

# CMC DENVER GROUP TRIP LEADER SCHOOL

March 2011

# Purpose of the Class

- Define steps to becoming a leader and begin the process
- Present responsibilities and duties of CMC leaders
- Does NOT provide technical training
- Leadership topics such as group dynamics, planning, emergency situations, environmental issues, etc.
- Identifies support systems for leaders

# Qualities of a Good Leader

- self-confident
- skilled in planning and organizing
- well-prepared
- competent in mountaineering skills
- cares for other people and the natural environment
- ability to inspire others to push for their best
- effective communication and group facilitation skills
- willing to show enthusiasm
- Sense of humor

# Why Become a Leader?

- Give back to club - CMC runs on its volunteers
- Get to know more people
- Choice in types of times of trips
- Possibly meeting requirements to be an instructor in some of the CMC schools
- Expand your horizons

# CMC Policies Regarding Leaders and Trips

- Leaders must be approved by the Group
- Trips must be approved by scheduler
- Minimum of four participants
- Official trip is trailhead to trailhead
- No harassment tolerated
- Alcohol policy
- No dogs unless advertised as such
- Children under 14 only with leaders permission
- No radios, limit cell phone usage
- Denver Group site prohibits firearms

# Steps to Becoming a Denver Group Trip Leader

- Current Denver Group member
- Denver Group Trip Leader School w/i 24 months
- CMC Trip Participation in at least 3 CMC trips
- Wilderness First Aid (offered quarterly, sign up in leader class for price reduction)
- Avalanche Awareness Class
- Leader-in-Training Trips (LITs)

# Steps to Becoming a Denver Group Leader (cont)

- Complete application and attach LIT evals, proof of required classes
- Send to CMC Office
- **KEEP A COPY**
- Denver S&L meets monthly and acts on applications
- Notification via e-mail

# Steps to Becoming a Denver Group Leader (cont)

- See separate hand out explaining these steps in more detail

# Approvals for Types of Trips

- Only approved initially for types of trips that you ask for
- Can only lead up to your hiker/skier classification
- When your hiker/skier classification changes, your ability to lead those trips changes
- If you change the types of trips that you want to lead, contact the office
- Can be approved first as a summer-only leader before taking Avalanche awareness class

# Priorities of Leader

1. Safety of the group
2. Keep the group happy
3. Make destination

**PRIORITY SHOULD BE IN THAT ORDER!**

# Responsibilities of the Leader

- Responsibilities of the leader
  - Plan the trip
  - Put it into the schedule
  - Screen participants
  - Greet participants at meeting place, facilitate carpools, get waivers signed for guests

# Responsibilities of the Leader (cont)

- Trailhead orientation
- Navigating on trail
- Maintaining awareness of groups needs during trip
- Maintaining awareness of weather conditions
- Deciding if a change in plans is necessary
- RETURN GROUP SAFELY TO TRAILHEAD

# Responsibilities of the Leader (cont)

- Bring closure to the trip
- If requested, fill out CMC Classification Change Form for participants trying to get a hiker or skier rating
- Completing an LIT evaluation form if you have taken an LIT on your trip
- File trip report and, if necessary, incident report

# Group Dynamics

- Purpose of a group is to accomplish a common goal together
- Individuals may have additional goals
- Leader needs to make sure that individuals maintain common goal as their primary one.
- Every group has a destination and a goal. We may not reach the destination but we'll always attain our goal: an enjoyable trip

# Group Dynamics (cont)

- Leader must communicate that safety is always the most important – both physical and emotional well-being.
- Positive Group Dynamics are encouraged by the leader's effective communication and decision making skills.
- Communication is key - pre-trip info is accurate, introductions at trailhead help each other bond, pace is appropriate, let group know if destination or route changes and why

# Group Dynamics (cont)

- Group size, pace, uniformity of the group, social concerns, weather can affect the group dynamics
- Be aware of why participants wanted to come on this particular trip and what may change reality from expectations. If it has to change, explain why

# Group Dynamics (cont)

- Group formation stages:
  - Forming – make them welcome
  - Sorting – figuring out other's experience, leader's style, etc
  - Norming – following guidelines (e.g., let leader know if you need to stop for anything, stay in sight and earshot)
  - Differentiating – participants feel safe
  - Closure – simple good-bye or perhaps social stop on the way home

