**WMC Evening Hike Organizers’ Guide**

The evening hikes are very popular, but there would be no evening hikes without volunteers like you to organize them. Organizing an evening hike is a great way to stay involved with the club. Plus you get to decide where we go!

You should have fun; almost all hikes go off without a hitch. However there are a few things to keep in mind:

* Participants on evening hikes have a wide range of hiking skills, experience, and pace.
* We don’t want to lose anyone and we don’t want anyone to hike alone, especially if he or she is new to the club.
* We should pay special attention to inexperienced hikers.
* Generally, we want to get back before dark.
* We need to respect the experience of others on the trail who are **not** hiking with the club.
* We need to respect the regulations for the areas in which we hike; in particular the group size limit of 10 in wilderness areas around Salt Lake.

Evening hikes are usually well attended, especially when the weather is good. This means that it is easy to exceed the wilderness group size limit. People tend to go at their own pace on these hikes. This means that the hikes can spread out, making it harder to keep track of everyone. On the other hand, there are a number of club members who very regularly participate in the evening hikes, who know the trails well, and who can help you organize your hike.

Here’s what you should do:

* Choose a hike that you know and enjoy.
* Arrive a bit early and let people know details about the hike.
* Have participants fill out the WMC release / sign-up sheet.
* Ask people to car pool to the trailhead. Ask drivers to make sure they bring back the people that they brought to the trailhead. Make sure that drivers know how to get to the trailhead.
* Don’t leave for the trailhead until the stated leave time for the hike.
* Make sure everyone’s signed up. It’s polite to accept latecomers.
* Know how many people are on your hike.
* It’s often best to leave the sign-up sheet and a pen on the outside of a car at the trailhead. Ask people who come down early to check themselves out on the sheet.

**Turn-around time**: For out and back hikes, decide on a turn-around time; a time when everyone needs to start coming back down the trail, regardless of whether they reached a stated destination. Let everyone know the turn-around time. Emphasize that participants must obey the turn-around time.

**Showing up**: Show up even if it’s pouring rain. Cancel the hike if you want, but you must be there to let people know the hike is cancelled. What if you have a scheduling conflict? Just call the evening hike coordinator or find an experienced club member to substitute.

**Hike selection**: Routes involving special skills or challenges, such as scrambling, excessive bush whacking, or very steep and slippery conditions, are best **not** done as evening hikes. Exploratory hikes should **not** be done as evening hikes. Remember that evening hikes are, generally, listed as NTD (Not Too Difficult).

**Participant preparedness**: Everyone on the hike should carry the 10 essentials (see the reverse side), use footwear which provides appropriate traction and protection, and wear clothing suitable for the season and weather conditions. Emphasize plenty of water, rain/wind gear, and a working flashlight.

**Counting heads**:

* Count heads at the meeting place.
* Count again at the trailhead. (People can get lost on the way to the trailhead too.)
* Count again at rest stops.
* Count again at the end of the hike (and check people off).

**Splitting into groups and directing traffic**:

* Find someone to bring up the rear and account for everyone. Sometimes it's better for you to be in the rear, in which case find someone for the front.
* If you need to split the group because of differences in pace or because of group size, ask an experienced club member who knows the hike well to organize a fast group and have that group start the hike early. Another way to split groups is to go to separate trailheads. Start a separate sign-up sheet for the different groups.
* The split group’s organizer needs to account for hikers in his or her group.
* If you have something special in mind, and the trail is tricky to follow, simply ask everyone to stay together or ask those in front to stop at known places along the trail so that you can regroup.
* You can also assign traffic directors at trail junctions.

**Weather related safety concerns**: This is mainly common-sense. If the weather dictates, change your plans while still at the meeting place. If you had planned a ridge top hike, but a thunder storm is threatening, change you plans! Instruct people ahead of time that if lightning should start, they should turn around, get to lower elevations quickly, and not wait under trees.

**Dogs**: Dogs are **not** allowed on the regular evening hikes. We schedule a separate series of evening hikes, listed as “Evening Dog Hikes”, on which dogs are allowed.

**Minors**: Children under the age of 18 are **not** allowed on the evening hikes. We schedule a separate series of evening hikes, listed as “Family” hikes, on which children are allowed.

**What if someone is missing?**

* Collect the group – don't lose any more people.
* Wait a reasonable amount of time for people hiking more slowly to catch up.
* Search briefly but carefully – don't take unnecessary risks. Look in places where people could get lost.
* Get the rest of the group safely back to the trailhead.
* Call the missing person’s number to see if he or she left without checking out.
* Call search and rescue.

**What if there’s an accident?**

* Identify participants with first aid experience. Locate the group's first aid kits.
* Stabilize the victim.
* Use your judgment about whether it's safe to move the victim.
* Never leave the victim alone.
* Make sure that the people leaving for help know the route. If possible, don’t let anyone travel for help alone.
* Make sure that they can find you when they return with rescuers. Make it easy for rescuers to spot you.

**Want to know more?**

* Talk to the evening hike coordinator or hiking director.
* Have a look at the full set of hiking policies on the club’s website.

**The Ten Essentials**

The “Ten E’s” are essential gear that you should always carry. Lists vary and this one isn't perfect, but it's very good. Yes, there really are more than ten items on the list, but hey, the name's catchy. Here they are:

1. water
2. rain gear (also used as wind protection)
3. extra clothing / insulation
4. extra food
5. maps and compass (and knowledge of their use)
6. sun protection (sun glasses, sun screen, lip balm, and sun hat)
7. waterproof matches or lighter
8. flashlight or headlamp (make sure in working order)
9. first aid supplies
10. emergency shelter (lightweight emergency bag or space blanket)

We strongly recommend that you:

* Put the 10 essentials in your pack.
* Always keep them in your pack.
* Always bring your pack.

Yes, that means you should not remove the rain jacket from your pack because you're "sure" it won't rain today. Nine times out of ten you'll be right. The 10th time you might get hypothermia.

**Phone numbers**

* Hiking Directors for 2014: Julie Kilgore 801-572-9838, Donn Seeley 801-706-0815
* Evening Hike Coordinator for 2014: Mark Bloomenthal 801-842-1242