

EVENT COORDINATORS' GUIDELINES

Updated – August, 2020

These guidelines serve as a framework for the preparation and coordination of CORE events. The content is not meant to be a catalog of DOs and DON'Ts, but a fairly comprehensive list of suggestions for anyone whose proper objective is enhancing the safety and enjoyment of all trip participants.

These guidelines should be read in full by all who wish to coordinate events, while the highlights are offered as a quick pre-trip review of the essentials for making the best of every trip.

The initiative and efforts of our volunteer trip coordinators are necessary and are greatly appreciated by all members. **A trip coordinators' prime objective should be to maintain the highest level of awareness for the safety of all participants.** To this end, preparation, organization and communication are very important.

First time coordinators: Please contact CORE's Executive Trip Coordinator, either in person (at a monthly club meeting) or by email through the link on the [CORE Executive Contact Info](#) page prior to posting an event. New coordinators are expected to have an experienced CORE coordinator along to help manage their first event, and CORE has a mentoring program in place to provide assistance.

Highlights

- **Research your trip.** For a listing of useful phone numbers and Internet sites reporting on weather, road, camping, and trail conditions, etc., see the [CORE Resources/Links](#) page.
- **Post the event on the CORE calendar** as early as possible and include all relevant information, especially difficulty rating, distance and elevation. Click here for [calendar directions](#).
- **Ask questions** if you are unsure of a member's ability for a particular trip, e.g. previous experience/physical ability etc., in a positive manner. Inform participants whether you intend this to be a leisurely trip at a slower rate or a faster paced event.
- **Arrange a meeting place** which is convenient for the majority of people and make sure participants are aware that the posted time is the carpool **departure** time.
- **Note phone numbers** in case you need to cancel an event, in which case you should call all registered participants and cancel the event on the CORE calendar.
- **Check club membership** when signing people in at the meeting place. Arrange car pooling and ensure that each driver knows how to get to the trailhead. Provide maps if necessary.
- **Introduce participants** to each other at the trailhead.

- **Speak to your group at the trailhead.** Tell them what you expect on the event, give weather and trail conditions etc. If you have a large group, it is probably best to split into a faster and slower group, appointing a coordinator and preferably a tail-ender (sweep) for each group. Make sure everyone understands that no one is to go off on their own, unless this has been agreed by you, and that everyone should be traveling in groups of four or more. **Preset points for regrouping, such as all junctions** and a place suitable for lunch, reminding participants to wait there.
- **Make a note of the mileage** at the trailhead and inform participants of the cost, reminding them to **pay the driver** at the end of the trip.
- Fill in the Trip Report. Record all participants and trip details in the Trip Report and have all participants initial the report. Post trip, submit the Trip Report to the Executive Trip Coordinator.
- **Make sure everyone arrives back safety** at the trailhead **before leaving**. Once you have left the trailhead, your responsibility is over and each car can make its own way back.
- Above all, remember that you are all there to have fun; try to make it enjoyable for everyone.

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The Details

Choosing Your Event

Be sure to refer to appropriate guidebooks and, if possible, obtain a topographical map from outdoor stores, bookstores, or Map Town.

Also see the [CORE Resources/Links](#) page for on-line maps. Some guidebooks provide time estimates for the various hikes. You might also check with other members and with the club database ([Yodel](#)) .

Advance planning will help you answer questions that people may have, such as:

- Can I meet you at the trailhead? If so, at what time?
- When are we likely to be back in Calgary?
- What is the route like—well traveled, easy grade, difficult sections, etc.—and what are the latest or expected conditions? The [CORE Resources/Links](#) page provides access to condition reports.
- Are more challenging extensions available for those who want to go beyond the established destination? Consider the time of year and the elevation of the area or trail. Think of attractions like alpine flower meadows and roaring waterfalls in June and July, cool waters and high passes during mid-summer, and autumn colours later. Be creative in choosing events; our members do more than hike.

These might be points to include in your calendar pop-up window description.

Estimate your round trip time in anticipation of questions:

- Specifically for hiking, use this rule-of-thumb for the *average* hiker to gauge trip times:
 - 3 to 3.5 km/hr on most inbound uphill routes
 - 5 to 5 km/hr on a flat or downward return trip
 - adjust for steep climbs at 300 meters/hr and add time for stops and lunch
- Have a rough idea of how long the drive will be.

Determine the level of difficulty of your event, where the most difficult section of a trip determines the overall difficulty:

- Specifically for hiking:
 - *Easy*– generally less than 10 km **round trip**, with elevation gains 300 m or less, no steep slopes
 - *Moderate*– typically 10-15 km, and/or 300-500 m elevation gain. May have the odd steep sections and rough trail conditions
 - *Difficult*– typically 15-25 km, and/or 500-1000 m elevation gain. Likely to encounter steep sections as well as difficult footing such as loose scree
 - *Extra-Difficult*– As above, but off-trail (scrambling) and/or over 1000 m elevation gain. Likely to encounter exposed height conditions, route-finding, stream fording conditions.
- For snowshoe and other events, see the [Guides/Difficulty Ratings](#) page.

