



Club Tread

Event Coordinator's Guide

(Revised January 2004)

Any Club Tread member can organize an event and all members should schedule events periodically. It's easier than it looks — no special skills or qualifications are necessary, just common sense.

Stage 1: Planning Your Event

Deciding on your Event

Club members often schedule events involving hiking, walking, birding, kayaking, cycling, backpacking, car camping, skiing, sailing, games and social activities. For specific ideas, first consult our web site at <http://www.clubtread.org> where there are detailed descriptions of many possible events. For more options, take a look at various guidebooks, old Club schedules, maps, tourist information and periodicals or speak with the Outdoor Event Coordinator or other members of the Club Executive. Their telephone numbers are listed on printed Club schedules.

Once you have chosen an event to coordinate, you will need to consider and specify:

- the days and dates involved
- the location or destination
- the rating of the event (boots, bicycles, etc.). Contact the Outdoor Event Coordinator if you cannot find a rating.
- the names of the event coordinators
- their telephone numbers
- whether the event will be for members only (this is generally discouraged)
- any deadline for booking the event
- the maximum number of participants, if you want to limit their numbers
- specialized limitations, such as fast paced or exploratory events
- a booking deadline, if you choose to set one

This information will be entered onto an Event Planning Sheet, as part of the planning process.

Event Coordinators may limit the number of participants whether this is shown in the schedule or not, and may set guidelines for equipment, smoking, consumption of alcohol, participation of children and pets, and minimum fitness level for the activity. *Note that Event Coordinators must be Club Tread members.*

Putting Your Event on the Club Schedule

Club schedules are available in print and on the Internet. Schedules are developed during our quarterly planning meetings and are printed about a week later. Then they are uploaded to our Internet site and are updated regularly.

There are several ways to schedule an event:

- The best is to attend a Club planning meeting, fill out an Event Planning Sheet for each event you will coordinate, and hand it to the Schedule Editor. Your event will be entered onto a large calendar during the meeting and any conflicts with other events resolved.
- Within 5 days after a planning meeting you could also pass the information for your event to the Schedule Editor by delivering a completed Event Planning Sheet or phoning in the information.
- If the deadline for submission to the printed schedule has passed, you can contact the Web Master at webmaster@clubtread.org, and your event will be placed on the Web.

If for any reason you cannot coordinate your event, please contact the Outdoor Event Coordinator and webmaster to reschedule it, and *if you need to cancel the event, please contact the Outdoor Event Coordinator first.*

Planning the Details

Now that the general information about your event is on the Club schedule, you will need to do some detailed planning, obtain additional information and set any additional requirements before people start to sign up. These include:

- The starting time of the event — it's best not to put a starting time on the schedule. People will then have to phone you to get the event details, and this will allow you to screen callers for their fitness and ability.
- Limits on pets, children, fitness levels, smoking, and consumption of alcohol. For legal reasons, people under the age of 19 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and are not allowed to go to the pub.
- Scout the route if need be, to be sure you know where to lead the group.
- Work out the event conditions: length, time (allowing for slower times with a large group), elevation change and grades, trail conditions and parking availability. Callers sometimes will want to know these details.
- Note any conditions that could cause some discomfort such as bridges, rope ladders, cliffs, bushwacking, and loose terrain.
- Try to find out if conditions have changed recently (roads, snow, etc.)
- Set the group's size — a smaller group is better if the trail is difficult or unknown or you are new to coordinating events.
- If you are a new Event Coordinator, consider arranging beforehand for someone experienced to help you lead.
- Estimate the travel costs. Passengers pay the drivers 5¢ /km on paved roads and 10¢/km on unpaved roads (with a \$2.00 minimum charge).

- Note costs such as ferry fares and rentals.
- Normally car pooling can be sorted out at the meeting place but sometimes advance planning may be required, e.g. when four wheel drives or bike racks are used.
- Note any special things people should bring such as a change of clothes or swimsuit. Be prepared to suggest suitable clothes both for expected conditions and for safety in unexpected conditions (cold, wet, injury).
- For overnight trips, decide if you will have a planning meeting before the event. This could be to arrange the sharing of items such as tents, stoves and food, and to make travel arrangements. For backpacking, checklists of items to bring are available on the Internet.
- For events off the beaten track, know how to use a map and compass and have a good idea where you are going. It is very important for exploratory events to be well prepared.

Taking Deposits

Sometimes deposits are required for items such as accommodations, kayak rental and campground fees. Remind callers that their spot on the trip is not confirmed until their deposit is paid and then collect deposits as soon as suitable.

Anything involving money can easily be controversial — be clear about all costs so that people know what to expect.

Tell people signing up that if they have to cancel from the event, they will only have their deposit refunded if someone else can take their place or the money is otherwise recovered.

Stage 2: Taking Phone Calls

The Club has prepared a checklist for event coordinators to refer to when they are taking calls from potential participants. Keep it handy by your telephone.