# Leadership Styles

- Authoritarian (no time to burn)
- Facilitative (time to learn)
- When it is appropriate to change from one to the other
- Consider probability of a risk and the severity of possible consequences
- REMEMBER: Leader has ultimate responsibility for safety of the group

# Conflict Resolution

- Avoid it by building trust and confidence within the group
- If it happens, face it
- Identify the real cause of the conflict
- Try to see all sides
- Identify possible actions to resolve the conflict
- Consider using peer pressure
- The less you say, the easier it is to be an arbitrator

# Planning a Trip

- Choose an appropriate trip
  - Do not lead above your capabilities, cannot lead above your approved hiking/skiing level
  - Make sure the trip is appropriate for the season in which you plan to lead it

# Planning a Trip (cont)

- Determine what rules and regulations apply to the area
- Determine if a permit is necessary
  - NOTE: IPWA permits are coordinated for the Denver Group by one individual. Be sure to put IPWA in second line of trip title so scheduler knows. To alert the individual
- Determine if there are closures in the area
  - Seasonal closures for habitat in Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
  - Temporary closures due to trail conditions (i.e., Jefferson County Open Space hotline 303-271-5975) or fire danger or danger from falling trees

# Planning a Trip (cont)

- Where to get ideas for trips
  - past activity schedules
  - catalogue in activity schedule
  - your own experience
  - books
  - web
  - other

# Planning a Trip (cont)

- Scouting the trip
  - Preferably done in person if you've never been there in that season **BUT DON'T GO ALONE**
  - Conditions change by season and weather so scouting trip conditions should ideally be similar to planned trip
  - Note directions and time to trailhead, time on trail, check out good places for lunch, points of interest, pit stops, alternate routes in case of bad weather, trail intersections stream crossings, etc.)
  - If you don't/can't go in person, you can check current conditions by:
    - Talking to someone who has done it recently
    - Calling the ranger for FS District or Park to see if there are any closures
    - Other

# Planning a Trip (cont)

- Prepare for the trip mentally - think through hazards that you might encounter
  - Lightning – be off peaks before noon in summer
  - Avalanche – plan alternate route
  - Rockfall – plan alternate route
  - Medical emergencies (heat-related, cold-related, altitude-related, fall-related, general health conditions)
  - Weather
  - Other

# Planning a Trip (cont)

- Alternative plan
  - If road or weather conditions are too bad to travel to original area, think of an appropriate close-in spot so trip does not have to be cancelled
  - If unexpected conditions are met at trail head, have an alternative in mind that doesn't require too much travel
  - Keep in mind that the participants have signed up for your advertised trip so try to keep the alternative as close to that as possible

# Scheduling a Trip

- Accurate info, include pace, include any special equip like snowshoes, crampons, ice ax, poles, traction devices, etc.,
- Input to the schedule whenever you know when you want to lead the trip
- Instructions for on-line scheduling are on the web, make sure to save your trip to the activity schedule and monitor that it has been approved by a scheduler

# Scheduling a Trip (cont)

- System Sign-up vs. Sign Up with Leader
- Advantage of system sign up
  - Not bothered by phone calls from every individual
  - Participant without the proper rating is automatically screened out – needs to get your permission (e.g., password from you)
- Advantage of signing up with the leader
  - You can screen every individual – may be preferable for a multi-day trip, trip that does not allow an easy turnaround if there are problem (i.e., key exchange above treeline where you cannot retreat to your car), etc.

# Scheduling a Trip (cont)

- Confirm the trip within 30 days of the trip (set meeting time and place then)
- Close trip usually the day before the trip
  - If you close the trip too early because it is full, people cannot cancel through the system and others cannot sign up without calling you
  - Default is midnight the night before trip so you want to close it whenever you print out your participant roster or someone may have signed up after that and you don't know it

# Scheduling a Trip (cont)

- Can send a group e-mail to participants through the trip sign-up system – useful for reminders of any special equipment to bring OR if conditions have changed and you need to update any info

# Selecting a Meeting Place

- If parking overnight at RTD, check their fee policy
- Don't meet at AMC when museum is open
- Two free downtown Golden garages
- Parking fee at St. Mary's –reduced fee for CMC (use CMC Member Vehicle Tags) – reservations accepted - Paul Johnson: 303-995-7104 (cell), 303-567-1010 (home), [astro1505@msn.com](mailto:astro1505@msn.com)

