

## ANGELES CHAPTER SAFETY POLICY

**SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUPS, SECTIONS, AND COMMITTEES** Outings are carried out in nearly all cases under the sponsorship of a Group, Section, or Committee which is responsible for overall planning, selection and scheduling. No other element of the Chapter has the same timely and specific knowledge and opportunity to ensure safety. Thus the basic responsibility for outing safety rests with the sponsoring Group, Section, or Committee. This includes:

- A. Formulation and communication of basic procedures for leader and participant selection and conduct.
  1. Each Group, Section, and Committee shall prepare a set of essential rules and procedures for safe conduct of outings which will supplement the Chapter Safety Policy. These shall express the obligations of outing leaders and participants and assist the leader in keeping participants together and maintaining control of the group. A copy of these procedures shall be filed with the Safety Committee, which shall review and approve them.
  2. The procedures shall include a requirement that a sign-up sheet be used to check each participant in and out and to record persons to be contacted in the event of an emergency, except where clearly infeasible. Every leader and participant shall be informed of the rules that govern conduct on an outing. Any Group, Section, or Committee that conducts outings that involve special difficulty or in which special skills or equipment are essential to safety shall establish procedures for the selection of appropriately trained and qualified leaders and participants. These procedures shall be approved by the Chapter Safety Committee.
- B. Selection of leaders with adequate knowledge, skills, and experience as required by the outing. As a minimum, the leaders must be certified by the Chapter Safety Committee, and:
  1. Be a current member of the Sierra Club;
  2. Know the basic procedures for conduct of the outing;
  3. Be capable of effective control of the group during the outing;
  4. Know Sierra Club emergency procedures and be in sufficient physical condition to handle emergency situations;
  5. Know the areas to be entered and the conditions to be encountered during the outing.

The Outings Chairman (however named) of the Group, Section, or Committee plays a crucial role in planning, selection, and scheduling of outings. More than any other individual, he can influence outing safety. Therefore, it is important that he be selected with great care. He should be a well-qualified leader and preferably a graduate of a leadership training course. Special efforts should be made to keep him well informed on matters of safety.

- C. Publication of essential information in the Chapter Schedule and/or newsletters.
  1. Every outing shall have a leader and at least one properly qualified assistant listed.
  2. The requirements of a participant with respect to the strenuousness of an outing (such as elevation gain, distance, etc) and special skill requirement shall also be published. Each outing shall contain an indication of its difficulty level (as defined under Leadership Qualifications). Each Chapter Schedule shall contain a definition of these levels.
  3. It is required that all write-ups for the Schedule and for newsletters shall be submitted through the Outings Chairman of the sponsoring Group, Section, or Committee to assure compliance with applicable safety policies.
- D. Outing Leader Requirements:

1. With the exception of "conducted" events, two appropriately rated leaders are required for all chapter sponsored outings unless specifically authorized by the Safety Committee.
2. If two rated leaders are not available at the start of the outing, the event must be canceled.
3. Trips canceled for this reason may not be led as "private" outings.

E. Accidents and Complaints: 1. Investigation of accidents and complaints with action taken as appropriate. The Safety Committee will be so notified.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS

The leaders exercise control during the outing and are responsible for its safe conduct. This includes:

- A. Compliance with the requirements and procedures established for safe outing conduct.
  1. The leaders shall keep the group together and under control at all times.
  2. All participants shall be checked in and out, whether at the place of origin of the outing or at any other suitable place determined by the leaders.
  3. The leaders shall check that all participants are properly equipped and qualified for the outing requirements.
- B. Adaptation to the conditions that prevail during the outing.
  1. The leaders shall modify the outing plan as necessary to avoid exceeding the capability of the group.
  2. The leaders shall abort the outing objective if circumstances prevent its completion in safety.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAPTER SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Chapter Safety Committee shall be given the following responsibilities:

- A. Review and approve procedures established by the Groups, Sections, and Committees for the safe conduct of all outings. Procedures judged inadequate by the Safety Committee shall be returned to the appropriate Groups, Sections, and Committees for revisions.
- B. Monitor schedules of outings to ensure that qualifications of leaders and participants are appropriate to the requirements of the outings. 1. The Safety Committee shall communicate with the sponsoring Group, Section, or Committee and request alternative modifications of outings that involve requirements that exceed the qualifications of the leaders or participants. 2. If the above is not successful, the Safety Committee shall recommend Executive Committee action as necessary to ensure safe modification of the outing in question.
- C. Investigate outing accidents and complaints involving outings leaders. Depending on circumstances and steps taken by the sponsoring G, S & C, additional action may be taken by the Safety Committee.
- D. Distribute the accident report form for use on Chapter outings.
- E. Assure the accident reports are filed and that copies are maintained in Chapter files. The Chairman of the Safety Committee shall be appointed by the Chapter Executive Committee. The Safety Committee shall include the Training and Safety Administration Committee Chairman, the Leadership Training Committee Chairman, the Mountain Rescue Committee Chairman, the Activities Administration Committee Chairman and other members appointed by the Safety Committee Chairman as desired to enhance judgment, expertise and liaison functions.

## LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

Leadership qualification is an essential factor in outing safety, and a system of certification of leader qualifications has been established. For this purpose, different levels of difficulties and leadership requirements shall be recognized.

Level C (Conducted) - Certain outings are conducted almost entirely under external control, such as a concessionaire, ranger, etc. In these cases, the Sierra Club leader has little responsibility beyond administrative matters. Such outings require only minimal leader qualifications and need not be included in the certification system.

Level O - Outings at this level will be trips on trails or equivalent. Prior backpacking experience is a leader requirement for outings that involve backpacking.

Level I - This level will be used when outings include cross-country travel. Leader qualifications will include navigation and backpacking training in addition to the O level requirements.

Level M - Outings that involve Class 3 rock or snow travel requiring the use of an ice axe shall be classed as M. Technical training in rock climbing and snow travel are required in addition to lower level requirements.

Level E - Outings that involve Class 4 rock or snow travel that require the use of crampons for safety will be classed E. Leaders are required to demonstrate more advanced skills involving rock climbing and snow travel than are required for Level M.

Level T - A relatively few outings involve unusually specialized technical difficulty (for example, technical rock climbing, scuba diving or ski mountaineering). These outings impose unusual and highly specialized leadership requirements and certification of leadership qualifications shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Sections that sponsor such outings.

If it is probable that circumstances will arise that impose much greater difficulty (e. g. outings held in early spring), then the outing shall be considered one level higher (a level I outing shall become a Level M outing, etc.) and shall be led only by persons qualified for the higher level. Technical outings (Level T) already encompass a broad span of difficulties and leadership selection shall take account of possibly adverse conditions. Consequently no level in excess of Level T shall be required.

Chapter approved leadership training course requirements shall be structured to be compatible with the leader requirements for Levels O through E. Certification of leadership qualifications shall be handled through the Safety Committee. Experience and training other than that obtained through these programs shall also be recognized as a basis for leadership certification provided these satisfy standards established by the Safety Committee and the Sierra Club. A list of currently approved leaders according to the outing categories described above shall be maintained by the Safety Committee and circulated to the Outings Chairman for planning purposes. Any unresolved questions concerning certification can be appealed to the Safety Committee for settlement.

## PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATION

Groups, Sections, and Committees are responsible for screening participant qualifications according to procedures established for outing conduct. They also shall provide training as appropriate to outing requirements. Currently the WTC is responsible for general basic participant education and training and, thus, can serve as an additional basis for qualification. Groups, Sections, and Committees shall cooperate in training activities. It is emphasized that more attention to developing and screening participant qualifications is needed.

## SCOUTING OF OUTINGS

Currently scouting of outings is handled in a variety of ways, ranging from little or none, such as inspection of the roadhead, to completion of the outing by the scheduled route shortly before the scheduled date. The requirements for scouting depend strongly on the nature of the outing and the capabilities of leaders and participants. Thus scouting requirements can be left to the discretion of the Groups, Sections, and Committees, to be covered in their outing procedures.

## TRAVEL SAFETY

Safety aspects of travel connected with outings are not considered here. With some exceptions, Sierra Club policy is to accept no responsibility for travel to, during, or from outings, leaving that to private, voluntary arrangements. Some Chapter organizations make special travel arrangements, but these are largely specific to their activities, and safety aspects are best addressed by the particular organizations concerned in establishing their outing procedures.

#### **NEWSLETTERS**

The Angeles Chapter Safety Committee Chairman is to be on distribution for a copy of all Group, Section, or Committee sponsored publications that contain outings information.

#### **FUTURE CHANGES**

This policy is subject to changes reflecting new situations or accommodating Chapter experience in operating under it. The Safety Committee shall review the policy from time to time, but no less frequently than annually, and shall propose revisions to the Executive Committee. Suggestions for changes shall be directed to the Chairman of the Safety Committee.

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