

# Family Activities 2021-2022 Handbook

For Youth, Parents, & Volunteers



## **YOUTH & ADULT PARTICIPANT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT**

In Mountaineers Family Activities, youth participants must be accompanied by an adult who agrees to be their supervisor. If the leader's child is participating, there should be an additional adult who takes responsibility for that child, so that the trip leader can focus on the safety of the group, without the distraction of taking care of a youth participant.

Adults participating in a family activity may supervise more than one youth, and youth can attend without their parents/guardians as long as they are with another adult.

Because many of our locations have party-size maximums dictated by the land manager, often times a family activity can only accommodate a handful of families. Because of this, and because families typically need to plan far in advance, it is very important that families commit to attending the activity. A last-minute cancellation will prevent families from attending who could have attended with more notice, and may significantly impact the feel of the activity. Families who frequently cancel at the last minute may risk denial of participation in future family activities.

### **ELECTRONICS**

Cell phones, music and video games are typically not a part of the Mountaineers programs. They detract from the wilderness experience and from the community. Youth are encouraged to leave all electronics out of sight (or at home) during Mountaineers programs. Youth who choose to use cell phones, gps units or other electronics may do so, with the leader's permission, as long as it creates no disruption of the wilderness experience for others. The Mountaineers is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronics.

### **DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO**

In the interest of creating a physically and emotionally safe environment for all families, use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco by any participant is not permitted on Family Programs. Youth participants are never permitted to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco while on Mountaineers programs. Youth who have or are under the influence of these will be sent home immediately and dismissed from the program without refund. Youth

dismissed from the program for possession of drugs, alcohol or tobacco may return the following year on a probationary basis.

## **MEDICATION FOR YOUTH UNDER 18**

Medication prescribed by a licensed medical professional for youth under 18 must be reported to The Mountaineers using the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form if the medication is to be taken during Mountaineers programming. This information will be shared with instructors who are leading any trip that the youth is participating in. If the doctor does *not* authorize the youth to self-administer, the medication will be kept with adult leaders, who will administer the medication according to the doctor's orders. All controlled medication and medication requiring hypodermic needle administration (with the exception of Epipens which may be carried by the youth) must be stored with parents or Mountaineers Leaders. All medication must be current and kept in its original bottle.

Over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antacids or topical antibiotics may be kept by youth participants in their personal first aid kits. These medications should be listed on the Mountaineers Medical Administration Form and kept in a clearly marked container with expiration date.

Mountaineers volunteers may carry over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen, allergy medication, antihistamine, antacids or topical antibiotics. Volunteer leaders may provide these medications to youth as needed unless otherwise indicated on the youth's health form. All medication administration should be recorded in a notebook, usually kept in youth's first aid kit.

## **MEDICAL CLEARANCE**

Mountaineers members spend a lot of time in remote areas and on technical terrain, where group safety is paramount. In some instances, Mountaineers leaders may require medical clearance and/or instructions from a licensed medical professional in order for a youth to participate in the program. Examples include but are not limited to: injuries, surgery, eating disorders, psychological & nervous disorders, developmental disorders, heart conditions, diabetes. Mountaineers leaders will disclose this information only to the people who need to have it in order to maintain a safe environment. In some cases, Mountaineers leaders may, at their discretion, forbid participation on a trip if they feel the circumstances

of the trip make it too difficult to safely manage the participant's medical needs or limitations.

## **LEADERS AND INSTRUCTORS**

The leader is a volunteer whose experience and judgment have qualified them for a leadership position. The leader has the authority and responsibility for the safety of the group, making sure that the participants of the trip are adequately equipped based on Mountaineers policy. The leader may wish to consult with the trip participants, but the leader makes the final decision regarding the group's safety in difficult situations.

## **TRIP GOALS**

Ultimately, the point of any Mountaineers trip should be the fun and full experience of arriving at and returning from the destination - not merely the destination itself. Even the most strenuous expedition is enriched by memories of good conversation, shared perceptions, and new friends. Particularly with Family Activities, reaching the destination is usually a soft goal, or even a byproduct of a fun experience. But having an enjoyable experience and returning safely rank higher. The leader is in a unique position to shape the quality and promote the safety of the trip.

## **INCLUSION**

We are committed to a diverse and inclusive program. This means that we welcome participants and volunteers of all backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnicities, vocations, family models and lifestyles. We ask that volunteers, including parents, acknowledge this diversity and refrain from conversations that may be perceived as offensive to others.

## **QUALIFIED YOUTH LEADER**

Leaders of family programs must be Qualified Youth Leaders. To do this, visit <https://www.mountaineers.org/youth/resources-and-faqs/volunteer-with-youth>.

## **OTHER LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS**

The Mountaineers always welcomes new leaders. In general, an aspiring leader must be at least 18 years old, be a member of The Mountaineers, have demonstrated leadership within The Mountaineers, and be approved by the appropriate Committee for inclusion on that Committee's leaders list. Check with the committee for which you wish to lead.

Family Activities are unique in that they may include a variety of outdoor pursuits. Leaders for all Family activities must possess the following: basic first aid training, knowledge of group leadership, basic map & compass skills, emergency preparedness, Family Activities Leader Badge, and current Qualified Youth Leader status. Each type of trip has its own additional requirements, listed here:

### **HIKING**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers hikes, scrambles, or climbs
- Leader must have Hike Leader Badge
- Leader must be familiar with hiking destination (this may involve scouting prior to the trip)
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

### **BACKPACKING**

- Leader must be a Mountaineers Hike Leader of Record
- Leader must have Wilderness First Aid and Navigation training
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

### **CAR CAMPING**

- Leader is responsible for reserving group campsites (in addition to necessary permits)
- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past

### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online



## **FIRST AID**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

## **NAVIGATION**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past.
- Activities must be done in the front country on safe terrain.
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

## **INDOOR CLIMBING DAYS**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Mountaineers Climb Leader of Record (any level of climb leader is acceptable) must be present during the entire activity, if the leader is not a Climb Leader of Record
- Mountaineers Climb Leader of Record must monitor safe belaying and intervene in any unsafe situation.

