How to signal and verbalize (slowing, stopping, turning, passing, etc.).
- Get off path/road when stopping.
- Announce path/road hazards such as sticks, cracks in pavement, wooden/metal bridges, posts, etc.
- To carry water, food and extra clothing.

- If you are leading, appoint a sweep; if you are sweeping, appoint a leader.
- Tactfully coach skaters who do not follow the 'Rules of the Road' about how to improve their skating etiquette.

"experience does count but experience can also lull you into a false sense of confidence and get you into trouble.

Experience is a great teacher but only if it comes with the wisdom to know your limits and the limits of your gear and how nature may disregard both and decide to dump a ton of snow or cold rain on you.

What has experience taught me?

- I hate being cold and wet and I hate not having water.
- I plan for the worst which makes my pack a little heavier.
- I've also learned to hike with a little humility because it only takes a few small mistakes that ANYONE can make to land in a potentially serious situation. I guess that's why they call it an adventure." - *Will M, PCT-L*

- Make certain all participants are accounted for at stops and the finish.
- If skating ability varies significantly within the group, break group up into slow and fast packs, each with a designated leader to account for the members.

Section 11: Guidelines for Mountain Biking

Setting up the trip

If choosing to take out beginners, make sure to teach basic skills to avoid injury, such as how to fall, how to lower seat for steep down hills, and how to balance pedals to try to avoid hitting rocks.

Learn trail conditions in advance. Have an alternative plan if the trail conditions do not allow planned activity. Do not go on muddy trails because it will damage the trails. Stay off trails that do not allow mountain biking!

Running a trip

Leader should carry and/or make sure participants are carrying other emergency supplies, such as: repair kit including pump, patch kit, spare tube, tire irons, chain tool, spoke wrench, and allen wrenches; first aid kit; compass; maps and/or trail book.

Remind participants of problem spots such as rocky hills (both up and down) and make sure participants space themselves sufficiently so if someone falls, the next person will have enough time to get around or stop. Suggest participants wear protective eye gear (sunglasses or clear glasses) to avoid injury to eyes from trees.

Reference books

Mountain Biking Skills, by Royale Press, by the editors of Bicycling Magazine; and Mountain Biking: The Complete Guide by Sports Illustrated and Bob Woodward.

Read books on outdoor medicine such as, Medicine for Mountaineering by James A. Wilkerson, MD.