



**Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY**



## **HIKE LEADER CHECK LIST**

The following information is provided to assist hike leaders with planning their hike. Following these guidelines should enhance the experience for both the hike leader and the participants in the hike. These ideas will be more or less important to the hike leader depending on the hike location, the other hikers in the group and the hike leader's experience. All Hike Leaders must be members of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

### **Several Days Before the Hike**

- Consider appointing an Assistant Hike Leader
- Pre-hike the route, with an Assistant Hike Leader if possible
- Check car park locations and car shuttle routes. Pre-drive the car shuttle route if you are unfamiliar with the area. Consider preparing a map and directions for car shuttle drivers.
- Complete the Hike Leaders' portion of the Hike Waiver Form
- Record road access points on the Hike Waiver Form. This is an easy reference if Emergency Services are needed. Use GPS readings whenever possible.
- Prepare any other materials that you plan to take on the hike, such as membership forms, themed hike handouts, business cards, first aid kit, map of hike route, cell phone, GPS, compass, whistle. In winter: Extra layers of clothing, Hand warmers, space blanket; In summer: Extra water, sunblock, cold packs and insect repellent; Plastic poncho to conserve heat and to provide seating and rain protection.
- Ensure you always have an Incident Reporting form (and pen) in your first aid kit.

### **At the Hike Meeting Point**

- Provide the Hike Waiver Form. Ensure all participants sign the waiver form then take the completed form on the hike with you in case a contact number is needed.
- Welcome all the participants and introduce yourself. This is the hike leader's opportunity to be a Bruce Trail Ambassador. Hike Leaders are "the face of the club". Ask if there are any beginner hikers, any new members, any non-members, anyone recovering from surgery, etc. Be sure to address the specific needs of these participants.
- Describe the hike: distance, pace, degree of difficulty and approximate duration.
- Ask anyone with a medical condition to tell the leader in private.

- Ensure that anyone who may require the use of their epi-pen tells the leader or a fellow hiker where the epi-pen is located.
- Ensure participants have the necessary footwear, clothing, water, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc.
- Check that everyone feels they can do the hike and, if not, suggest that people without the capability or with time constraints do not come.
- Remember that a hike leader may refuse to accept a person on a hike who in their opinion is not properly prepared or who they believe is otherwise unable to hike safely.
- Explain any procedures you wish to be followed. Some examples are:
  - Hikers must stay between the leader and the sweep.
  - Hikers must advise the leader or the sweep if they wish to leave the group.
  - Hikers must leave their backpack on the trail facing in the direction the group is walking if leaving the trail for a call of nature. The sweep will wait for the hiker to return to the trail.
  - Hikers must follow the whistle instructions: 1 blast- stay where you are; 2 blasts- come to the leader; 3 blasts – come to the leader quickly.
  - Hikers must not carry hiking poles when climbing stiles.
  - Hikers must walk close to the shoulder, facing traffic when road walking.
  - Hikers must follow the Trail Users Code
- Confirm whether or not you will be having a pit stop or a lunch stop on the hike
- If you or anyone else on the hike (ask them) has knowledge of flora, fauna, birding, geology or history of the area, you can enhance the hike by encouraging the sharing of that knowledge with the group.
- Remind hikers that they have signed the waiver and are hiking at their own risk.
- Assess whether the size of the group would make splitting into two groups advisable.
- Appoint a sweep who will remain at the rear of the group.
- Do a head count of the participants and reconcile this number to the number of signatures on the waiver form to ensure everyone has signed the form.
- Arrange car-pooling if necessary. An easy way to sort car-pooling is to ask that those hikers willing to drive separate themselves from the group, then ask hikers to line up behind one of the drivers.
- Do not start the hike before the advertised starting time.

### **During the Hike**

- Set a pace appropriate to the group and don't let the group get too spread out.
- Discourage people from going ahead of the leader. If hikers insist on leaving the group, advise them that they have left the official hike.
- Do periodic head counts, especially after any stops.

- Water breaks, pit stops and clothing adjustment breaks should be included at appropriate intervals in addition to breaks for lunch, sightseeing, etc.
- Ensure that all hikers get a break, and not just those at the front of the line.
- Assign someone to wait at intersections (be a post) to ensure everyone stays on the correct route.
- Assign someone to assist at stiles or obstructions on the trail.
- While a hike should be led as advertised, be prepared to alter or modify the hike if weather conditions warrant a change.
- Make note of any trails maintenance concerns or access problems.
- Complete the BTC Incident Report Form if warranted.
- Make sure the hike offered is as advertised.
- Just before the end of the hike thank hikers for participating and tell them about future hikes or upcoming club events. It is best to have this chat before getting to the cars so that you have an attentive audience. This is also a good time to mention any post-hike social activity that is planned.

#### **At the End of the Hike**

- Ensure everyone is accounted for.
- If a car shuttle was used, ensure that everyone is able to get back to their cars.
- Hand out membership material and application forms to non-members.
- Remain until all cars are on their way.

#### **After the Hike**

- Report any trail maintenance concerns or access problems to your club's Trail Director
- Follow BTC procedures if the Incident Report Form was completed.
- Send the waiver form to your club's Hiking Director for archiving.

#### **First Aid Kit - a suggested list of contents:**

Antiseptics: alcohol pads, benzoin swabs, antibiotic ointment, eye drops  
 Medicines: aspirin, ibuprofen, antihistamines – tablets and liquid, gravol, oral rehydration salts, dissolvable aspirins  
 Bandages and such: triangular bandages for slings, tensor bandages to stabilize joints, wound closures, gauze, surgical tape, moleskin or blister kit, splints  
 Scissors, tweezers, splinter picker, knife  
 Survival blanket  
 Medical gloves, breathing mask (CPR ISO Shield)  
 BTC Incident Reporting Form