

# Guidelines for Trip Coordinators 2021

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Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Section Updated – 2021/05

Thank you for volunteering to organize a trip for the Alpine Club of Canada. Below are reminders about how to plan and stay safe on the trip. The objective is for everyone to have a good time on a safe trip, including you!

Here is the [link to the guide for how to create a trip on the website](#).

## 1. Trip Planning

Plan a trip that you are comfortable going on. It doesn't have to be somewhere you have gone before if you are an experienced person, but for your first few times organizing a trip it would be best to go somewhere that you have been before. Plan something that you would like yourself.

Make sure the trip is well within your abilities. We carefully use the term "organizer" instead of "leader" to emphasize that we are volunteers and not guides. However people will be looking to you for guidance and possibly some leadership on the trip.

Think about how many people and what mix of skill levels would be appropriate for the trip. You don't want to take too many beginners along the first time you organize one. Maybe ask a more experienced leader to come with you.

A smaller group of four to six participants is easier to manage when you start coordinating trips.

A group of 12 is the maximum in US Wilderness Areas or National Parks. Consider using that number for trips in BC parks too. With much more than 10, you won't get the same feeling of getting away. Once you get more than six, it really helps to have a second experienced person to be the "tail-person". They can keep track of any stragglers.

Some other things to think about before you start posting on the ACC Vancouver trip schedule:

- If you are going to have a carpool where will you meet? The standard places to meet are St. David's United Church parking lot in West Van or at the Chevron just south of Grandview Highway on Boundary Road in Burnaby.

- What gear do you want people to bring? Try to add mandatory safety equipment such as a climbing helmet and harness for rock climbing or mountaineering and [avalanche safety gear](#) for winter trips.

Be ready to answer the following questions:

- Where is the trip?
- How long will it take?
- Where and when are we meeting?
- Who else is going?
- What do they need to bring?

## 2. Gather information on prospective participants

As a trip coordinator, you can review the sign-ups and click on a person's name on the list in the website and see what other trips they have gone on. In their profile they may have added some information on their climbing experience. If you are not sure from the website, you can send an email with some questions. If you don't hear back by the next day: text them. On longer more difficult trips it's good to call people. Make sure that they have the right experience and equipment for the trip.

If you call or send a list of questions here are some ideas:

- How much experience do you have
- Have you climbed any similar mountains?
- Have you taken a climbing course? (if applicable)
- How good of a skier are you? (if applicable)
- Are you a member of the Alpine Club? Membership is not mandatory for club day and weekend trips but it is encouraged. Priority will be given to ACC members first, VOC members second, and others third
- Can you drive? What kind of vehicle? How many passengers?
- Get their name, email, and phone number. A cell phone number is always handy.
- Ask them to confirm their emergency contact information in the system. It is really hard if we don't have emergency contacts in case of an emergency. If they are not a member you should get them to email you that.
- Make sure that the participants have answers to all the questions listed above in the trip planning section.

If you are using the waitlist option on the website, make sure you let them know ASAP if they can come. People like to plan their weekends in advance.

## 3. Send Confirmation email

A few days before the trip (ASAP) or as soon as you decide who is coming on the trip (if you are using the waitlist feature) send people the extracted spreadsheet from

the website so people can plan car-pools. See the [guide for using the website to create trips](#).

Send an email to all trip participants as a reminder a couple of days before the trip. Make sure to include your cell phone number, in case they sleep in or are late.

#### **4. Leave a trip plan**

Leave a list of trip participants, contact numbers and emergency contacts, planned destination and route, and expected time of return with a trusted person. Your Mom, wife, husband, partner or trusted friend needs the information in case of an accident or delay. We have had frozen cars in the winter and stuck vehicles on logging roads that have delayed our return to cell phone coverage areas.

You can extract a list of participants from the trip website.

You could add the link to the website trip information, so that all the trip information is in one file.

Tell that trusted person to call the police if you are late. I usually tell my wife to call 9-1-1 and ask for the police or RCMP if she does not hear from me by a pre-arranged time. I usually set that time with a couple of hours of buffer but usually set that on the same day I intend to drive back and not the next morning. Your emergency contact can ask them to plan for a search the next morning. Your contact can also request that the RCMP drive to the trailhead that night to check if your car is stuck.

It's a good idea to send the trip plan to all participants so they can forward on to their emergency contacts too.

Reference: <http://www.adventuresmart.ca/downloads/TripPlan.pdf>

#### **5. Review weather and avalanche forecasts**

The night before the trip make sure to check the weather forecast and avalanche forecast in winter. It's a good idea and best practice to include this in the trip plan.