Remember that what attracts many people to CORE is that we usually take time to enjoy our trips rather than rushing to our destination. Plan for time to stop and look at the flowers, take photos, have snacks and bathroom breaks, etc.

Posting Your Event on The Calendar

Once you have your trip planned, post the event in the CORE Calendar.

See the [CORE Guides / Calendar Posting](#) page.

Before The Event

At the time of registration, make every effort to determine the general level of capability of each person. This is especially important for new people and guests. Ask questions in a positive manner if you are unsure of a member's ability for a particular trip, e.g. previous experience and/or physical ability. Inform participants whether you intend this to be a leisurely trip at a slower rate or a faster paced event. Tell participants about equipment needed for the trip, e.g. helmets, sturdy hiking boots, sandals for crossing streams, etc.

Also ask if each person is a currently paid-up CORE member, or is hoping to join your event as a guest.

Note phone numbers in case you need to cancel or modify your event, in which case you should call all registered participants and remember to make changes to the event on the CORE calendar. You may also want to give the participants your cell phone number, in case they need to contact you on the way to the meeting place or while carpooling to the trailhead. If you have agreed to meet anyone at the trailhead, stress that they must be there in good time and that you cannot hold up the rest of the participants. Also, request that they advise you if they decide not to come on the trip.

Arrange a meeting place, preferably one of our [designated carpool locations](#). Or provide directions to the Trailhead. Our policy is that the posted event beginning time is the time we leave the carpool or meeting point, but make sure participants are aware they should arrive earlier to sign in and arrange carpooling.

Check conditions in advance whenever possible, including water levels in the event of stream crossings, canoeing or kayaking. Note emergency numbers listed for the event location to take with you on the trip. These are listed on the CORE [Resources/Links](#) page. **It is best to just print that page and keep it in your pack.**

If you are unable to lead the trip due to unforeseen circumstances, try to find a substitute coordinator before canceling or postponing the event. Reminder: If you cancel your trip but fail to contact all who have registered, you must go to the meeting area and wait a reasonable time for them—otherwise they may be tempted to drive to the trailhead expecting to find you there.

For high-risk events, be sure that some in-town contact will alert authorities if not notified by you of your safe return by a specifically set time and date.

The Paperwork

A Trip Report should be produced and submitted for every outdoor event and training course. Social events or unofficial outings that have fewer than four participants may still be submitted in order credit the organizer for putting together the information for the event.

Print out a copy of the Trip Report to take to the meeting place. Each member and guest MUST fill in their name, phone number, and emergency contact information and initial as evidence of participation. The coordinator can fill in other event details and later submit the form to the Executive Event Coordinator for club records). It can be submitted in paper form or scanned/mailed to the executive trip coordinator or mailbox@corehike.org.

Print out several copies of the Guest Waiver forms in case a CORE member brings a guest.

* You can download both of these forms from the [Resources/Forms](#) page on the CORE Website.

At The Meeting Place

Remember that you need *at least 4 people* (including yourself) in order for the trip to qualify as a club-sanctioned trip.

Plan on arriving at the meeting place at least 15 minutes before the designated departure time. You should have a Trip Report form and Guest Waiver(s), pen, guidebook(s), and, if useful, topographical maps.

Have everyone print their name legibly and fill in the appropriate spaces on the Trip Report form. Ensure that guests sign the Waiver form and indicate the name of their sponsoring member, **who MUST accompany them on the trip**, and who should initial beside the guest's name. For both members and guests, the emergency phone number provided should be someone who can be reached that day.

Remember to check membership cards to see that, aside from guests, those registered are all currently paid-up CORE members. (This is important to insure the existence of a current liability waiver. An old member showing up by mistake could come along as somebody's guest if they sign a guest waiver.)

You may refuse to allow anyone not adequately equipped to participate on the trip, but in fairness be sure you've let people know in advance what is expected.

If the latest weather forecast is particularly bad, you may wish to make a last minute change to a similar (appropriate to those who have signed up) alternate trip. If nobody is joining the group at the trailhead, this can be discussed when everyone has arrived at the meeting place, while any who are uninterested in the alternative trip can still bail out.

Advise your group as they arrange car pooling to ensure that passengers have the same return plans as their drivers (e.g., returning early or late, stopping for supper, etc.).

Advise everyone of the "official" Google Maps distance of the carpooling trip, and the carpooling rate. Side trips or split distances can be arranged separately between driver and passengers.

Ensure that guests and new members are aware of our latest policy for sharing the cost of transportation.

Confirm that each driver knows how to get to the trailhead and is aware of any intermediate stops (e.g., Information Centre, gas station). Provide maps if necessary.

It may be a good idea to try to exchange cell phone numbers with a least one person in each vehicle in case anyone encounters delays. (You can circle these on your report.)