## **OUTDOOR TOP ROPE CRAG DAYS**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Mountaineers Climb Leader of Record (any level of climb leader is acceptable) must be present during the entire activity, if the leader is not a Climb Leader of Record
- Leader must have Wilderness First Aid training
- An area with a safe (non-scramble) approach must be selected
- Mountaineers Climb Leader of Record must monitor safe belaying and site management, and intervene in any unsafe situation.

## **SNOWSHOEING**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Mountaineers Snowshoe Leader of Record (any level of snowshoe leader is acceptable) must be present during the entire activity, if the leader is not a Snowshoe Leader of Record
- Leader must have Wilderness first Aid and Navigation training

- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

### **NATURE PROGRAMS**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Leader is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

### **POOL/LAKE SESSIONS**

- Leader must have participated in/led Mountaineers activities in the past
- Mountaineers Sea Kayak Leader of Record (any level of snowshoe leader is acceptable) must be present during the entire activity, if the leader is not a Sea Kayak Leader of Record
- Leader must have Wilderness first Aid and Navigation training
- Leaders is expected to choose a destination suitable to the age group of the kids, and post that online

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Adult participants (even parents) do not necessarily have experience working with youth, and may conduct themselves in ways that some may not consider appropriate for youth participants.

Youth might not speak up when they feel uncomfortable.

Youth who attend school are trained culturally to follow directions and listen to instructors. They are less likely to question the decisions of adults – either instructors or fellow students. This creates a need to err on the side of caution even more than we might with an all-adult class. It also implicates the need to check in with youth often to make sure they are comfortable and okay.

### **FORMS AND PAPERWORK**

Every Youth must fill out the following forms online that will be filed digitally with the youths' membership forms, one copy should be downloaded, printed, and kept by the program leader. Please remember that these forms are personal and confidential, and leaders must be careful not to disclose information unnecessarily.

- Youth Information Form. We recommend printing a copy to be kept in the youth's personal first aid kit.
- Youth Programs Form

All of these forms can be found in Youth Forms section in youth's membership profile page.

It is important that Youth in Adult Programs leaders have read the forms submitted by the parents online, print, and file them in a way that they are accessible

## **GROUP SIZE**

It is essential that every participant (including pets, if allowed) are registered online for the activity. Many of our locations have group size maximums, and we need to ensure that we are not exceeding those maximums. Hikes on federal lands had a party size maximum of 12, which, depending on sibling attendance, will likely mean 3-4 families maximum. It's a good idea to be extra communicative with folks who've signed up to make sure they've registered everyone who plans to come, and that no one plans to cancel, since the cancelation of just 2 families could ruin the feel of the trip, or cause it to cancel altogether. The earlier you can offer waitlisted families a spot, the more likely they are to be able to join.

Consider leading trips to locations that don't have hard party size limits and that can accommodate more people. A picnic at a city park, a camping trip at Mt. Rainier, where families can go on different hikes together during day, a day of rock climbing at Mt. Erie.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

We recommend that leaders reach out to trip participants either by phone or email the week before the scheduled family activity. Confirm that families will be attending, and let families know what to expect. Help them prepare for weather, terrain, time and distance.

## **SUPERVISION**

In Family Activities, the Leader is responsible for creating a safe experience by choosing an appropriate location and giving participants the information they need to participate safely. The Leader is NOT responsible



for the supervision of children. That is the responsibility of the parents or adults who are designated by the parents to supervise their children. HOWEVER, the Leader should ensure that all children are supervised by clearly communicating expectations to adult participants; and by identifying unsupervised children during the activity and reminding adult participants they act as supervisors for the youth participants they registered with.

Children and Youth under the age of 18 must NEVER be left unsupervised. Young children (usually under 14) should be in the sight/sound of a trained adult at all times, including during bathroom breaks. All youth must be appropriately supervised at all times. This means that adults know EXACTLY where each youth is and how long they should be there at all times. It's a good idea for the leader to also be in the habit of conducting a frequent mental count of youth.

When a group of youth is split up, leaders must know which children are in which group. Never assume a youth who is not with you is with another adult. If a child who was in your group is no longer in your group, it is imperative that you verify that they have moved to another adult's group.

One adult should never be alone with one youth, unless that adult is the youth's parent. This practice prevents uncomfortable or dangerous situations and protects adults from false accusations. Predators are skilled at creating alone-time with youth. This practice prevents that from ever happening. Youth can misinterpret the intentions of an adult's words or actions. This makes youth feel uncomfortable and/or prompts them to report benign behavior as inappropriate. The presence of another person reduces the vulnerability of the situation, and provides witnesses should an accusation be made. Exceptions: some programmatic situations inherently create a 1:1 situation (eg. Multipitch Climbs). In these cases, steps should be taken in advance to minimize risk to the youth and adult leader.

Youth Leaders must monitor behavior of other adult participants and leaders and address inappropriate behavior immediately.

## **PHOTOS**

We encourage you to take photos on your programs, and share those photos with the program participants and Mountaineers Staff. Many of our programs have facebook groups, which are private groups where participants interact and share photos. A Flickr or Shutterfly album are also

great ways to share photos.