#### **6. Print out the Waiver Form**

Trip Waivers Forms are available at: [ACCvancouver.ca](http://ACCvancouver.ca)

## **7. Print out the list of participants**

If there is an emergency, your emergency contact or the club executive may need that to deal with the police. On a recent trip, our group got separated and the leader stayed with some people moving slower. We didn't have the trip leader's emergency contact information or the other participants' names and ages handy. So ideally the leader should bring a couple of copies of the detailed list and leave one copy in another car.

## **8. Plan for Communications**

Most mountains close to Vancouver have some cell-phone coverage, but there are many dead spots. Cell phone batteries don't last too well if it is cold. It's a good idea to bring an extra battery pack to charge your cell phone. As you get further away from town, you cannot rely on a cell phone for emergency communications. The Vancouver Section has a Garmin In-Reach and a satellite phone available for loan. You are strongly recommended to take a satellite device along on club trips. See the [ACCvancouver website](#) for more info.

## **9. Policies, procedures and forms**

The Alpine Club of Canada has established policies regarding Waiver Administration, Incident Management and Reporting for all ACC activities.

All participants in activities sponsored by The Alpine Club of Canada are required to sign the Release of Liability, Waiver of All Possible Claims, and Assumption of Risk ("the Release"). The importance of this document to The Alpine Club of Canada cannot be over-emphasized. The form is provided for section trip leaders to print out and it is required that all trip participants read and sign.

You can find the waiver form on the [Vancouver Section website link](#).

## **10. Carpool and/or Trailhead Meeting Location**

Be sure to get everyone to sign the waiver before you start! Do it at the carpool location if its not dark or raining.

Especially on winter trips when avi gear is required: confirm gear on hand before leaving town! Get participants to do a final check in cars for tents, stoves, ropes, hardware, and any other gear. You don't want to have an embarrassing situation like arriving at the campsite with too few tents!

If people haven't arrived within about 5-10 minutes of the meeting time, try to get them on their cell phone. After 15 minutes, feel free to leave without them.

It's a good idea to meet for coffee at a spot on the way or at a major junction before you start off on logging roads. Make sure everyone has enough gas to get back to the closest gas station. Sometimes we go a long way on logging roads.

## **11. On the Trip**

Try to keep the group together if possible. Keeping a group together is often not feasible for larger groups. However you can make sure the group comes together at designated meeting points. Take head counts to make sure everyone is there. Having a designated person act as a sweep (at the back or end) can help. The key here is to not leave stragglers on their own. There are some firm rules that the group should adhere to:

- No one hikes down the trail or access route until everyone is off the technical part of a climb
- No one skis down the access route until everyone is off the portion of the route subject to avalanche danger.
- No one heads down from a campsite until everyone is back in camp unless it is pre-arranged with trip coordinator
- No one drives off until everyone arrives back at the cars unless pre-approved by trip coordinator.

Be sensitive to the needs of each participant. Some will definitely be stronger and more experienced than others. Use other strong members of the group to help make sure the whole group is taken care of.

If someone wants to go back because the trip is too difficult or strenuous, make sure they are capable of going out safely on their own. If in doubt, ask someone to go out with them. Instruct them to stay on the trail. Make sure their car is gone when you arrive back at the parking area.

Sometimes a person will want to leave the trip because they disagree about the objectives/route or they think the group is moving too slowly for them. In that case make sure they clearly understand and agree that they are no longer part of the ACC trip. It would be helpful to have others witness this.

If you have non-members on the trip, feel free to promote membership in the ACC. We have lots of great members like you and we are looking for more!

## **12. Post Trip Activities**

If you left someone behind in the area, phone to make sure they got home safely. If you had any difficulties with the trip, feel free to discuss them with the Climbing Coordinator or Section Chair.

Pass the completed waiver form to the Climbing Coordinator or Section chair at a social or mail it to the ACC-Vancouver Section 595 Burrard Street, PO Box 48241 Bentall Centre, Vancouver, BC V7X 1A1. We're hoping to get electronic waivers soon.

It is very important that the waiver form be returned. This is required to show we have a track record of having participants sign waivers on ACC trips.

Consider writing a trip report and sending it to the [WebHelp team](#) to get it added to website blog.

### **13. Emergency Contacts**

In the event of an emergency, the first contact is 9-1-1. The 9-1-1 operator will contact the ambulance service or RCMP, who will in turn contact a local search and rescue group if required for rescues or evacuations.

Also contact the Section Chair or the Climbing Coordinator as soon as possible. If necessary they will contact the National Executive Director. Do not talk to the media.

#### **13.1 ACC Vancouver Contacts:**

See ACCvancouver.ca website on the contacts page.