

HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST

Location: _____ DATE: _____

Co-Leader(s): _____

Sweep(s): _____

Before Hike Day:

- ✓ 1. Obtain map of the hike area. If necessary, obtain strip maps from the meeting area to the trail head. Do an internet search of the trail and blogs.
- ✓ 2. The pre-hike may be the most important thing you can do to prepare to lead a successful hike! Select a date and time for a pre-hike of the trail. Consider taking one of your co-leaders on the pre-hike in the event you are unable to be present for the hike. The pre-hike is ideally conducted within 2 weeks of the scheduled hike. The pre-hike will increase your awareness of seasonal changes to the trail and give you and your leaders added confidence to handle situations along the trail.
- ✓ 3. If unable to lead the hike, find a substitute leader and notify the BMTA Hike Director.
- ✓ 4. Interview hikers that contact you for permission to join the hike. Determine if they are capable before giving permission to join the hike. Ask them to review the Hiking Guidelines at bmta.org.
- ✓ 5. Determine the nearest and/or best emergency access routes along the hike. Determine if cell phone access is available along the trail for 911 service.
- ✓ 6. Determine the communication method needed to manage your hike, i.e.: whistle, walkie-talkie, runner, cell phone, etc. If you decide to use special devices, ensure they are operational and that your co-leader(s), and sweep(s) know how to use them.
- ✓ 8. Check your own packing list and inventory the items in your first aid kit.
- ✓ 7. Review Medical Emergency Management Guidelines (see below)
- ✓ 8. BTMA recommends all hike leaders, regular hikers and maintainers complete First Aid, CPR and more advanced emergency training. This training is regularly offered for free from the US Forest Service and may be announced on the activity page at bmta.org. However, certification through other agencies is equally important for you to take if the training becomes available.

Hike Day:

- ✓ 1. Cancel the hike if extreme weather conditions exist or are forecast and inform them via email.
- ✓ 2. Introduce first time hikers & guests to the group and make them feel welcome. Provide a reminder to all that they should have their own first aid supplies and know how to use them, as leaders have no group supplies or medical expertise. Ask if anyone has any special medical expertise; if so, what. Note the most proficient medical person. Ask whether anyone has any insect bite allergies and uses an EpiPen, a heart condition that requires nitroglycerin, or has any other serious medical condition that might require immediate treatment. Physically see the location of the EpiPen or any emergency medication.

- ✓ 3. Excuse individuals who might pose a risk to themselves or others, or do not have the proper clothing, equipment, or water.
- ✓ 4. Provide the hike description, degree of difficulty, approximate speed of the group, significant points on the trail and color of blazes. If special conditions warrant, describe the difficulty of the road conditions from the meeting place to the trailhead.
- ✓ 5. Assess the abilities of the group. In designated Wilderness Areas, hiking groups may not exceed 12 in GA and 10 in NC, and group starts must be staggered about 10-15 minutes apart. This may necessitate more than one group. Groups should not come together while in the wilderness area. It is also recommended that when not in a wilderness area that groups not exceed 15 persons. This helps minimize trail impact. Do not pick the slowest/weakest hiker to be sweep.
- ✓ 6. Have the participants sign the waiver form. Bring extra copies. Inform the group that this form will be in the possession of the leader during the hike in case the emergency notification information is needed. Emphasize the need for an accurate emergency phone number. 911 is not an acceptable emergency phone number.
- ✓ 7. Describe the location of the trailhead and the route the cars will be traveling. Distribute strip maps if needed.
- ✓ 8. Keep this checklist with you during the hike.

During the Hike:

- ✓ 1. Determine the total number of hikers. Share this number. Do not permit hikers to go ahead of the leader or lag behind the sweep without permission.
- ✓ 2. The leader should stop at confusing intersections to allow all hikers to catch up if they are dispersed to ensure everyone takes the correct trail.
- ✓ 3. Call attention to all hazards and have the information passed down the line.
- ✓ 4. Stop periodically to assess the hikers, provide water breaks or to allow slower hikers to “catch up.” Survey the group to determine when lunch and snack breaks are needed. Take pictures throughout the hike. Take action shots...avoid boring pictures of the whole group standing in front of a sign. Faces showing emotion are the best pictures.
- ✓ 5. If someone has a medical emergency while hiking, consider the Medical Emergency Management Guidelines below.
- ✓ 6. If a person wants to leave the hike for any reason that does not require our assistance, you must physically sign them out by crossing their name off and having them initial it with the time of day noted.

After the Hike:

- ✓ 1. Account for all hikers.
- ✓ 2. Wait until all vehicles are road worthy before leaving the parking area.
- ✓ 3. Complete the waiver forms and return them to the Hike Director in person or via mail or email within one week.
- ✓ 4. Write an article with pictures and submit it to the BMTA Newsletter Editor.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR HIKE LEADERS

During the hike briefing at the meeting location or trailhead ask if anyone has any special medical expertise? If so, what? Make a note of the most experienced medical person.

If a medical emergency occurs, consider taking the following actions:

Assign the most proficient medical person to the immediate care of the individual. If you are the most experienced medical person, assign your remaining hike leader duties to one of your co-leaders. The medical person should canvass the group for any needed medical supplies from their first aid kits and supplies. If the victim is conscious, ask them if they want your help. If so, proceed. If not, ask them what they want and respect their wishes. If the victim is unconscious, consent to help is implied. Remember to only provide care within the scope of your medical expertise and do no harm.

The hike leader's job is to keep the group calm, organized and to provide leadership. Try to keep people occupied and away from the emergency site. Give them something to do.

If the medical person judges that outside assistance is required, call 911. If you cannot get a cell phone connection, try other carriers. If no one can get a connection select two competent and able bodied hikers to hike to a location that may provide a connection. Ensure they have the exact location of the emergency, and details about the patient including Name, age, known medical history, and emergency contact phone number.

Once the medical response crew arrives, provide assistance, if requested, to speed the evacuation.

Finally, prepare a detailed report of the incident and forward it to the Hike Director and the President of the BMTA within 24 hours.