Because some families prefer not to have photos of their children publicly available, and because some of the youth in our programs come from unstable home situations, we need to be sensitive about not posting photos in public forums. It's important that photos ONLY be shared with the group participants and Mountaineers Staff. Mountaineers Staff will only use photos of youth whose parents have granted permission to use their photos.

## **HEALTH HISTORY & MEDICATIONS**

The Youth Participating in Mountaineers programming are required to annually complete the Youth Information form, which includes

1. Health Information
2. Allergies
3. Immunizations
4. Authorization for treatment
5. Insurance information
6. OTC Medication Administration Authorization
7. Prescription medications
8. Special Circumstances and Disaster Preparedness

Youth should have this form printed off in their personal first aid kit, program leaders should also have a copy downloaded from the activity roster with them as well.

Leaders: To print off youth forms, in the activity roster select "View Flag Report," and then select "Print All Youth Information Forms," and/or "Print All Youth Program Forms."

Program leaders must have a "permission to treat" (found in the Youth Information Form) for each participant, signed by the participant's parent/guardian, with them or accessible on site. When older youth are participating in adult programs, it's a good idea for the youth to keep a copy of their medical history and permission to treat form in their personal first aid kit.

Youth prescription medications that are to be administered during the program must be discussed with the program leaders and accompanied with Doctor's orders. It is imperative that program leaders know what

medications are present, what the appropriate dosage is, and the effects of not taking the medication, the effects of overdose and the potential side effects of the medication. If the participant self-administers the medication, we must have written permission from the parent.

Controlled medications (federally listed controlled substances which includes any potentially addictive substance such as codeine, oxycodone, Adderol, Ritalin, Xanax, Ativan and others) and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with the parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers. Time and dosage should be logged.

Hypodermic needles that are required for medical administration and the accompanying Mountaineers Medication Administration form must be kept with parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers in secure storage and administration must be supervised by parents or Mountaineers adult volunteers. Exception: EpiPen auto-injectors may be carried with the youth to whom it is prescribed.

Diabetes monitoring plans must be discussed in detail and presented in writing to Mountaineers staff and volunteers, signed by the participant's parents, even if the youth self-monitors or if the parents are present. Plan must include daily routine, possible complications, signs and symptoms and appropriate response.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Many youth have life situations that may impact their participation in Mountaineers programming. These situations may be medical, physical, dietary, religious, emotional, family-related, school-related or trauma-related. In order to best serve each youth, we request that parents/guardians share this information with us on a "Special Circumstances" form.

Special Circumstances forms will not be shared with anyone other than the program leader(s) without specific consent from the parent/guardian.

We will make every effort to accommodate any needs associated with a youth participant's special circumstances. If a program is such that special accommodations are not practical, Mountaineers Staff and/or Volunteer Leaders must communicate this to the family in advance of the program,

so that they can decide whether or not to participate.

## **PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND DISCLOSURE**

In each program, Youth Leaders must exercise careful judgment about the disclosure of health and special circumstance information.

Youth health and special circumstance information should not be shared with anyone—other leaders, other participants, youth or adults, without prior consent from the family.

In many cases, disclosure is not necessary for the safety of the program. In the event that disclosure is necessary for safety reasons, youth and parents must be notified in advance, and caution must be exercised to ensure that only those *needing* the information are given the information.

## **OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS**

During an overnight program youth should not share sleeping quarters with adults unless:

- The adults are the legal parents/guardians, siblings or authorized adult supervisor on the Adult Supervisor Form of that youth.
- The sleeping quarters have individual beds, such as in a cabin or yurt.

Sleeping quarters (especially a tent situation) should be designed and programmed for appropriate supervision. Youth who are not tenting with their parents or authorized adult supervisor should generally be in tent groups of 3 or more youth, which creates group accountability and “crowd supervision”. In some cases, it may be appropriate for youth to sleep in solo tents. Tent groups of two youth should be avoided or treated as a last resort option because it creates an environment that enables bullying, abuse or otherwise inappropriate behavior. Adult tents (and other sleeping quarters) should be positioned in a way that adults can be accessed by youth in the middle of the night, and so that they can provide adequate supervision.

Specific nighttime bathroom procedures must be communicated before dark on the first night. Suggestions include:

- Ensuring youth know how to get to the bathroom and know not to leave their sleeping quarters without a light source and/or whistle.

- Leaving a personal backpack in a designated area to identify that the bathroom is in use and by whom.
- Identifying areas of hazardous terrain to be avoided at night (eg. Stream crossings).
- Encouraging youth to wake an adult (and which adult to wake) should they need anything.
- Ensuring youth have working light sources and/or whistles should they get lost on their way back from the bathroom.

## **PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY TRIPS**

Leading safe and fun outings cannot be prescribed through rules. It requires participants and leaders who are prepared for the activity, as well as the experience, judgment, and sensitivity to adapt to unforeseen or changing circumstances. The following guidelines offer examples of problems that you should consider in advance, how to address these problems, and suggestions for planning and conducting safe trips.

### **TRIP CHOICE**

Location and destination will be dictated in part by the age group you list the activity for. In order to get compatible age groups in your outings, one suggestion is to list the pace of the youngest child so others know at signup the approximate pace of the group. "5-year-old pace" or "parents carrying young kids welcome" or the like are perfectly fine to put in the leader notes. You can also glean more information from each parent about his/her children when you send out the lead e-mail and a quick follow-up phone call if necessary.