Items to Cover When People Call

1) Thank them for calling

Give them a warm welcome! Be courteous and enthusiastic! Indicate that Club events are for enjoyment and good exercise, and are supposed to be comfortable for participants.

2) Keep track of names and phone numbers

Do this on a separate page. This will allow you to inform callers if there are changes to the event, cancellations, a waiting list, etc.

3) Ask if callers are members or nonmembers

If they are a nonmember, tell them a little about the Club — how many members, the age range (30 - 60), the type of events we hold, the pub stop. Say they are welcome to attend three Club events, after which they must join the Club if they wish to continue.

4) Find out relevant information

This will determine what you tell callers. If they are experienced members, you can usually assume that they will be fit enough for your event.

If callers are new members or nonmembers, tactfully assess their ability, fitness level and experience relevant to your event. This is difficult if their experience for the type of event is limited or several years old. Ask if they have been on similar events recently or if they participate in other activities such as walking and running, and how often.

If you think that they are not suited for the event, suggest that they attend an easier event than yours. Most people should understand that it is better to do their first event and find that it is too easy, rather than find out it is too difficult.

5) Ask that friends they want to bring call you
If callers say they are bringing a friend, it is best to speak with the friend directly. Ask callers to have friends contact you.

6) Tell all callers the key event information
These include the starting time, event details such as highlights, length, terrain and amount of climbing, pub stop, perhaps approximate travel costs, the meeting place, etc. Usually events start at the lower parking lot at the Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue. For people who phone well before the date of an event, you may not want to or be able to provide details. Contact them closer to the start date to provide additional information.

7) Tell non-members:

- That you are a volunteer and are not an expert in first aid or survival techniques.
- That you need to be informed of any health or medical issues that are relevant.
- That they are responsible for ensuring their own safety and fitness.
- That the idea is to enjoy the event. It is each participant's responsibility to speak up if the pace is too fast or if they are uncomfortable in any other way.
- That they are expected to stay with the group and not go off on their own.
- That club outdoor events are nonalcoholic unless the Event Coordinator specifies otherwise.
- That they will be required to sign a waiver.
- The mileage policy.
- That occasionally there are unexpected costs during an event, like a flat tire or vandalism of a vehicle. All participants on an event may be asked to contribute a portion of the costs as a matter of etiquette.
- For trips outside BC, to purchase travel medical insurance and to bring adequate identification for crossing the border.
- What they (including you) should bring:
 - daypack
 - water

- lunch and snacks such as dried fruit
- first aid kit
- hat
- something to sit on — a piece of Insulite
- money for car pooling and the pub stop
- suntan lotion
- rain gear if it could be wet
- note that cotton clothing such as jeans and t-shirts should be avoided
- warm clothes including gloves and toque if it could be cold
- proper footwear — hiking boots are required for hikes — sturdy sneakers are acceptable for walks
- an extra pair of shoes or sandals in a plastic bag, to change into after the event, to help keep the car clean
- dry clothes in a plastic bag to leave in the car
- tools and a spare tube for repairing flat tires for cycling events

Provide a Rough Estimate of the Duration

If callers need to know a specific time when the event will be finished, provide only a rough estimate. Inform them that it sometimes takes longer than estimated and if they need to be back by a specific time, they should not car pool.

Dealing with Requests to Get Picked Up

Occasionally people ask to get picked up on the way to an event. Some events have been delayed because such people do not show up at the arranged time or place, so usually such requests should not be accommodated.

Create a Waiting List

If the trip becomes full, having reached the limit you set, it is useful to create a waiting list, especially for longer overnight trips in case there are cancellations.

If You Can't Coordinate the Event

If the circumstances change and you are unable to coordinate the event, try to find someone to

take your place. Call the Outdoor Event Coordinator for a suggested replacement if you can't get someone else to do it. *If at all possible, do not cancel your event.* If the event has to be cancelled, make sure everyone is informed. Call or email the Web Master and request a change in the coordinator, the date of the event, or as a last resort, a notation on the web that it has been cancelled. Call those who have already signed up and tell them of the new arrangements. Sometimes it is necessary to wait for people at the agreed meeting place, or to arrange for someone else to be there to tell them of the change in plans.

Stage 3: Packing for the Event

As Event Coordinator, you should consider packing a few items in addition to those you suggested the participants bring. These include:

- a map showing directions to the trail head
- a cell phone
- a compass or GPS unit with extra batteries
- extra clothing
- extra food and snacks (dried fruit, power bars)
- extra water
- a headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries
- a knife
- an event route map in a watertight case
- matches or a lighter in a waterproof container
- sunscreen
- a whistle
- a water filter for overnight events
- tools and spare parts for cycling events

Stage 4: At the Meeting Point

There are a number of points to cover when people gather at the meeting point before starting your event. They include:

- Fill out the headers of all waiver sheets that are to be signed.