# Getting a Sub

- If you are sick, do NOT lead a trip - get a sub
- The office has a list of leaders who have volunteered to sub
- Denver Safety and Leadership Committee is working on getting the sub list accessible on the web

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip

After confirming trip, before meeting:

- Monitor sign up and screen participants
- Monitor weather as date approaches
- Develop possible alternative plans
- Remind participants a few days before trips (optional) and let them know of any change in plans or special equipment needs

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip (cont)

At the meeting place:

- Get there early, welcome each participant and check-off name on roster
- Assure that everyone has appropriate gear
- Assure that everyone has a ride, mention that CMC is not responsible for car pool
- If there will be a refreshment stop afterward it can influence make-up of carpool
- Ask participants to tell you about their health concerns in private
- Get waivers signed by any guests

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip (cont)

At the trailhead:

- Make sure car lights off
- Circle participants to:
  - Discuss what to expect on trip (approx length, difficulty, describe route, when to expect breaks and lunch, set policies on stopping and keeping together)
  - Ask about who has medical training and survival training
  - Introduce self and participants (use ice breaker for participants to introduce themselves)
  - Request a rear leader **AND MAKE SURE HE/SHE KNOWS WHAT IS EXPECTED FOR THE ROLE**

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip (cont)

On the trail:

- Set appropriate pace and look for feedback from group on actual pace
- Keep in touch with rear leader
- Take breaks for water, pit stops, clothing adjustments
- Check status of participants visually and by asking
- Monitor the weather to see if any change in route or destination is needed (i.e., do you have to turn around early) or if anyone is having trouble from altitude or health issues

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip (cont)

At the trailhead again:

- Make sure everyone is back and has a ride
- Provide closure by thanking participants for coming on the trip, mention the refreshment stop (if applicable)
- Make sure that all cars start
- Provide hiker classification forms if requested –  
**BE HONEST IN EVALUATIONS!!**
- Provide LIT evaluation form if requested –  
**AGAIN, BE HONEST IN EVALUATIONS**

# Roles for Leaders at Different Stages of Trip (cont)

Upon return:

- Complete trip report (can be done electronically)
- If appropriate, complete incident report (need to mail hard copy to office)

# Trip Segment Scenarios

- Will be discussed in small groups during the on-site portion of the class

# Beyond the Ten Essentials

- Ten Essential Systems
  - Navigation Aids: map and compass
  - Sun Protection: Clothing, Hat, Sunscreen, Sunglasses/goggles
  - Insulation: Extra clothing, insulation pad, etc.
  - Illumination: flashlight, headlamp
  - First Aid Supplies
  - Fire Starter: Two or more types
  - Repair Kit: Tools, Duct tape, etc.
  - Hydration: Water, juice
  - Nutrition: Extra food
  - Emergency Shelter

# Beyond the Ten Essentials (cont)

## Bonus items to consider

- Radios
- GPS
- cell phones
- personal locator beacons
- outing-specific repair kits
- Advise your participants of any special equipment needed
- Know how to use any of the equipment is as important as having it with you
- Consider having extras of small things in the car, in your pack – can save having to turn a whole trip around early

# Emergency Situations

## Some causes of emergency situations

- Weather considerations may require change in route or early turnaround (lightning, precipitation, heat, cold, wind)
- Forest fire danger
- Falling trees
- Avalanche danger (always check CAIC page first for winter trips)
- Rock fall
- Accidents or medical emergencies
- Lost person
- Lost party
- Wildlife
- Forest fire

# Emergency Situations (cont)

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# Emergency Situations (cont)

- Determine if there is continued danger and mitigate it
- For medical emergency, use most qualified medical person
- Keep rest of the party busy
- Keep group together unless you are sending for help

# Emergency Situations (cont)

## – Lost Person

- First call person's name and listen for response
- If none, then blow whistle once, listen for response (two whistles)
- If no response, think back to when and where person was last seen
- Either keep rest of group together and backtrack to that spot or make plan to spread out WITH DEFINITE PLAN HOW TO COMMUNICATE AND RE-GROUP

# Emergency Situations (cont)

## – Lost Party

- Do not panic
- Determine where you are, then determine whether it is best to backtrack to where you missed the trail or if there is a better route from current location (keep in mind time of day, weather conditions, condition of party – physically and emotionally, etc.)
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from other experienced leaders who are participants on the trip. Remember that the safety of the group comes first.

