

Outback Hiking Club of Southern Utah

Final as of: November 7, 2023

“Effective leaders are competent, skilled, secure, and considerate. (University of Arizona Global Campus)”. There is no way to anticipate the many possible unexpected events a hike leader may face while leading a hike and no way to provide guidelines for every possible event. As a leader, you are entrusted to have the skills and good judgement to meet most any event head on. These guidelines are provided as a reference to hike leaders, and especially to those who are new to leading hikes.

Before the Hike

1. The Outback Club requires dues for membership. A portion of the dues goes towards an insurance policy that provides some degree of coverage for “Accident Medical” (if injuries occur on a Club hike) and “General Liability” for the leadership team. Our hike leaders are volunteers and must never accept any kind of payment from a hiker, (except as a contribution for a gas expense) that might compromise their volunteer status and thus lead to potential problems with our insurance coverage. The scope of this policy can be examined at the link posted on the Clubs “Welcome” page and cannot be adequately covered in these guidelines.

2. Be familiar with the Club Bylaws (especially Article X, Hike Leaders’ Responsibility) and Member Guidelines. Please post your hike in the format approved by the Club Director of Hike Planning (link is posted on Meetup) and ensure the final paragraph of your post includes the disclaimer, “Outback hikes and trips are not led by professional guides...”, etc. (Exact wording is available in the above-mentioned document.)

3. When deciding on the number of people on your hike, be cognizant of restrictions imposed by various local, state or federal agencies. Uphold the “Leave No Trace Ethic”, some areas have very fragile ecosystems. Large groups may be inadvisable in those areas.

4. a. Hike Leaders are the back bone of this Club and should be given latitude to bring guests/family on their hikes. In the interest of fairness to our dues paying members, please limit the numbers of guests/family members on limited hikes to no more than 20% of the total, (e.g., if a hike is limited to 12, 2 guests/family members of the hike leader may be put on the hike, please ensure waivers are signed in accordance with {IAW} Club Bylaws).

b. Other members may bring guests, if approved by the hike leader prior to the day of the hike, and subject to any restrictions in the Club Bylaws and/or Member Guidelines. Please ensure that members do not bring guests on limited hikes (unless, at the time RSVP’s close, there are open spots on the hike not reserved by members and the guests are approved by the hike leader prior to the day of the hike).

5. Every leader will have their own “arsenal” of equipment they want to have on hand in the event of an emergency. That equipment might include some of the following:

HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES

___ First Aid Kit; ___ webbing (where needed); ___ Map; ___ Compass; ___ GPS; ___ Electrolytes

6. *Once at the trailhead, it might be a good time to have a discussion with your hikers as to what to expect on the hike. We can't assume they have all read the hike description. Please also collect signed waivers and forward them to the Outback Secretary/Treasurer: PO Box 910536, St. George UT, 84790.*

7. *Consider assigning a sweep if you feel it is necessary. Enjoy the hike.*

On the Hike

8. *Lead your own hike, take charge and in most cases that will probably mean leading from the front.*

9. *On the hike, a periodic head count will ensure no one is left behind. At the end of the hike, if vehicles are parked in a remote area, consider ensuring all vehicles are able to make the egress back to pavement.*

10. *Single hikers are not permitted to leave the group or subgroup. If a single hiker leaves the group, the hiker is automatically and officially off the hike. This might help mitigate any liability for the leader and the Club should that person leave of their own will and subsequently suffer an injury.*

After the Hike

11. *Hike Report: Please generate a hike report after completion of the hike. It can either be posted on Meetup or sent directly to the Communication Director. The hike report should focus on events during the hike, and avoid controversial topics or anything that would upset a participant.*

Miscellaneous/Lessons Learned

We believe hike leaders should, (to the extent possible and consistent with Club Bylaws) be able to lead their own hikes without others second guessing every move. Over the years, there have been complaints/concerns brought to the attention of the Board that have made it necessary to add more detail and clarity to some issues. The following are some recent examples and will be added to as needed.

12. *Hikes should not be cross posted on other Meetup sites, e.g., posting the same hike on Redrock as has been posted on Outback would negate the coverage of our insurance.*

13. *No leader should modify or otherwise manipulate the hikes of any other leader on the Meetup site, (i.e. do not edit another leader's hike posting).*

14. a. *If a leader concludes someone who has signed up for their hike, is not properly equipped*

HIKE LEADER GUIDELINES

(either physically or lacking appropriate gear), to participate in a hike, the leader has the right to refuse that member's participation on the hike.

b. If a member has two or more previous no-shows, or multiple (4 or more) last minute cancellations, a leader has the option of denying the member permission to participate on future hikes. Additionally, if a member has an excess of hike sign-ups and cancellations, the leader may refuse to allow them to participate on their future hikes (this sometimes happens when members sign up on multiple same day hikes with different hiking clubs, looking for the best option. Meanwhile they are taking up space on the RSVP list so other members are unable to sign up for the hike). The Director of Hike Planning must be made aware in writing of any such action.

15. Otherwise, our members pay an annual dues with the expectation that they will be permitted to participate in hiking. Personality differences alone are not sufficient justification for excluding a member's participation on a hike. However, members who are disruptive may be removed from a hike. This includes members who insist on going off on their own or are consistently non-compliant with a leader's direction. In this case a leader should verbally let the member know they are removed from the hike and, if necessary and practicable, provide assistance to the member to find their way back to the trail head.