



Outdoor Enthusiasts of Fredericton

Guidelines for Hike Leaders

Safety First & Always

- Always remember that people are relying on you to get them safely there and back again.
- Don't take risks. Hike for fun and exercise, not to win a battle with nature.
- Don't lead hikes to potentially dangerous places.
- Always have a plan for what you will do in an emergency, or if the weather or trail conditions worsen.
- Notify hikers in advance of any challenges associated with a hike.
- If safety is at all in question, **stop** and do the hike another day.
- If in doubt about going forward with an event, consult the Event Coordinator or another OEF Executive member.

Preparation

- Only lead OEF hikes to places you are familiar with.
- If you want to lead a hike to a new location, first go and check it out yourself.
- Plan your hike in detail before you go: Start time, travel route, lunch stop, water sources, end time, return time.
- Have proper directions, maps, etc. and allow sufficient time to complete the hike.
 - *if the info is on your cell phone, make sure you can access it without cell coverage, and start with a full battery.
- Have a plan for what you will do in an emergency, or if the weather or trail conditions worsen during the hike.
- Send your hike plan to the Event Coordinator ASAP, so it can be added to the Event Calendar.
- Have an event created on Facebook.
- Ideally, gather some history, fun facts, tree and plant or wildlife knowledge before the hike so you can have a discussion when taking breaks.
- Monitor the weather as your hike day approaches, and notify the Events Coordinator if your hike needs to be changed, postponed or cancelled.

Hike Day

- Check the road conditions and the weather forecast before setting out, and if safety is in doubt, cancel or postpone the event.
- Know who is planning to attend the hike, and check for any last minute joiners.
- Arrive at the meetup spot a few minutes early, and leave 5 or 10 minutes after the stated time.
- Have all hikers sign a Safety Waiver before the event, and ensure they understand what they are signing.
- Remind hikers of the minimum equipment that should be carried for that particular event and recommend that anyone lacking water, medication or critical gear either not go at all, or pick it up along the way. (Examples: Water, snack, insect repellent, hunter's orange, special medication, Medicare card.)
- Remind hikers to inform the leader of any medical condition that might affect the hike.
- If a hiker seems unprepared or unsuited for the event, take them aside and let them know.
- Explain the driving route to the drivers before heading out on the road.
- When driving to the trail head, ideally have a person in each car who knows the route.
- Car pool as much as possible. It saves money and the environment.
 - *cost: about \$5/hour seems reasonable based on 4 people per car.
- If possible plan a bathroom stop, just prior to beginning the actual hike.
- Carry a First Aid kit, Compass, Flashlight, Lighter and Cell phone.
- When hiking, always have a reliable person at the back acting as a sweeper to make sure no one is left behind.
- Stick to your plan: Leading a hike is not the time to wander down unfamiliar paths.
- Know where you are on the trail at all times...it's your responsibility as hike leader.
- Keep the group together, never split up, and do not leave anyone behind.
- Ideally, all hikers should be within sight of each other on the trail, with the leader and sweeper working to keep the group together.
- Set a pace that all can handle and don't make newer hikers feel out of their element.
 - *in time, the slower hikers will get faster.
- Work to keep everyone together by pausing periodically to regroup, especially at all trail intersections.
 - *These breaks are a good time to talk about the trail, and to check on new hikers.
- Always be respectful of nature and other people's property.
- At the end of the hike, gather together and make sure everyone is out of the woods, and has a way home.