### **DESTINATION OUTCOME**

Strive for flexibility. Adults who are used to participating in Mountaineers outings elsewhere in the club typically have the final destination in mind; as a leader of family activities, you need to rethink the end result and learn to be far more fluid. One Everett family hike leader shared that on one of her early season outings, they reached snow and everyone wanted to stop and play; they never actually reached the end destination. The kids had a

blast and remember that trip fondly. Remember that letting kids have fun is often more important than the end destination so that they will want to keep going out. Be sure to communicate your goals in your leader notes so that parents know what to expect. (eg. "this is a conditioning hike for middle-schoolers and we will try to get to the summit" or "the main goal is fun and nature discovery").

## **FUN IN NUMBERS**

Kids gravitate toward other kids and will ultimately have much more fun if they can hike with others of comparable ability levels. While children can participate on hikes, they will have more fun doing so on a Family Hike where adults can only participate if they have a child along. Typically on a 12 person trip kids will range from 4 to 8 of the participants.

## **PREPARING TRIP PARTICIPANTS AND ENSURING READINESS**

The leader may communicate with trip participants by phone or emails or hold a pre-trip meeting, if necessary. Some Branches have participants sign up through the leader, which allows the leader to talk with potential trip participants about equipment, trail conditions, and readiness for the particular trip. Many a trip has been made or broken by how well the leader has evaluated the readiness of a potential participant prior to the trip.

## **QUESTIONS MAY INCLUDE**

- Are you a member of The Mountaineers? What Branch? How long?
- Have you and your family gone on Mountaineers trips before?
- How old are your kids?
- Will your kids be bringing friends for whom you will assume responsibility (and are they registered)?
- How long and/or difficult were previous trips?
- Are you aware of the distance, elevation gain, and difficulty of this trip?
- Do you have and plan to bring the 10 essential systems on this trip?
- Are you properly equipped for bad weather?
- Does anyone in your family have physical or emotional conditions or disabilities that may cause you or the group any problems? Do you have a scheduled time you need to be back by?



By asking these questions and (politely) insisting on complete answers, the leader can make an initial assessment about the appropriateness of the trip for each participant. If in doubt, recommend something more suited to the person's skill level, or refer them to the branch office where sign-up personnel will gladly suggest a suitable trip.

## **SCOUTING**

It is very helpful to scout the area in advance, especially if you have not done the trip in a while. You should be aware of current trail/camping/rock conditions and road conditions to the area. It is also important to check road and weather conditions just before the trip. Recent weather conditions may affect the route, especially in spring and winter. Talk with the appropriate Ranger Station, Forest Service, or Park Service personnel, or previous leaders of the trip PRIOR to scouting the trip. Make note of amount of trailhead parking available, toilet facilities, cell/emergency telephone access, trail intersections, and water crossings.

## **EQUIPMENT**

The Ten Essential Systems are recommended on all trips, plus a pack, lunch, drinking water, and appropriate clothing and shoes. Leaders should also carry a first aid kit adequate for the type of trip you are leading, the Trip Roster, health forms for kids whose parents aren't present

## **KID ESSENTIALS**

Whistle for emergencies, on a lanyard around neck or attached to front of backpack

- Emergency ID with name, parents name/contact, insurance info, emergency contact
- Sunglasses and hat if sunny or going anywhere in the snow
- Bandana: for nose, hat, sunshield, neck warmer, hand washer, towel, carrying pouch
- Backpack with: water, snack food and emergency spare food bars hat/gloves/socks/extra warm thing, rain gear/poncho, and Mylar emergency blanket
- Optional: chapstick, bug wipes, sunscreen, mini-flashlight, HotHands
- Optional: Kid Comfort such as small toy or stuffed animal friend if they can carry it

- Optional: clothing and water shoes that work for swimming, mini-towel

## **FAMILY 10 ESSENTIALS (PLUS)—THIS IS THE MINIMUM FOR SIMPLE ACTIVITIES**

1. Food and Spare Food: Bring ample meals and snacks plus trail incentives (M& M's, gummy bears) and spare food bars for an emergency—at least one per person.
2. Water: Personal water, plus extra water for kids. Water sanitizing tablets in case you need to drink some “wild” water. For cold weather hiking or snow activities, consider a hot beverage thermos and cups or a backpacking stove to make hot beverages.
3. Illumination: small powerful flashlight or headlamp in case you are stuck in the dark—spare batteries or a spare light too—just in case.
4. Shelter: A small emergency blanket or good poncho for each person. Heavy Duty drop clothes can work for the whole family.
5. First Aid: Allergy, asthma, other medications. Bee sting supplies, sports tape and ace bandage, band aids, alcohol wipes, Bug spray, Hot Hands for hypothermia
6. Navigation: Map of area in a Ziploc, compass if you know how to use it, phone or other GPS/map function
7. Rain Gear and Extra Clothes: Hats, gloves, dry socks, extra warm wraps, hat for sun/ rain/snow. Poncho or rain jacket, rain pants if rain is likely. Can also pack a very small umbrella. Put some clean, dry clothes, shoes and a towel in the car for comfort after the hike.
8. Sun protection: A must in the snow! Sunglasses, hats, sunscreen, lip balm
9. Tools and repair: Jackknife/multitool, zipties, duct tape, strong rope
10. Fire: consider bringing a stove to heat up beverage in the winter
11. Potty pack: T.P or Kleenex packs, wetwipes, blue bag for waste
12. Bug Protection: Kid friendly bug spray or wipes. Consider bug net hats in very buggy environs.
13. Safety: ID and emergency info, whistles. Leave travel plan with someone.

## **TRAIL ETIQUETTE AND COURTESY**

At the start of the trip, talk to the kids about respect, and let them know that being respectful of others means letting others pass, saying “excuse me” and “thank you,” and keeping our voices down when others are around.

