

Guidelines for Leaders of UCHC Hikes

Prior to the Day of the Hike

1. Scout the hike area! Unless you recently hiked the area, this should be done prior to putting the hike in the schedule if at all possible. Even then it's good to check it out closer to the scheduled date.
2. If you are unable to do a scheduled hike, do your best to find a replacement leader. If you cannot, let your hike coordinator or the president know.
3. Plan for possible emergencies: Know the best 'bail outs' along your route; bring emergency phone numbers for the day's hiking area; consider CPR/First Aid training or take a review course

Day of the Hike

1. Your pack should include:
 - Water/food/clothing you need (set a good example);
 - A basic first aid kit;
 - Cell phone; (Check to see if someone else has one to allow for improved reception and emergency situations.)
 - Whistle and an extra for the sweep;
 - Sign-up sheet and maps;
2. Arrive at the starting point at least 15 to 30 minutes before scheduled time.

At Starting Point

1. Hikers must sign the waiver form/sign-in sheet. Encourage new members to read before signing. Non members should read form and sign on the back. Leader should keep the sign-in sheet(s) until the end of the hike, noting latecomers, anyone who leaves the hike, any group that splits off, or any other change. (See "After The Hike #3" below.)
2. At the starting time (use your own judgment about waiting for 5/10 minutes if there are road delays), hold a circle and state your name and town with each hiker following in turn. Then ask if everyone signed in. Describe the day's activity, including its level of difficulty and potential problem areas, urging those who are unprepared (inadequate water, footwear, or clothing) or unable to complete the entire hike not to continue. Suggest a safe alternative hike if possible.
3. Before or during the circle ask for a Sweep. Remind hikers to stay between the Leader and the Sweep and not to leave the hike for any reason without informing one or both of them.
4. Sweep Duties: The Sweep should have a map and know how to use it, staying behind the last hiker. When a stop is made or at trail junctions, let Leader know privately if any hikers appear to be having difficulties. The Sweep should keep hiker in front of him in sight and whistle to leader if there's a large gap in the line.
5. Count participants and check that count matches the sign-in sheet.
6. If hiker shows up with a dog, inform them that Club Bylaws prohibit dogs.

During the Hike

1. Start at the pace indicated in the schedule for the hike, but frequently check, especially at the beginning, to be sure everyone is keeping up. If you are going too fast for the particular group that day, you should adjust the pace.

2. Within the first 10 minutes of the hike, check to be sure that there is no one totally incapable of continuing. Ask for a volunteer to return to the parking lot with that person or, if necessary, walk back to the parking lot with the entire group.
3. There should be Separations as needed, especially 10-15 minutes before the end of the hike.
4. At every turning onto a differently blazed trail, stop and wait for the entire group to be together so everyone makes the turn.
5. At appropriate times during the day, stop for a water- or shedding- break.
6. Choose a place for lunch that is the best available in the area: consider adequate seating, low insect activity and a nice view if possible. Break for lunch around noon. If the best lunch spot is further along, an 11:30 snack break is suggested. Give a 'five-minute' call before you want to move on after lunch.
7. At lunch see if the Sweep wishes to be replaced.
8. Count occasionally to make sure everyone is there.
9. Check in regularly with your Sweep.
10. Be conscious of the weather and flexible enough to shorten a hike when necessary (i.e., possibility of lightning on a ridge).
11. Bushwhacking: Some parks request that there be no bushwhacking (usually for environmental reasons) and we should honor that request. In other areas, remember that if an accident occurs during a bushwhacking segment of the hike it may not be possible for emergency crews to locate you.
12. In case of an accident, you, as Leader decide what needs to be done. If the injured person needs professional help, designate a group to go for help (include someone who knows where the accident occurred and how to return). They should have a cell phone so they can keep in touch. Those best qualified to help should stay with the injured person. If the injury is less serious, assist the person to walk out. Do not immediately call park rangers or 911 for a minor problem that you and the group can handle on your own.

After the Hike

1. If possible, hang around to make sure everyone is able to get their cars started and leave the parking area. Help people with directions, if needed.
2. If an accident (even minor) occurred during the hike, record that information on the sign-in sheet with the name of the person involved. If it was a major accident involving rangers and/or police, call the UCHC president to report incident and give a full report on a separate sheet of paper to him/her by email (if possible) and by mail with the sign-in sheet as soon as you can. If medical help was offered and the victim refused, that also should be noted.
3. Mail the sign-in sheet to the UCHC president with any notations of hikers who left the main hike. (see "At Starting Point, #1" above)

Most Important: Have a great day and enjoy yourself!! These directions try to cover all the possible problems that might, but almost never, arise. Relax and provide a wonderful hike for all your hiking friends.