Count participants and cars before you leave. Make it clear to the others that they should wait at the trailhead or at a pre-arranged intermediate stop until everyone has arrived.

At the Trailhead

Wait for everyone to arrive. If some participants are significantly delayed, you can allow the first group to proceed, provided there is a minimum of 4 people with a competent designated Trip Coordinator. You must wait until the missing people arrive before you start, assuring that the trailing group will also have a minimum of 4 people.

When all participants have arrived, make a round of introductions and make a special effort to identify new club members and make them feel welcome.

If the group is quite large, or there is an obvious difference in ability, you should consider splitting into two or more sub-groups and assign a competent Trip Coordinator for each sub-group. Also, with large groups or subgroups, assign a tail ender if possible. More likely, you will want the group to start together and wait until the first rest stop before making any split. This is usually when the faster and slower people will have begun to separate naturally.

Instruct participants to wait at obvious points, like junctions, to allow the rest of the group to catch up and clarify directions.

Before you leave the trailhead, you may wish to discuss a potential location for the lunch break. You may also want to discuss possible changes in the planned destination due to impending bad weather.

Leave the trip report (with your route filled in) in a car at the trailhead in case of search and rescue emergency, but **do not** leave it in plain sight on the dashboard. Also, if you have made a last minute destination change either at the meeting place or the trailhead, it is suggested that your or another participant call and inform at least one person back in Calgary of where you are going.

Lastly, count heads before setting off.

On The Trip

As the trip progresses, participants may regroup themselves. Remind them to be sure that there are **at least 4 people** in each sub-group so that they can deal adequately with any emergencies (e.g., one person stays with the injured person while the other two go for help). **NEVER LEAVE ANYONE ALONE.**

Try to be aware of anyone who may need help. **Don't ignore anyone in the group!** Listen to and consider any safety concerns expressed by participants as you proceed on the trip.

If a sub-group wants to go beyond the scheduled destination, you, as the coordinator MAY permit this provided there are at least 4 people in the group. **Make it clear that they are fully responsible for themselves and that you will not wait for them at the parking lot.** Any necessary car pooling adjustments should therefore be arranged before they set off.

When leaving the lunch stop or final destination, be sure that no one has wandered off or is being left behind: Count heads again.

If a carpooling sub-group wishes to head back before the main group, ask them to leave a note on your vehicle to confirm their safe arrival.

Back at the Trailhead

As the trip progresses, participants may regroup themselves. Remind them to be sure that there are **at least 4 people** in each sub-group so that they can deal adequately with any emergencies (e.g., one person stays with the injured person while the other two go for help). **NEVER LEAVE ANYONE ALONE.**

Try to be aware of anyone who may need help. **Don't ignore anyone in the group!** Listen to and consider any safety concerns expressed by participants as you proceed on the trip.

If a sub-group wants to go beyond the scheduled destination, you, as the coordinator MAY permit this provided there are at least 4 people in the group. **Make it clear that they are fully responsible for themselves and that you will not wait for them at the parking lot.** Any necessary car pooling adjustments should therefore be arranged before they set off.

When leaving the lunch stop or final destination, be sure that no one has wandered off or is being left behind: Count heads again.

If a carpooling sub-group wishes to head back before the main group, ask them to leave a note on your vehicle to confirm their safe arrival.

Emergencies During the Trip

Many areas are part of the 911 Emergency System, however, in many Parks you may be better off contacting the Parks Emergency Services directly since 911 numbers are often routed to major population centers where the dispatcher may not be familiar with the area or nature of the activity. **Print and take a copy of the emergency numbers listed on the [CORE Resources/Links](#) page.**

Emergency involving one of the participants:

If you or another member of the trip has First Aid experience (and First Aid is required) – apply that. If no one has First Aid try to call for help in any way possible – i.e. send one or more

members by foot to raise the alarm. Or try to signal other hikers who may be in the area. If it is possible to call (cell phone) try various emergency numbers.

If the situation requires rescue techniques which may be beyond your ability or knowledge – again try to summon rescue by foot or by cell phone. **DO NOT PUT YOURSELF (OR ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE TRIP) IN DANGER IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY TRAINING TO DEAL WITH THE EMERGENCY.**

Emergency involving yourself – appointing a Backup coordinator:

As above – call for help – or ask a participant to do it. If it becomes necessary to appoint a back-up coordinator during the hike (not feeling well – unable to complete the trip for any reason) proceed as follows:

- If one or more members of the trip are established CORE Coordinators, choose the one with the experience best suited to the trip you are doing.
- If none of the members have been a CORE coordinator before, choose the person who volunteers and seems best suited – AND who has the approval of ALL of the members who wish to continue. If there are less than 4 members who wish to continue, they may do that but only if they clearly understand it is no longer a CORE event.
- If no one volunteers – or a volunteer does not have UNANIMOUS approval, you must cancel the trip and return.
- If you need to return but the group is continuing on, ask for a volunteer to accompany you. DON'T go alone.