

Winter Mountaineering Policies

Created by: Ethan Cantlin 02/15/16

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Trip Classifications

Easy:

- Single day hike avoiding inclement weather
- Distance traveled not to exceed 8 miles
- Non-technical gear use may be required, e.g. snowshoes
- Maximum participant to leader (including assistant leader) ratio 8:2
- Elevation gain around 3000 ft
- Example trips: Green Mountains, Catskills, Lower Adirondack Peaks

Abstract:

Participants of an easy winter mountaineering trip do not need to have any prior experience in winter mountaineering, but it is preferred if they have experience hiking. Easy trips are used to introduce hikers to the sport with minimal risk; altitude, terrain, and travel distance are minimized. These trips are only single day trips over moderate terrain in fair weather and may include instruction of the use of basic mountaineering tools: ice axes and crampons. This is the introductory level.

Moderate:

- Day, overnight, and selective multi night trips.
- Moderate weather conditions avoiding extreme cold, snow, and wind
- Distance up to 10 miles per day
- Elevation gain around 4000 ft
- May require crampons and ice axes
- Simple travel and route finding
- Maximum participant to leader (including assistant leader) ratio is not to exceed 8:2
- Example trips: Catskills, Lower White Mountains, and Adirondack Peaks

Abstract:

Trips will range from beginner to moderate in potentially inclement weather conditions. Participants will need to have prior experience with hiking or backpacking, and some experience with winter mountaineering. Use of technical gear is assured. Limited exposed travel will be done; camping will be done in protected areas.

Difficult:

- Day, single night or multi night trip in most types of weather including harsh wind, cold, and snow
- Use of technical gear, potential for use of rope teams; demonstrations from leader
- Distance up to 15 miles per day
- Elevation gain around 5000 ft
- Maximum participant to leader ratio 6:2 depending on participants experience level
- Pack weights starting at 35 lb
- Example trips: High Adirondack Peaks, White Mountains, Catskills
- Potential for camping in more exposed areas.

Abstract:

Difficult trips will be those with either difficult terrain, length, or a large number of days. Participants will have prior experience including an overnight and be physically capable of high mileages and long days. Participants will need to have mountaineering skills such as self-arrest and self-belay. Weather can be potentially hazardous and terrain may require caution. Campsites may be marginally protected.

Strenuous:

- Day, single or multi night trips in steeper, varied terrain at higher altitude in potentially difficult weather
- Distance greater than 15 miles per day
- Use of technical gear, potential for use of ropes with a qualified leader
- May require fixed roped sections
- Elevation gain greater than 6000 ft
- Pack weight starting from 50 lb
- Maximum participant to leader ratio 4:2 depending on skill level of participants
- Example trips: High Adirondack Peaks, Presidential Range, Katahdin, Presi Traverse

Abstract:

Trips that are strenuous can include steep elevation gain, fast pace, high pack weight, difficult weather, and altitude. Participants should have solid winter mountaineering experience and have been on overnight trips in the past and should be physical capable of daily challenges. Knowledge of mountaineering skills and risk-management is required. These trips may include fixed roped sections, use of technical gear, high class terrain, and camping in exposed sites.

Leadership Classifications

Assistant Leader:

- Is a ROC backpacking leader and has participated in a ROC winter mountaineering trip
 - Actively learning the skills from a leader during trips
- Have knowledge in the use of common styles of tents:
 - Proper location and orientation for wind protection
 - Site selection
 - Guyouts with deadmen
- Ability to read common snow features and dangers
- Have knowledge of, and access to, proper clothing and equipment
 - Extra clothing
 - Layering
 - Sun protection
 - Footwear
 - Wind and water shell clothing

Leader:

Leaders must meet all the requirements for assistant leaders, as well as the following:

- Knowledge of basic mountaineering skills
 - Self-arrest
 - Self-belay
 - Ice-axe use
 - Crampon use
 - Steep snow travelling techniques
 - Kicking step
- Have knowledge in the use of common styles of tents:
 - Proper location and orientation for wind protection
 - Site selection
 - Guyouts with deadmen
- Have knowledge of mountaineering rope teams:
 - Setup
 - Knots
 - Figure 8 (follow-through and on a bite)
 - Alpine butterfly
 - Water knot
 - Prussik/autoblock/klimheist
 - Communication between members
 - Safe zones (avoid unstable snow, cornices, avalanche runout)
- Have knowledge of risk-management and protection techniques for
 - Runouts
 - Fall lines
 - Steep snow fields
 - High class terrain
- Knowledgeable of common camp stoves
 - Fuels used
 - Stove repair

- o Cooking in inclement conditions
 - Wind, cold, wet
 - What stoves work when and why
 - Avoid cooking in tent
- Ability to plan backcountry trips
- Winter mountaineering skills
 - o Snow protection
 - Snow pickets
 - Deadmen
 - SERENE Anchors
 - SIMPLE
 - EFFICIENT
 - REDUNDANT
 - EQUALIZED
 - NO EXTENSIONS
 - o Setting up fixed lines
 - o Rock and ice fall avoidance
 - o Probing
- Winter wilderness snow skills
 - o Snow kitchen
 - o Snow cave
 - o Burying food when leaving base-camp
- Gone on at least one overnight winter mountaineering trip with qualified trip leader as an assistant leader

Recommended Gear for Leaders

For single-day trips:

- Medical kit
- Extra food and water
- Extra clothing
- Shell jacket and pants
- Light with spare batteries
- Compass and map, knowledge of how to use them
- Snowshoes
- Hand/toe warmers
- Lightweight sleeping bag (it's warmer than a puffy)
- Emergency bivy
- Stove and fuel with extra meals

For overnight trips:

- Medical kit

- Additional warm and waterproof clothing for use by trip members
- Appropriate technical gear
- Spare batteries
- Extra lamp/light
- Compass and map, knowledge of how to use them
- Spare matches/lighters
- Repair kit (tape, pliers, scissors, safety pins, etc.)
- One day extra fuel and lightweight food
- Snow pickets
- Extra guylines for tents

For multi-day all-weather trips:

- Medical kit
- One day of extra food
- Additional warm and waterproof clothing for use by trip members
- Compass and map, knowledge of how to use them
- Stove parts kit
- Repair kit
- Spare batteries
- Spare lamp/light
- Spare lighter/matches
- Snow probe
- Appropriate technical gear
- Extra guylines for tents

Winter Mountaineering Chair

The winter mountaineering chair shall be appointed by the Executive Committee. The chair should be familiar with mountaineering and should be able to identify and explain the use of ALL gear commonly used on trips. This includes knowledge of all the parts of a backpack and tent and how to repair them. Additionally, the chair MUST: 1. Inventory all mountaineering equipment at least once per semester. 2. Maintain and repair all mountaineering equipment as needed. 3. Develop and get approval for the yearly mountaineering budget. 4. Buy all gear as approved in the budget. 5. Organize and find leaders to run early season snow-school sessions. 6. Organize and find leaders to run a minimum of one (1) mountaineering safety session, on or off campus, per semester. 7. Revise the mountaineering policy as needed or when requested to by the Executive Council.