
HIKING CLUB LEADER GUIDELINES



Pack 740

Putting the Outing in Scouting!

Overview

This document offers guidelines and suggestions for use by Den Leaders when planning and conducting hiking activities that will be submitted for Hiking Club credit.

Den leaders can participate in the Hiking Club in many ways ...

- Promote and support Hiking Club events and encourage scouts to become active in the Hiking Club.
- Lead, coordinate, or participate in Pack Hiking Club events.
- Plan and lead Den hikes and request Hiking Club mileage credit..

Incorporating outdoor activities at regional parks into your program makes great use of the Outdoor Classroom for teaching outdoor skills, Cub Scout Leave No Trace Frontcountry Guidelines, BSA Outdoor Code, etc. and it provides your scouts with fun and adventure. Plus, they can earn Hiking Club Mileage Awards and get recognition at Pack meetings.

This is your opportunity to ***“Put the Outing in Scouting.”***

Event Planning

The following section offers some suggestions for organizing den hiking activities and provides the guidelines for requesting Hiking Club mileage credit.

1. Den hiking events should have a purpose or a theme. Take advantage of the outdoor classroom.
2. Hiking routes should be planned well in advance. If the route is unfamiliar, it should be hiked before the event. If you plan to submit the activity for Hiking Club credit, make sure the event distance meets the requirements below.

Note: Try to be as accurate as possible in determining hiking distances. Use trail maps, a GPS, pedometer, etc. to determine the distance ... don't simply guess or estimate it. Scouts earn mileage awards in the Hiking Club based on distances hiked. It our job to ensure that when a scout earns a 30-Miler award that it really represents 30 miles, not 25,29, etc. The awards must be based on legitimate miles to have real meaning.

3. Submit a BSA Local Tour permit, if required. A Local Tour permit may be required if you are traveling out of the general vicinity. The BSA Scout Shop can assist, and permits can now be completed on-line.
 4. Plan ahead to ensure that enough leaders and parents attend to meet BSA Youth Protection Guidelines.
 5. **To get Hiking Club Mileage Credit, make sure the event meets the following requirements:**
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- a. Hikes at least 2 miles long.
 - b. Competitive, timed events such as Orienteering at least 1 mile long.
 - c. Geocaching events at least 2 miles long.
 - d. Mileage must be done on foot, i.e. not cycling, boating, roller-blading, etc.
 - e. At least 50% of the Scouts in the Den participated in the event.
 - f. Webelos events hosted by Boy Scout Troops meeting the guidelines above. *Note: mileage credit is not awarded for walking from station-to-station at Webelos Outdoor Weekend.*
 - g. Other events subject to approval by the Pack 740 Committee.
6. Check weather forecasts. Don't hesitate to cancel or postpone an activity if poor weather is expected. In the late spring and summer, make adjustments for the heat index.
 7. Suggested equipment:
 - Trail Map
 - Baseplate (Orienteering) Compass
 - First Aid Kit
 - Knife
 - Watch
 - Cell phone
 - Flashlight
 - Camera
 - Whistle
 - Garbage Bag
 - Rain Gear
 - Sunscreen
 - Insect Repellent
 - Day Pack
 - Optional: Binoculars
 - Optional : GPS or pedometer
 8. On longer hikes, > 5 miles, consider eating lunch on the trail.
 9. Hikes should be age appropriate in length and difficulty. Adjust the pace as necessary for challenging terrain and weather conditions.
 10. Adequate food and water is essential. A regular size water bottle will be insufficient in warm weather. Plan carefully and verify that each scout has enough water for the event.
 11. Consider any special needs, precautions, medications and work with your scouts' parents to ensure the needs are met on event day.
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Event Day

A successful, safe, and fun event doesn't happen by accident. Den Leaders are responsible for making sure everything goes as planned and all participants return safely from the hike with smiles on their faces.

The following guidelines are suggested:

1. Check weather forecasts the day before and the day of the event.
Error on the side of caution ... SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT Also, never hike on muddy trails as it damages the trails and promotes erosion. Muddy trails provide sufficient reason to cancel a hike ... even on a nice sunny day.
 2. Verify that all participants have the required clothing, equipment, food, and snacks for the event.
 - It is the responsibility of the parents and scouts participating to bring their own food and water.
 - It is the responsibility of the event leader to ensure that participants meet the requirements before the event begins. DO NOT ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TO PARTICIPATE IF THEY DO NOT HAVE THE REQUIRED EQUIPMENT, CLOTHING, FOOD, OR WATER.
 3. Make sure all participants have applied sunscreen and insect repellent.
 4. Verify and enforce BSA YPT guidelines by maintaining two-deep leadership at all times.
 5. Take a headcount before departing and re-check periodically during the event.
 6. Discuss the theme of the event with participants and any interesting details about the park.
 7. Discuss Leave No Trace guidelines and Recite the Outdoor Code.
 8. Discuss the rules with all participants before the event. Here are some suggested rules:
 - The den hikes as a single unit.
 - Stick together. Don't allow large gaps to develop – keep up!
 - No one goes ahead of the hike leader.
 - No one drops behind the hike sweeper.
 - Don't wander off at rest stops.
 - Hiking sticks are not swords – Zero Tolerance.
 - Always use the Buddy System – choose buddies at this time.
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- Discuss lost procedures with participants.
 - If you get separated from the group ...
 - Stay calm and don't panic
 - Pay close attention to your surroundings.
 - Stay put. We will find you.
 - If you have a whistle, blow (3) bursts, wait one minute, and repeat until found.
This is the mountain distress signal used in North America.
 - Only blow whistles in emergencies, i.e. you are lost.
 - We will stop to allow cyclists, faster hikers, and horses (if applicable) to pass.
 - On sidewalks we will stay to the right.
 - On streets without a sidewalk, we will hike on the left side of the road facing on-coming traffic.
 - Beware of poison oak. "Leaves of Three- Let it Be."
 - Don't eat any plants or berries.
 - Don't put your hands in any holes in the ground or trees.
 - Discuss any special safety precautions.

9. Take regular water and snack breaks, particularly in the summer. Keep breaks brief to keep the event on schedule.

10. Take advantage of teaching opportunities along the trail.

11. Display a positive attitude and make it fun!

Post Event

1. Take a head count to make sure everyone is accounted for.
 2. Check and record mileage on pedometer or GPS.
 3. Collect maps and any equipment loaned to participants.
 4. In warm weather, check for ticks.
 5. Have a snack and water.
 6. **Submit a completed Hiking Club Mileage Request to the Hiking Club Coordinator to log the mileage for your scouts.**
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