

Backpacking Policies

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Trip Classifications

Easy:

- Single day hike in good weather avoiding inclement weather.
- Distance traveled not to exceed 8 miles
- Maximum participant to leader (including assistant leader) ratio 8:2
- Altitude up to 4000ft
- Example trips: Grafton Lake, Green Mountains, Catskills, Berkshire Hills, Taconic Hills, Lower Adirondack peaks.

Abstract:

Participants of an easy backpacking trip need not to have any prior experience in hiking or backpacking. Used to introduce hikers to the sport with minimal risk, altitude and travel distance is limited. These trips are only single day trips over moderate terrain in fair weather. This is the beginner level.

Moderate:

- Day, single night and selective multi night trips in fair weather conditions avoiding extreme cold, wind, and water when possible.
- Distance up to 10-12 miles per day
- Altitude up to 5500ft
- Simple travel and route finding
- Maximum participant to leader (including assistant leader) ratio is not to exceed 8:2
- Example trips: Green Mountains, Catskills, Berkshire Hills, and High Adirondack Peaks

Abstract:

Trips will range from beginner to moderate in potentially inclement conditions. Participants will sometimes need to have prior experience with hiking or backpacking. No high altitude travel will be done.

Difficult:

- Day, single night or multi night trip in most types of weather including rain, cold, and snow.
- Distance up to 15 miles per day
- Altitude up to but may exceed 7000ft
- Elevation gain of over 1800ft in 2 miles
- Maximum participant to leader ratio 6:2 or 8:2 depending on participants experience level
- Pack weights starting at 30lbs
- Example trips: High Adirondack Peaks, White Mountains, Catskills

Abstract:

Difficult trips will be those with either difficult terrain or length of stay. Participants should have prior experience with overnights and be physically capable of daily mileages. Weather can be potentially hazardous and in moderate winter conditions not requiring the use of snowshoes or crampons.

Strenuous:

- Day, single or multi night trips possibly at higher altitude in potentially difficult weather conditions including snow (not needing mountaineering gear such as crampons, snowshoes etc.)
- Distance of up to 20 miles per day
- Altitude can be greater than 7000ft
- Elevation gain of greater than 2000ft in 2 miles
- Pack weight varying from 35 lbs or more
- Maximum participant to leader ratio 4:2 or 6:2 depending on skill level of participants
- Example trips: High Adirondack Peaks, White Mountains, Catskills and other ranges around the world

Abstract:

Trips that are strenuous can include elevation gain, fast pace, high pack weight, difficult weather and altitude. Participants should have solid experience and have been on overnight trips in the past and in physical shape to be capable of daily mileages.

Leadership Classifications

Leader:

- Proof of current certification of WFA and CPR
- Proper clothing and equipment: Layering. Appropriate use of cotton. Sun protection. Footwear. Wind and

water shell clothing. Extra layers packed to stay dry.

- Backpack adjustment and repair: Sizing. Proper pack mass distribution for hiking on flat or steep terrain.
- Navigation by map and compass, knowledge of terrain that may be encountered and how to prepare for it.
- Use of common camp stoves: Fuels used. Priming stoves. Stove repair. Cooking in windy conditions. How to cook. Food to pack.
- Use of common styles of tents: proper location for water drainage. Use of rain fly when necessary
- Trail etiquette: Yield to those Ascending. Stay on trail. Collect litter. L.N.T (Leave No Trace)
- Backcountry rules and regulations: Current policy of intended location.
- Awareness and prediction of changing weather conditions.
- Water treatment and purification: Safe sources. Tablets. Boiling, Filters. Knowledge of how to use them.
- Leadership techniques for groups and understanding of basic group dynamics in a wilderness setting.
- How to keep clothing and equipment dry over the course of a multi-day trip in rain or snow: Keeping camp dry. Drying wet clothing.
- Basic winter wilderness snow skills
- Camping above tree line techniques
- Selection of qualified participants
- Experience in multi day trips
- Gone on at least one trip (can vary) with qualified trip leader as an assistant leader

Assistant Leader:

- Proof of current certification of WFA and CPR
- All above but possibly lacking some experience

Recommended Gear:

For single-day trips in fine weather:

- Medical kit
- extra food and water
- extra clothing
- light with spare batteries
- compass and map and knowledge of how to use them.

For single-day trips in poor (wet and cool) weather:

- Medical kit
- extra food and water
- extra clothing including rain gear

- light with spare batteries
- compass, map and knowledge of how to use them.

For overnight trips:

- Take additional warm and waterproof clothing for use by trip members.
- Spare batteries, extra lamp or light, spare matches or lighters.

For single-day foul-weather trips:

- Medical kit
- extra food and water
- extra clothing
- compass and map
- stove with fuel and matches or lighters
- lamp or light with spare batteries
- ground pad
- bivouac sack or light tent
- light sleeping bag
- map and compass.

For multi-day all-weather trips:

- Medical kit suitable for trip length
- extra food and water
- additional extra clothing
- compass, map, spare matches or lighters
- stove parts kit
- repair kit (tape, pliers, safety pins, etc.)
- spare batteries
- spare lamp or light
- map and compass.