- Get people to sign the waiver sheet as they arrive. This includes all participants, including the Event Coordinator. Please ensure that nonmembers read the waiver.
- Introduce yourself and have everyone introduce themselves.
- Count the number of participants.
- Wait an extra 5 minutes past the meeting time to allow for latecomers. Usually there will be some people who don't show up.
- Briefly describe the event, including the distance, terrain and amount of climbing.
- Remind the group that the event is for the enjoyment of all participants.
- Ask them to speak up if they want to stop for a drink of water or rest, or to organize their clothes, etc. *Tell them to inform you or the sweep if they are uncomfortable with any situation.*
- Remind participants to keep together; to not go off on their own unless they inform you; and to keep an eye out for one another.
- Remind participants of the pub stop and that there will be a fee for the drivers.
- Organize car pools by
 - balancing the number of people in each vehicle
 - creating a mix in each vehicle of experienced and newer members
 - ensuring that someone knows or can find the event location in each vehicle
 - asking if everyone wishes to go to the pub or meal stop after the event. Sometimes it will be good to organize a vehicle that will not be going to the pub.
- Tell drivers how to get to the starting point. For difficult routes or longer drives, give each driver a map and suggest a rendezvous point along the way.
- Count the number of cars.
- Keep track of the distance to the event.
- Be sure to keep the waiver form with you. If someone gets lost or injured you might

need their name and telephone number while you are on the event.

Stage 5: Leading Your Event

During the event, it is important to remember several key points, to ensure that the event is comfortable and enjoyable for all. Here are the key points for hikes. Many of these apply to other events such as kayak and cycling trips:

1. Appoint a "sweep"

The sweep should be experienced and have a whistle. Make sure they know their role:

- to ensure that people don't fall behind and become separated from the group;
- to help keep the group together; and
- to prevent the front people from getting too far ahead.

If you are not in front, appoint a leader.

2. Ensure that the group stays together

Keep track of the number of participants. Stop at suitable rest intervals, forks and junctions in the trail, viewpoints, and places with difficult terrain. Sometimes the group may break apart into two groups — if this happens make sure that the second group has a leader and that there are periodic "catch up" spots. Participants should not leave a hike without informing someone of where they are going.

3. Check How the Group is Doing Regularly

Count the number of participants at regular intervals to check that the group is intact. Chat with newcomers several times during the event, and ask how they are doing. Be friendly and make sure they feel welcome. If they don't feel welcome or comfortable, they might not want to come again.

4. Don't put people uncomfortable situations

Remind participants to inform you or the sweep if they are uncomfortable or can't cope with a situation, need a rest stop, etc.

5. Encourage Participants to Schedule Events
Ask them to coordinate a different event or to conduct the same event at another time.
6. Check with newcomers after the event
Inquire about their experiences and if they have any suggestions or comments.

Stage 6: After Your Event

Once the event is completed, there are still a few things to do:

- Stay at the destination point until all participants have arrived.
- Make sure that everyone has paid their driver for gas and for any other shared costs. If people change vehicles, the normal policy is for participants to pay the driver who drove them to the event unless that driver left the event early.
- **Mail the liability sheet to the Outdoor Event Coordinator.** Include a report of any problems, incidents or interesting information

We are always looking for articles for "Keeping Track" — especially informative information for all members. Consider writing an item about what made your event a great or awful, how to get there, other

Emergencies During an Event

If someone is injured during your event, assess the situation and determine the following:

- What you or other participants have to offer in terms of first aid knowledge, supplies, clothing, etc.
- How to get the person out — determine if they can walk or they need more assistance.
- If the situation requires time to deal with it, appoint someone to continue the event. Keep

behind only those who are necessary to deal with the situation, bearing in mind which participants are drivers.

If a person goes missing during a hike, the action to be taken depends on the circumstances. If you are organizing a search, keep it organized by setting time limits, meeting spots, etc. Don't make the situation worse. If a search by participants is not advisable, contact the RCMP who will contact Search and Rescue. Have key information ready including names, locations, times, conditions, the person's description, etc.

If you do call for help, making the call, having rescue personnel assemble and come out could take several hours. Don't wait until it is getting dark before putting in a call for help. If your call is late, you might have to stay overnight, so be prepared for this possibility.

One additional safety option is to leave specific information about your plans with a responsible person providing the location, expected time of return, contingencies, etc. See the "Trip Itinerary" form from the Provincial Emergency Program — the Outdoor Event Coordinator should have copies. If you do not contact this person by a specified time, they should obtain help. This approach is seldom adopted and is used primarily for small groups in isolated areas.

If your event is not well documented anywhere, it will be useful to collect some information during the event for future trips — a rough map, distances, times, directions to the location, etc. and send this to the Outdoor Event Coordinator.

If you need any assistance, or have any questions, contact a member of the Club Tread Executive. Their telephone numbers are listed on any printed Club Schedule.