If your group is traveling on a narrow trail, please remember not to make it difficult for other hikers, climbers, or horseback riders to pass. Step aside quickly if your group is being overtaken. It is customary for the downhill hikers to step aside for the uphill hikers. Stay on the downhill side of horses/riders when it is safe to do so.

## **CLIMBING COURTESY**

Be sure to frontload your group with some good ways to be a low-impact group:

- This is a public area, and we are a group. Think about your reaction when you see a busload of people at a destination you want to go to. People are going to react negatively to seeing a group. We want to be the group that impresses them – that changes their opinion and makes them walk away thinking how enjoyable it was to climb near us.
- Keep your stuff consolidated. The crag is a tight space. Hardware should be in your bag or on your harness (no loose gear!). Jackets, lunches, shoes should be out of the way so others don’t have to step over them.
- If there’s an open rope, either: someone should get on it, we should pull it, or we should offer it to neighboring climbers if we need to keep it up but don’t have a climber.
- There’s a lot of loose rock that you could kick onto someone else – be mindful of where you step and who’s around you. Move around the crag slowly and carefully.

Remember, we’re all one climbing community.

## **HIKING POSITION/ROLES**

Teach kids the value and role of EVERY hiking position, from leader, to sweep, to First Aider, to middle of the pack. If there is an obvious battle for leader, it’s helpful to set a time limit (anywhere from 10-30 minutes

depending on the age of kids, number of kids wanting to lead, distance of hike, etc.) so that there are no spilled tears over who is in front. If battles continue, it may be necessary to set an adult in front. Always remind kids to stop at any place along the path where there's more than one choice and let everyone else catch up so nobody gets lost.

## **SPLITTING THE GROUP**

In general, it is not advised to split up a group on any Mountaineers Trip. However, Family Activities, especially those in very low-risk environments and/or traveling a very short distance, are often designed to accommodate families with younger children. If a family deems it is in their best interest to turn back (due to a behavior issue, a melt-down, or some other reason that makes continuing difficult), it's important that the leader facilitate that safely. If a family requests to leave the group, have him or her sign out in the presence of witnesses (i.e., by initialing their name on the trip sheet with date & time). Explain to anyone leaving the group that they are now on their own and have assumed that risk. Ensure that they are prepared to go back on their own.

## **ON THE TRIP**

### **AT THE TRAILHEAD**

It's good policy to arrive at least 15 minutes early at the trailhead or carpool site. Identify yourself as the leader and check the names of participants on the trip list as they arrive. Wait at the meeting place at least 15 minutes beyond the scheduled start/departure time for late arrivals. Identify no-shows and report them on your post Trip Report.

### **BEFORE A HIKE**

- Introduce yourself and have all participants introduce themselves to the group. Identify any guests and new members (if you know any name games those are great for kids and set a great tone for the trip).
- Check the Trip List to see if everyone has signed the waiver. Those who haven't are NOT allowed on the trip. All activity participants must be on the roster.

- Do a quick equipment check. It's the leader's responsibility to ensure all hikers are prepared for the trip. If a person forgot important gear or looks unprepared, this is the time to turn them away, before it becomes a safety issue for the entire group. This may require a 10 essentials, lunch, and/or water check of a hiker (in private if possible) before the trip begins.
- Describe the trip and trail conditions, potential problems, pace, side trails, special scenery, etc.
- Establish the trip rules - be explicit about how you intend to keep the group together. Remind everyone to wait at trail intersections or water crossings.
- Designate a First Aid person. Ask to be informed of any special health concerns in private.
- Appoint a Rear Guard (a.k.a. sweep) and if applicable, a front guard.
- Appoint a Child Guard, and be sure all kids know who this person is. This person will be responsible for gathering and managing all children in the event of an emergency. This is an important role in immediately averting extra chaos in an emergency situation by getting the kids out of the picture.

## TIPS FOR HIKING WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- 1. Keep a grown-up in sight** all the time. Kids should not be leaders or sweep without a grown up accompanying them due to wildlife danger. Practice buddy system in going off trail.
- 2. What to do if lost.** Have clear instructions for what to do if lost and have whistles for all kids. Three blows on the whistle indicate the need for help. One blow indicates that the blower wants a response to know where others are. Respond with one whistle blow. Practice these and other communication at the beginning of the trip.
- 3. Safety.** Each kid should have a safety whistle and waterproof ID with them at all times. Consider having colorful hats for easy

identification in the wild. Also teach kids that we always use walking feet while on the trail, even if it's tempting to run.

- 4. Picking and collecting.** Kids like to pick flowers and gather things. In National Parks and Monuments they cannot remove anything or pick anything except for berries to eat. The same applies to heavily used areas, like urban parks. Use judgement about collecting rocks, cones, sticks, etc to play with and be sure to disperse them afterwards.
- 5. Noise.** Teach kids about trail voices. We don't have to whisper, but we want to be respectful of others and make sure we don't scare wildlife. Use talking voices, not playground voices.
- 6. Move to the side.** Large groups should move to the side and let other hikers pass. Make sure kids know that coming down, uphill hikers have the right of way.
- 7. Goals of trip** are #1 safety, #2 have fun #3 reach a destination. Encourage frequent stops to examine bugs, fungi, plants, to climb on stumps/logs/rocks, to look at the view, and to generally explore. Budget time for enjoying nature.
- 8. Give trail incentives** if getting to the destination is important and a challenge. Challenges are good for kids, but special intermediate stops and special trail treats can help them reach a destination with minimal complaining.
- 9. Garbage and Stewardship.** Take litter bags for your own trash and have kids help to pick up any litter they see as part of stewardship training. Of course be sure to pack out what you carry in.
- 10. Common injuries** include bee stings/nettles, hypothermia, sprained ankles, and minor abrasions and splinters, so make sure you are prepared for those.
- 11. Weight allowance.** For hiking and also backpacking, a child's pack should weigh no more than 1/4 of their body weight. See Kid Essentials for what they should pack. Add optional items as they get older.



