

Rules and Recommendations for ADK Chapter Outings

The outings program of ADK Chapters is a principal means by which members and their guests learn about, enjoy and become proficient in outdoor recreational activities. Each Chapter should strive to ensure that its outings are conducted in a safe, enjoyable and environmentally sound manner.

The following guidelines are for the practical assistance of Chapters and their outings leaders and participants. These guidelines do not attempt to deal with all the varied situations and decisions with which trip leaders are presented. Each Chapter and each leader must therefore use their best judgment in adapting these guidelines to the individual circumstances of their trips.

1.) Planning, Trip Size and Leadership

It is required that Chapters establish procedures to screen and authorize Chapter outings. Trips approved by such procedures and announced via official Chapter communications such as Chapter meetings, newsletters, hotlines and websites (as long as hotline messages and website trip postings cannot be made by the general membership) are considered official Chapter outings. All authorized Chapter trips begin and end at the trailhead. “Pick up trips” or “meet-up group” trips will not be considered as Chapter outings and will not be covered by ADK’s liability insurance.

Every Chapter sponsored trip must have a designated leader who is an ADK member. A co-leader or assistant leader may also be appropriate on trips with a large number of participants.

Trip leaders must familiarize themselves with applicable private and State regulations governing individual and group activities on lands and waters to be traversed in the course of the outing, and communicate those which are most relevant to outing participants and secure all applicable permits required for access and/or camping.

For lands with group size limits, ADK trips must comply with these limits. For example, in Wilderness Areas of the Catskills and Adirondacks, ADK trips should be limited to a total party size, including leader(s), of no more than 15 and for overnight trips, of no more than 8. Habitats of rare or endangered species should be visited with great care, if at all.

A minimum party size of three (four during winter conditions) is recommended. A minimum party size of three boats is required for white water trips. Life jackets (PFDs) must be worn on any ADK paddling trip while on the water.

It is recommended that trip plans and expected return times be communicated to a household member or with local authority.

Chapters must consult with the ADK Headquarters before scheduling any trips outside the United States and Canada.

2.) Trip Classification and Participant Qualifications

It is required that a trip description be communicated to potential participants prior to the trip and that it must include trip type, level of strenuousness and any special skill or equipment required.

Trip leaders must screen participants for appropriate skill, equipment and fitness for the proposed outing. Leaders have the responsibility to decline participation in a trip by any individual who, in their judgment, may impair the safety of participants or the objectives of the trip.

A basic understanding of the use of map and compass is strongly recommended.

3.) Participant Conduct

Participants are expected to have a realistic knowledge of their own ability to select activities within their capabilities and to carry clothing, food and equipment appropriate to the trip.

Participants must be willing to accept the authority of the trip leader and to cooperate with him or her and other party members to make the trip safe and enjoyable.

Participants should inform the leader if they feel unduly tired or if the trip is exceeding their capability. Concealing such information to avoid embarrassment or other reasons endangers the safety of all participants.

Participants must not leave the party at any time without permission of the leader. Participants must not leave the trip area until all party members have safely returned, unless given permission by the trip leader.

4.) Party Coordination

It is recommended that leaders establish procedures to ensure the cohesiveness of the group. They should explain the concept of having a leader and sweep and stress the importance of maintaining contact within the group

5.) Making a Trip Report

A report of the trip, liability releases and list of participants must be provided to the appropriate Chapter committee and retained by the Chapter for a period of 3 years.

Any injury on a Chapter trip requiring medical attention must be reported to the Executive Director of the Main Club by the most immediate means possible.

6.) Safety Considerations

It is recommended that trip leaders and participants observe reasonable safety precautions and that all trip decisions be made with safety as the primary concern.

A leader may curtail further participation by an individual and amend trip objectives if, in the leader's judgment, the safety of the individual or group requires such action.

It is recommended that if a trip participant is unable to continue with the trip and must turn back that he or she be accompanied by at least one other person.

7.) Firearms and Other Weapons

Activities involving the use of firearms and/or other weapons are not permitted on Chapter trips.

8.) Liability Release Forms

It is required that Chapters have participants sign liability releases for all Chapter outings. Technical rock and ice climbing and white water activities on rivers and streams containing sections rated at Class IV or greater are not covered by ADK's liability insurance. A Class II or III river may be run if all Class IV or higher drops are portaged.

9.) Supplemental Chapter Guidelines

Any supplemental guidelines established by individual Chapters must be submitted to ADK Headquarters for approval.

Original BoG 9/19/92

Revised BoG approved: 6/21/97

Revised BoD approved: 12/1/07

Revised BoD approved: 3/24/12