# Emergency Situations (cont)

- Follow-up
  - phone call to 1-269-384-1056 (CMC toll-free emergency number) if there is a incident requiring outside help, serious injury or death,
  - DO NOT TALK TO MEDIA (refer them to CMC Office), Exec Director will speak to family in case of life-threatening injury or fatality), see CMC Emergency Contact Info for Leaders (card)
  - Incident report

# Incident Report

You need to complete an incident report:

- If there is an injury that would prudently require medical attention afterward (i.e., if it is recommended, whether or not the participant actually did so)
- If there is a death
- If outside assistance is needed to evacuate

# Incident Report (cont)

It would be helpful to the Safety and Leadership Committee if you would complete an incident report if there is a near miss. If anything happens on the trail that would provide a good learning experience, please report it, whether the situation was saved through good decisions or just good luck.

# Liability Issues

## Four Means of Protection from Liability from Simple Negligence Claims

- Federal "**Volunteer** Protection Act of 1997" 42 USC 14504
- State Good Samaritan Statute
- Liability Waivers
- CMC Liability Insurance

# Liability Issues (cont)

- Don't accept anything of value as compensation
- Intoxication is an exception
- Does not cover gross negligence

# Environmental Issues

- Leave No Trace Principles
  - Plan ahead and prepare
  - Educate your group about rules and regulations of the area you will be in
  - Walk on durable surfaces whenever possible. Be especially careful if trail is muddy to NOT ALLOW your party to walk off-trail. If trail is muddy, the party should be prepared to walk in the mud.
  - If you must go off-trail, spread out to minimize impact (but not out of earshot or eyesight)

# Environmental Issues (cont)

- Leave nothing behind, even bio-degradable garbage. Lunch garbage can bring new species to an area that is not indigenous and it can provide human food to animals that should not rely on it.
- Beware of the impact of noise on wildlife,
- Respect wildlife
  - Do not allow anyone to feed animals
  - Do not allow anyone to approach wildlife

# Environmental Issues (cont)

- If camping overnight,
  - If there are established sites, use them, otherwise choose area that has least impact and return it to its natural state
  - Camp at least 200 feet from water and from trail
  - If you must have a fire,
    - use an existing fire ring if there is one,
    - make sure the fire is completely extinguished,
    - gather dead wood from the ground (do not snap branches off trees)
  - Store your food and trash securely so wildlife cannot get it

# Environmental Issues (cont)

## – Human waste

- Carry out all toilet paper and personal hygiene products, even if they say they are biodegradable (wildlife may dig them up before they degrade)
- Bury feces in a cathole 6 inches deep, mix with the soil, and cover with soil
- Some places require you to carry out feces

Int.org – Leave No Trace website

# Scenarios

- Will be discussed in small groups in the on-site portion of the class

# Resources

- Denver Safety and Leadership Committee assigns a mentor to each Denver Group member who has attended the Denver Group Trip Leader School to assist and encourage you to complete all the steps and become a Denver Group leader. Your mentor should be in touch with you shortly after class is complete.

# Resources (cont)

- CMC Trip Leader Manual, Emergency Action Plan, Emergency Communications Procedure for Leaders, forms and more are available on the CMC website. After you log in, look for Leader Information on the left.
- Once you become a leader, consider inviting another leader to co-lead with you if it would make you more comfortable until you gain more confidence.

# Resources (cont)

- Denver Group Wilderness First Aid (required to become a Denver Group leader) is offered at a reduced rate for recent grads of this Trip Leader School. (Register in the class for trip leaders.)
- Avalanche School is being planned for January
- Other CMC schools are available to help hone your technical skills

# Resources (cont)

For those wishing a refresher on map and compass or GPS, USGS offers free classes on the Denver Federal Center and at REI – see

<http://www.cr.usgs.gov/gpsworkshops/index.php> or call 303-202-4689 for a schedule

You can also download workshop materials at the website.

# Suggested Reading

- John Graham, 1997, *Outdoor Leadership: Technique, Common Sense, and Self-Confidence*, Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers Books
- Alex Kosseff, 2003, *AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership*, Boston, MA: Appalachian Mountain Club Books
- Laurence Gonzales, 2003, *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why*, New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co.