



# CONTRA COSTA HILLS CLUB

## HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES

**Save for Reference**

**Hiking members are requested to lead hikes.  
To that end, here are some guidelines for leading hikes.**

1. **Pick a route that goes with the season, i.e.**
  - a) In hot weather, hike near the coast, or find shady trails.
  - b) In rainy weather, avoid trails known to get very muddy.
  - c) Have an alternative in mind in case the trail or weather is problematic.
  - d) It is recommended that at least 1 leader or member have a cell phone turned on.
2. **Always scout out a hike a week or so before you are scheduled to lead it.**
  - a) Sometimes there are trail closures, or a path is flooded, or the trail is overgrown with poison oak, etc. On rare occasions, a foot race or another hiking group could have been scheduled to go along some of the same route that you planned to cover, so you have a little “traffic” problem.
  - b) Choose a suitable spot along the route to have lunch. Ideally, there would be a shady spot with picnic tables, restrooms, and serenading minstrels (ha ha ha). Realistically, you may have to just call a halt sometime around noon or later, right on the trail, and make do with what you can.
3. **Appoint a Rear Leader or “Sweep” that is familiar with the route you intend to take.**
  - a) As a hike leader, you can insure the safety of your group by periodically checking to make sure the rear leader is in sight, because that means that no one has been left behind or taken a wrong turn (see Hiker Guidelines).
  - b) Stop at intersections to wait for the group to catch up, or post a volunteer to wait.
4. **When requested, members will call you a day or so before the hike** to arrange transportation or to inform you that they will see you at the trailhead.
5. **When you “Circle Up” at the start of a hike, have everyone say their name and count off** (so that you know how many people are on the hike and who they are).
  - a) You should then tell the group about the route you are taking them on and (optionally) hand out any maps or descriptions that you would like them to have.
  - b) Ask if there are any announcements.
6. **You should call a rest break about every 30 minutes** or whenever you have covered a steep elevation gain so that hikers can regain their resting heart rate, take a drink of water, shed a layer of clothing, or whatever.
7. **You, as the hike leader, set the pace.**
  - a) No one should be in front of you, and no one should be behind the rear leader (sweep).
  - b) You choose when and where to have lunch.

**The bottom line is that everyone should have a safe,  
enjoyable hiking experience.**