**12. Pack Kid Essentials** in kid's packs in the event they get lost and to train them in how to pack and carry their own gear. Food, water, a poncho, and some spare clothes would be the minimum gear. See Kid Essentials list.

**13. Bring Special Interest Items** along to enhance a trip. Kid plant ID books, NW story books, dinosaurs/elves to live in the moss, rope to make a pet rock/cone/fungus, crayons and notebook for making rubbings, and other toys and crafts can enhance your outdoor time.

## DURING A HIKE

- Plan to stop 15-20 minutes after the start for a clothing adjustment; this is also a good time for you to check the hikers' abilities with the current pace. Is the group too spread out? Is someone out of breath or not well equipped for conditions?
- Remind hikers to always wait at signed and unsigned trail junctions, to undo pack hip belts for water crossings, and of any other safety concerns of which you want them to be aware on the route.
- Share your past experiences on other trips, identify strong hikers and talk about whether they would consider becoming a trip leader, and encourage/mentor new participants.

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sometimes a trip will beautifully lend itself to some sort of nature education lesson, such as map reading (Tiger / Talus Rocks is a prime example), geocaching (Lake 22 had 4), counting bridges (Wallace Falls had 5) or wildlife (count different types, older kids can even write them down in a nature journal if they have one), or photography (if kids have their own camera), etc. so there's something to look at / learn / remember. Bring a wildlife or nature handbook so you can point out what flowers you're seeing; Pasque flowers (or fuzzy "mice on sticks") were a big hit with kids on Naches Peak Loop and Spray Park (both near Rainier) this summer; many know and can remember what Devil's Club and Skunk Cabbage are by the time they're 3-4 years old.

## LET THEM KNOW WHO IS IN CHARGE

Along with being assertive and confident comes the ability to speak up with a group so that everyone can hear you and knows you are in charge.

It may feel at times like you may be yelling, but with car noises, other parties with kids, wind, rushing water, etc. it can be tricky to get everyone's attention unless you really vocalize, especially with kids who are interested in getting going, playing with other kids, or doing their own thing. Check in with other parents on the trip on a regular basis to see how they feel their own child(ren) are doing so if earlier turnaround is necessary you can be aware of that and call the trip before reaching the final destination.

## **NATURAL ORDER OF EVENTS**

Picking a trail that has a lot of interest (like waterfalls, creeks, old growth trees, etc) is a great idea. One thing to consider is getting the kids to the farthest point of the hike first (i.e. so strongest energy is used and the hardest uphill is out of the way), then the party can enjoy as many other stops on the way back as they want to see and have time and energy for. If you stop for a river visit early on, for example, there's always a risk that someone might slip and get clothes or footwear wet, resulting in an abbreviated trip for all; if you do it on the way out, it isn't as important about wet clothes as you have the shortest possible trip back to the car: down and out. However, that's entirely a judgment call on the part of the trip leader, and being fluid and flexible allows you to change directions at any time and linger or make a side-stop at any time when everyone wants to do it.

## **AFTER THE TRIP**

- Make sure every participant has returned to the cars. (No one is to leave until every hiker has returned to the trailhead.)
- If a dinner/food stop is being planned, identify the restaurant and directions, etc.
- Make sure all cars start before leaving.
- Complete the online Trip Report under My Profile/Activity History.

## **TIPS FOR A SAFE TRIP**

1. Obtain accurate and timely weather forecasts.
2. Consider the avalanche or rock fall hazard along the route and select the route accordingly, taking into account the time of day and time of year for the trip.

3. Take into consideration the time needed for the trip, the time of year, weather, hours of daylight, and ages, physical condition and experience of party members.
4. In cold conditions, be vigilant for hypothermia (especially with kids!); know, and urge all participants to look for, signs and symptoms of hypothermia in their colleagues, as the condition may be life-threatening.
5. In hot weather, monitor for signs of heat-related illnesses (heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke; the latter of these can be life-threatening).
6. Remind adults that they are responsible for the behavior of the kids they are in charge of. While Family Activities are great opportunities for adults to get to know one another, the safety of the group is dependent upon adults actively guiding their kids' behavior. One injury can ruin a trip for an entire group.

## **PHONE NUMBERS**

Mountaineers Emergency Line (206) 521-6030

### National Park Service

Mount Rainier National Park (360) 569-2211

[www.nps.gov/mora/](http://www.nps.gov/mora/)

North Cascades National Park (360) 856-5700

[www.nps.gov/noca/](http://www.nps.gov/noca/)

Olympic National Park (360) 565-3130

[www.nps.gov/olymp/](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/) roads (360) 565-3131

### National Forest Service

Gifford Pinchot National Forest (360) 891-5000

[www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/](http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/)

Mt Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest (425) 775-9702

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/) (800) 627-0062

Okanogan National Forest (509) 826-3275

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/)

Olympic National Forest (360) 956-2402

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/)

Wenatchee National Forest (509) 664-9200

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/)

### Other Areas

Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area (425) 744-3400

[www.washington.edu/trails/alpine](http://www.washington.edu/trails/alpine)

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (360) 457-8451

[www.dungeness.com/refuge/](http://www.dungeness.com/refuge/)

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (360) 753-9467  
164.159. 1 1.73/nisqually/  
WSDOT (800) 695-7623  
Web links: Mountain Passes  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/passinformation.aspx>

## **IDEAS FOR FAMILY CAMPING (STATE PARKS WITH DRIVE-IN GROUP SITES)**

Reservations can be made online at [www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov).

