

CATAMOUNT TRAIL TOURS

Tour Leader Responsibilities

For a ski tour to be enjoyable it must also be safe. The **Tour Leader Responsibilities** below will help you organize and manage a tour that is fun and safe for all participants, including yourself!

BEFORE THE TOUR

1. When people call or email about the tour:

Screen anyone of whose skiing ability you are uncertain to determine if they have the skills and conditioning to enjoy and complete the tour. If one participant is not up to the tour, it affects the day for everyone on the tour, including the leader. Here are some questions that may be helpful to ask:

- a. What backcountry skiing have you done and where?
- b. What sections of the Catamount Trail have you skied and what is most recent?
- c. What is your longest ski in miles and when?
- d. Have you skied in deep, fresh snow?
- e. Where have you been skiing this year?

Ask if they have skied the section before. If not, describe the tour, indicating degree of difficulty, steep climbs and/or downhills, backcountry or groomed, etc.

If you or they are concerned the tour may exceed their capabilities, suggest they start with an easier tour that they might enjoy more to test their skills.

2. Sign them up!

If you feel they can comfortably finish the tour, get their name, phone number and email address and record this info on the waiver form NOW to save time at the tour meeting place. (Waiver form is on the website.)

3. Prepare them for the tour.

Advise participants to bring an extra layer of clothing and plenty of food and water in case an unforeseen problem causes a delay on the trail. Urge them to read the Skier Responsibilities and the Recommended Equipment List which are on the CTA web site.

Tell skiers the meeting time and place. Meet at the tour's end point and car pool with as few cars as possible to the start. If parking space is limited, try to find nearby alternatives such as a school, business, etc.

4. Prepare yourself for emergencies

Review local rescue contact information and possible evacuation routes. Be aware of cell phone coverage on the route.

Read the **Safety Plan for Tour Leaders** on the CTA web site.

AT THE MEETING SPOT OR TRAIL HEAD

1. Get there early so participants do not wonder where the tour leader is.
2. Make sure all participants sign the Waiver Form.
3. Introduce everyone (except for large groups).
4. Describe your planned tour route.
5. Read List of Skier Responsibilities. **Strongly emphasize two things:**
 - **Stay with the group.**
 - **Do not leave at the end of the day before checking out with the leader.**
6. Identify who is Leader and who is Sweep.
7. Do a head count and make sure it jibs with the number of names on the waiver form.
8. Ask participants who has communication, repair or rescue equipment and medical expertise we can use in case of injury and evacuation.

ON THE TOUR

1. Don't let your group get too spread out and be aware of how far back the sweep is. Skiing as a group increases the sense of camaraderie and greatly reduces the risk of losing someone. **The leader does not have to be in front and can lead from the middle or even the rear.**

Tour participants like to ski at their own pace which makes it challenging for the leader to keep the group together. The leader may allow a faster group to ski ahead and should **designate a "lead skier" of the faster group** and make it clear that:

- a. The "lead skier" is responsible for following the trail and keeping the group together.
 - b. The faster group should wait for the others at a designated spot.
2. If new snow requires trail breaking, rotate the strong skiers in the front every few minutes.

3. If you determine that a skier does not have the skills or stamina to complete the Tour safely and in reasonable amount of time, ask that person to turn back or exit early, if practical.

AT THE END OF THE TOUR

1. Count noses to make sure you have everyone!
2. Thank everyone for coming.
3. Make sure all skiers who left cars at the start of the tour have a ride back.
4. Send the Waiver form to the CTA office.

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