



OUTING LEADER'S HANDBOOK

Alpine Club Of Canada

Montreal Section

Revision Draft March 2016

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Outing Leader's Handbook

ACC Montreal

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Forward

If you are reading this handbook then you have probably either volunteered to lead an outing or you are considering volunteering.

I hope that this handbook will provide some useful information for you.

First of all, THANK YOU to get involved in the Alpine club. As outing coordinator and to all the participants of your outing we appreciate the time and effort you have shown in organizing an activity. If you are thinking about leading a trip then this handbook will give you some guidance on what to do and what not to do.

Outings are at the heart of Alpine club activities. They allow the members to enjoy the mountains with like-minded individuals and, importantly, are one of the ways that the club introduces people to the mountains. It is important that the outings are properly organised because, for new members, these outings can make or break someone's interest in the mountains, and for the established members, a poorly organised outing can be unpleasant or even dangerous.

Hopefully, with the help of the guidelines in these pages, you and the participants will enjoy your outing.

If you have any questions please contact me, or one of the other members of the executive. Contact information for them is on the website. <http://dev.accmontreal.ca/>

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1. Introduction

Part of the mission statement of the Alpine Club of Canada Montreal Section is to encourage and promote responsible practice of recreational mountain-related activities.

One of the ways that this is accomplished is through section outings. Well-organised outings allow section members to recreate safely, responsibly and enjoyably, to develop their technical and leadership skills, and to learn from others. As such, outings are an essential part of the club's activities and this handbook has been written to assist outings leaders in planning section outings to ensure that they achieve the aims of the mission statement.

This handbook can only hope to produce guidelines to help outings organisers with their planning. It is covering activities as diverse as rock climbing and back-country skiing, and difficulty levels from a beginner hike up Cascade mountain to a back-country ski and overnight winter camping expedition to the White mountains.

Each outing has its own individual requirements which will require different amounts of planning and equipment. Some of the guidelines in this document may not be applicable to your outing, but equally some specialized requirements for particular outings may not be included so do try to think broadly about the outing and in particular consider some "What if this happened" scenarios and make sure that you have scope for contingency plans.

2. Outing Planning

With the intro out of the way let's get down to planning the outing...

Outing Selection

- Usually this will be your choice, but you may be asked to lead an outing by someone who is unable to lead their outing due to other last minute commitments.
- In either situation the same steps apply, but hopefully if you have inherited the outing then at least some of the work should have been done.

Activity

- The ACC Montreal Section promotes recreational mountain-related activities such as mountaineering, backpacking, hiking, rock and ice climbing, cross-country, back-country and telemark skiing, and snow-shoeing.
- Outings generally should be mountain-related, but other activities of interest to the membership may be considered.



Skills

- Select an outing for which you have a high level of competence in the technical skills.
- Outing leaders are responsible for planning, coordination and organization of their outing. Should a problem or emergency arise the outing leader must act quickly and decisively to safeguard the participants of the outing.

Information

- It's best to choose a route or location that you have been to before so that you have firsthand knowledge of the navigation and the difficulties.
- If you are unfamiliar with the area or route that you will be taking, then find out as much as you can about the physical and technical demands that will be required.
- Read the appropriate guidebooks and talk to experienced people to obtain this information, and consider doing a trial run of the route you intend taking.

Access

- Check up on the local access requirements for the area where you are going. There may be seasonal or temporary closures, limitation on group sizes, user fees to pay, or registration requirements.

Difficulty Level

- The outing needs to be given a difficulty level. In order to keep some consistency there are some guidelines for rating an outing in appendix 2. Also look at previous outings schedules to find out how other similar outings have been rated.

Outings Schedule

- Contact the Outings Coordinator to discuss your planned outing and get a spot on the outing schedule. The schedule is updated on an on-going basis so ideas for outings are welcome at any time.

3. Getting The Word Out

Once the outing is on the outings schedule it is an official ACC Montreal outing and will be publicized on the ACC Montreal website. You need to make sure that you are ready when people contact you with questions about the outing or want to sign-up for the outing.