### **FORT EBey (WHIDBEY ISLAND)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-60 people, The park has three miles of saltwater shoreline on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, a freshwater lake for fishing, and miles of hiking and biking trails. Panoramic views of the Puget Sound shoreline, the Olympic Mountains and sunsets. The park features para-gliding, surfing and gun batteries to explore. Eagles may be viewed at Lake Pondilla.

### **FORT FLAGLER (NEAR PORT TOWNSEND)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-100 people, Fort Flagler State Park is a 784-acre marine camping park surrounded on three sides by 19,100 feet of saltwater shoreline. The park rests on a high bluff overlooking Puget Sound, with views of the Olympic and Cascade Mountains. Many historic buildings remain at this 19th-century-established military fort. This historic fort offers gun batteries to explore and guided heritage tours. Panoramic views of surrounding mountains and Puget Sound add to the attractions.

### **KITSAP MEMORIAL (ON KITSAP PENINSULA)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-56 people: Kitsap Memorial State Park is a 58-acre camping park with 1,797 feet of saltwater shoreline and facilities for group and individual recreation, weddings and overnight stays. The park offers beautiful natural surroundings and sweeping views of Hood Canal. Grassy playfields and children's play equipment, a saltwater beach with tide pools and shellfish harvesting opportunities are highlights of this park.

## **LAKE SAMMAMISH STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-200 people Lake Sammamish State Park is a 512-acre day-use park with 6,858 feet of waterfront on Lake Sammamish. The area around the lake was an important culture zone for local Indian tribes for centuries. The park provides deciduous forest and wetland vegetation for the enjoyment of visitors. A salmon-bearing creek and a great-blue-heron rookery are additional features. The park includes diverse natural wetlands, a large great blue heron rookery and the salmon-bearing Issaquah Creek. The park has one of the largest freshwater beaches in the greater Seattle area.

## **LAKE SYLVIA STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-50 people Lake Sylvia State Park is a quiet, 233-acre camping park with 15,000 feet of freshwater shoreline. The park is an old logging camp in a wooded area halfway between Olympia and the Pacific shore. Aside from the interesting displays of old logging gear and curiosities, the lake is good for fishing, and the rustic charm of the park makes for excellent day outings and group camping trips. The park features a giant ball carved of wood by a local logging legend. Lake and forest offer rest and rejuvenation for park visitors.

## **LAKE WENATCHEE STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-80 people Lake Wenatchee State Park is a 489-acre camping park with 12,623 feet of waterfront on glacier-fed Lake Wenatchee and the Wenatchee River. The park is bisected by the Wenatchee River, creating two distinct areas -- South Park, with areas for camping, swimming and horseback riding; and North Park, in a less developed, forested section, a quarter-mile walk from the lake. The park is a natural wildlife area, and visitors should be aware of the presence of bears and other natural dangers. More than five miles of equestrian trails are in and around the park. A concession offers horses for rent for day rides or overnight pack trips. There are no public stables available. Year-round recreation opportunities abound, including swimming, boating and hiking in the summer and cross-country skiing, snowplaying, showshoeing and sledding in the winter.

## **MANCHESTER STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 2-130 people Manchester State Park is a 111-acre camping park with 3,400 feet of saltwater shoreline on Rich Passage in Puget Sound. The park is covered in woods of fir and maple. Nestled in woods of fir and maple, the park sets on the shore of Rich Passage on Puget Sound. Bainbridge Island and Seattle are visible from the beach.

### **MARYHILL STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-200 people Maryhill State Park is a 99-acre camping park with 4,700 feet of waterfront on the Columbia River in Klickitat County. The area is significant for its natural beauty, its access to the surrounding natural wonders and its cultural history. A full-scale model of Stonehenge stands near the park.

### **OCEAN CITY STATE PARK (NEAR ABERDEEN)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-40 people Ocean City State Park is a year-round, 170-acre camping park, featuring ocean beach, dunes and dense thickets of shore pine. Migratory birds may be viewed at the park, and beachcombing is a popular activity.

### **PENROSE POINT STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-50 people Penrose Point State Park is a 152-acre marine and camping park on the shores of Puget Sound. The park has over two miles of saltwater frontage on Mayo Cove and Carr Inlet. Wildlife, birds and forested terrain make this a beautiful park.

### **POTHOLES STATE PARK (NEAR MOSES LAKE, NORTHEAST OF YAKIMA)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-50 people Potholes State Park is a 640-acre camping park with 6,000 feet of freshwater shoreline on Potholes Reservoir (also known as O'Sullivan Reservoir). Potholes Reservoir is often confused with the Pothole Lakes themselves, which are a 30- to 45-minute drive from the park. The terrain is desert with freshwater marshes.

### **RIVERSIDE – BOWL & PITCHER STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-60 people Riverside State Park is a 10,000-acre camping park along the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers in Eastern Washington. The park supports a wide variety of recreational activities and is rich in history. Freshwater marshes, running rivers and beautiful



countryside make up the terrain. Riverside features a 600-acre off-road vehicle riding area for dirt bikes and snowmobiles, as well as 37 miles of hiking along the Centennial Trail and many more miles on other trails. Horseback riding and bicycling are possible in the park, along with all manner of watersport activity. Interpretive programs invite exploration of the region's history. This is a large park with several natural areas abundant with wildlife.

