

SAFE PRACTICES

Safe backcountry travel entails awareness of hazards that need to be avoided, mitigated or protected against.

Situational Awareness

Stay aware of what is happening around you, where you are, where you are traveling to, and whether there is a threat to you or the group. Assess the situation and take appropriate action.

Wildlife Smart

Educate yourself and the group on potential wildlife conflicts and how best to protect both the group and wildlife.

Pacing and Flow

Maintain a pace that works for all members, leaves some energy in the tank for emergencies and keeps the group together.

Transitions

With a significant change in the terrain (e.g. slope incline, forest density, exposure to hazards) take time to assess and discuss possible consequences and mitigation strategies.

Slips and Falls

Slipping on loose terrain, snow, or just falling over can be serious issues in the backcountry. Pay attention to your footing and wear appropriate footwear.

Environmental Conditions

Be alert to temperature, changing traction conditions, visibility and other factors that impact safety; take actions to prevent injury.

Group and Individual Energy and Dynamics

Constantly monitor personal and group member condition. Stay in voice or visual contact.

Team Work

Work as a team by sharing information, tasks and decision making. Be a good team member!

Safety Equipment

Adequate to deal with first aid issues, gear problems and survive if you are benighted. Groups must be self-sufficient, do not count on a quick rescue by outside sources.

Time Management

Follow your route plan and time allocations. Be prepared to adjust your trip to ensure you are back with time to spare in case of an accident.

RESOURCES

Weather:

www.weatheroffice.gc.ca

Mountain Conditions Report (MCR):

www.mountainconditions.com

Gear Lists:

www.acmg.ca/03public/resources/gearlist.asp

Trail Conditions - example sites:

National Parks

www.pc.gc.ca/apps/tcond/index_e.asp


Kananaskis

www.albertaparks.ca/parks/kananaskis/kananaskis-country/advisories-public-safety/trail-reports/

Copyright Association of Canadian Mountain Guides 2018



CONTACT US

 Box 8341
Canmore, AB
Canada T1W 2V1

 +1. 403. 678.2885

 acmg@acmg.ca

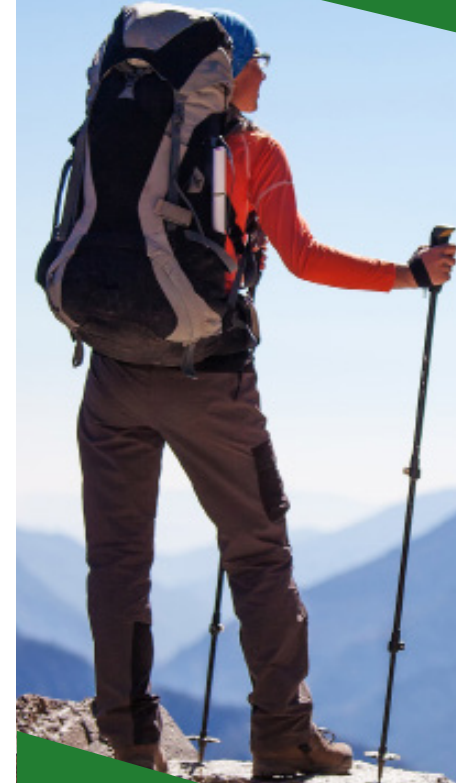
 www.acmg.ca



ACMG

Association of Canadian Mountain Guides
Association canadienne des guides de montagne

How To Plan A Hiking Trip



Trip Selection

Pre-Trip Research

Trip Meeting

Safe Practices

TRIP SELECTION

Picking the right trip for the group and the current conditions is fundamental to planning a safe trip.

GROUP COMPOSITION

Look at the group goals, experience and members

- **Group and Personal Goals**
Trip goals should be shared by group members. Group cohesiveness means a safer trip.
- **Assess Skill and Experience**
Group members need the skills, training and gear for the chosen trip.
- **Risk Tolerance**
Group members should have similar risk tolerance levels or be willing to adjust to a lower level of tolerance when needed by the group.
- **Group Size**
Efficient groups of 3-5 hikers are faster, easier to manage and can engage everyone in decision-making. Larger groups should choose easier trips in less demanding terrain.
- **Leadership**
Although the whole group should be involved in decision making, a designated leader can be key in case of an emergency.

Now that the group is known, research trips of appropriate length and difficulty.

PRE-TRIP RESEARCH

Based on group goals and current and forecasted conditions, choose potential trips and options. A final decision will be made in the trip meeting.

1 Conditions Research

- **Trail Reports** - When available, check trail condition reports. A web search will provide various sites that update this type of information.
- **Wildlife Warnings and Cautions** - Seasonal closures, group size limitations and protocols are in place to protect you and wildlife; do your research.
- **Weather** - There are many information sources for weather. Research and observe to narrow the field to those most accurate for your area.
- **Mountain Conditions Report (MCR)** - Real-time field observations from mountain professionals.
- **Other Online Sources** - There are a number of resources available to help with planning.

See "Resources" in this pamphlet

2 Terrain Difficulty

Choose terrain difficulty based on forecast conditions, group goals and fitness.

As weather or travel conditions deteriorate, terrain choices will decrease. Conversely, as conditions improve, terrain choices will increase.

3 Route Research

There are numerous sources of route information: route books, maps, online sources, as well as local knowledge.

4 Create a Route Plan

For your chosen trip, create a route plan including:

- Estimated total trip time
- Turn-around time and return time
- Hazards en route and mitigation
- Emergency Services contacts and procedure
- Route Options – local and regional
- If specialized equipment is required

5 Let a responsible party know your trip plan and options

TRIP MEETING

Taking place in a coffee shop or at the trail head on the morning of the trip. Include all group members in the meeting and process.

1 Review

- Conditions - have there been appreciable changes since your original assessment?
- Wildlife warning or area closure updates?
- Current and forecast weather - any significant change?
- Group well being - any change since your initial review?

2 Observations

Consider current information and observations made that morning. What effect might it have on your chosen trip?

- Recent precipitation amounts - enough to make travel or water crossings more difficult?
- Wind effect - elevation and aspect? Are effects prevalent in the area you plan to hike?
- Temperature - unseasonably hot or cold, will it effect wellbeing, do you need extra gear or water?

3 Discuss

- Have conditions or the situation changed since you selected your trip? Is the trip still reasonable or does it need to be modified?
- What terrain features should be avoided and what field observations will impact your route choice?

4 Confirm Route or Choose Option

- Review route plan
- Group roles
- Check group, personal and safety equipment
- Communication - group has at least one device to contact backcountry emergency services e.g. Spot, InReach, satellite phone, VHF radio