### **SCENIC BEACH STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-40 people Scenic Beach State Park is a 88-acre camping park with 1,500 feet of saltwater beachfront on Hood Canal. The park is known for its wild, native rhododendrons and stunning, clear-day views of Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains. ADA-compliant paths lead visitors to a country garden, gazebo, rustic bridge and huge trees. A wide variety of birds and wildlife call the area home. The park is ideal for those who appreciate outstanding natural venues for outdoor activities. The park features beautiful views of Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains, flowers of wild rhododendrons in spring, and a rocky beach where oysters may be harvested in season.

### **SCHAFFER STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-100 people Schaffer State Park is a 119-acre camping park on the Satsop River, midway between Olympia and Ocean Park. A big attraction to park users is the abundant fishing for steelhead, cutthroat trout and salmon on the Satsop River. Wading and swimming in the shallow water make it an equally attractive site for family gatherings. Buildings are constructed from native stone. This park is known for its fishing opportunities, including sea-run cutthroat trout in summer, salmon in the fall and steelhead in late winter. There is abundant wildlife in the park. Wading and swimming are possible in the river.

### **SEAQUEST STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 10-25 people Seaquest State Park is a 475-acre, year-round camping park near Mount St. Helen's. The beautifully forested park claims over a mile of Silver Lake shoreline, a shallow wetland lake. Enjoy one mile of wetland trail and six miles of woodland trails for hiking and bicycling; see spectacular views of wildlife, Silver Lake and the surrounding area. There are also children's play areas and playing fields. Great seasonal fishing, boating and swimming are available nearby. The

major draw to this park is Mount St. Helens. An outstanding interpretive center details history and geology of the volcano. An ADA-compliant trail opens to a view across Silver Lake of Mount St. Helens. There is excellent wildlife viewing in both wetland and lowland forest habitats.

### **SEQUIM BAY STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 10-50 people Sequim Bay State Park is a year-round, 92-acre marine camping park with 4,909 feet of saltwater coast in the Sequim "rainshadow," just inside Puget Sound on the Olympic Peninsula. The bay is calm, the air is dry and interpretive opportunities await visitors. The name Sequim, which means "quiet waters," aptly describes the bay on the shores of which the park rests. Beachcombing is popular.

### **SUN LAKES STATE PARK (EASTERN WASHINGTON)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-100 people Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park is a 4,027-acre camping park with 73,640 feet of freshwater shoreline at the foot of Dry Falls. Dry Falls is one of the great geological wonders of North America. Carved by Ice Age floods that long ago disappeared, the former waterfall is now a stark cliff, 400 feet high and 3.5 miles wide. In its heyday, the waterfall was four times the size of Niagara Falls. Today it overlooks a desert oasis filled with lakes and abundant wildlife. The park's dramatic landscape was formed by Ice Age floods that swept through the area 15,000 years ago. The park and the interesting exhibits at Dry Falls Visitor Center offer many opportunities for people to learn about this unusual landscape. Special programs, hikes, talks and classroom visits are available by appointment, through the visitor center, (509) 632-5214. Other park features, available seasonally, include boat rentals, a nine-hole golf course and a miniature golf course.

### **TWANOH STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-70 people Twanoh State Park is a 182-acre marine, camping park with 3,167 feet of saltwater shoreline on Hood Canal. The name of the park derives from the Native American Twana tribes, better known as the Skokomish, who made their home in the area. The park is situated on one of the warmest saltwater beaches in the state. This is because Hood Canal is one of the warmest saltwater bodies in

Puget Sound. The park offers access to one of the warmest saltwater beaches in the state. Wading, swimming and oyster and crab harvesting are immensely popular.

### **TWENTY-FIVE MILE CREEK STATE PARK (LAKE CHELAN)**

Has drive-in group sites for 20-50 people Twenty-Five Mile Creek State Park is a 235-acre inland waters camping park on the forested south shore of Lake Chelan. The park separates the mountains from the lake and is surrounded by spectacular scenery. With its modern marina, the park affords visitors excellent boating access to the upper reaches of Lake Chelan. The park is known for its boat accessibility. Boating exploration of the uplake wilderness portions of Lake Chelan is possible from the park. A nearby ferry takes visitors to a roadless community at the head of the lake. The park offers wading opportunities.

### **TWIN HARBORS STATE PARK**

Has drive-in group sites for 10-50 people Twin Harbors Beach State Park is a 172-acre camping park on the Pacific coast, four miles south of Westhaven. The area allows opportunities for nature study and seaside activity along the ocean shore, and the chance to lie in the sand and soak up the sun in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. The park is on the Pacific Coast. Beach activities predominate, including kite flying, surf fishing, and beachcombing.

### **WENATCHEE CONFLUENCE STATE PARK (NEAR LEAVENWORTH)**

Has drive-in group sites for 26-250 people Wenatchee Confluence State Park is a 197-acre year-round camping park at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers. Situated at the edge of town, the park has two personalities. The North Confluence is urban and recreational, while the South Confluence is a wetland natural area. Muskrat and beaver may be seen in the rivers here. The park has shaded, grassy areas, sports fields, a roped-off river swimming beach, a boat launch and walking access to the Horan Natural Area.

As if in imitation of the two rivers that meet here, the park has a dual personality. The north portion is recreational, while the south section is a designated natural wetland area. Located in a comfortable urban setting, the park offers a roped-off swimming beach, a boat launch, tennis courts and play equipment for children. A pedestrian bridge crosses the

Wenatchee River. Rock climbing and winter skiing opportunities are not far from the park.