Numbers

- You can put a maximum limit on the number of people on the outing. This may be as simple as the maximum number of hut spaces available or the maximum group size allowed in the area



where you are going, otherwise it should be set as the number of people who can complete the outing safely (remembering that large groups move slower and the communication lines are longer).

Accommodation

- If necessary, make arrangements for hut-space, campsites, etc.

Publicity

- Send a letter to the Coordinator which publishes the announcement on the website. Thereafter, it is possible to advertise on Facebook the ACC Montréal group
- Its generally best to send the message out around one week to ten days in advance, but for some outings you may need to finalise the list of participants earlier if you need to book hut spaces etc.

4. Signing People Up

Typically when people contact you, you may need to get some information from them such as whether they have the necessary equipment, their ability levels and their experience.

Make sure that you have a list of questions that you need to ask and make sure that you make a list of the names of people who contact you and their contact details.

Ability Levels

- Ensure that the participants have sufficient ability for the outing. Remember that groups with widely varying ability levels have to move at the pace of the slowest and set objectives based on the weaker members. This can be frustrating for the stronger members of the party.

Membership of ACC Montreal

- All of the participants must be members of the ACC Montreal section or one of the other ACC sections. We also welcome prospective new members (one time).
- Details about joining the ACC are on the web-site www.accmontreal.ca or contact the Membership Coordinator at membership@alpineclubmontreal.ca.

Equipment

- Make sure that you and the participants have all of the necessary equipment to complete the outing safely and know how to use it.
- As guidance for the equipment needed for certain types of outings, see the equipment lists in appendix 1.
- For some suggested places where you can rent equipment, see appendix 3.



- The ACC Montreal section has a limited amount of equipment which can be borrowed by ACC members for ACC Montreal outings. Contact the Outings Coordinator to arrange for loan of the equipment.

Group Splitting

- If there is a possibility of the group splitting up due to differing abilities or conditions, make sure that there are enough experienced people in the party to lead the sub-divided group.

Meeting-up

- Arrange a meeting place.
- It is not your responsibility to arrange transport for the participants, but it is often helpful if you can make sure the participants are in touch to arrange car-pooling etc.
- It is your responsibility to make sure that everyone knows where and when to meet and has adequate directions to get there.

Conditions

- Check on local conditions (weather, trails etc.) on the days leading up to the outing so that you know what to expect or if you will need to change your route.

5. On The Outing

Now to the outing itself

- Make sure that everyone reads, understands and signs an ACC waiver. Copies of the ACC waiver are available in English and in French on the ACC Montreal web-site <http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Waiver-2014-08122014-1.pdf>
- Please print them out **EXACTLY AS THEY ARE WITH NO CHANGES** and ask all participants to sign them.
- Please read the letter to ACC Section Leaders in appendix 5 which explains why it is so important for participants to sign the waiver.
- Make sure that everyone has all of the required equipment and uses it when required. Make sure that you have all the necessary group equipment and that it is distributed around the group so that one person does not end up carrying all of it.
- Make sure that everyone has water with them.
- Throughout the outing you should follow the seven Leave No Trace principles and the ACC Wilderness Code of Ethics and encourage the participants to do likewise.
- Appendix 6 has more information on the LNT principles and the environment.



- Keep the group together and make sure that you keep track of all the participants. If you have to split the group for some reason make sure that each group has a competent leader and that you arrange a meeting point for later in the day, or a contact system so that you know that all groups have successfully completed the outing.
- Assign a competent lead (at the front of the group to set a steady pace that people can keep up with) and tail (at the back of the group to round up stragglers).
- Make sure that participants use safety equipment where it is warranted (eg helmets, ropes, harnesses).
- Make sure that you consider the safety of the group when making decisions. Where practical involve the participants of the group in decisions during the outing.

6. After the Outing

- Report any accident or serious incident that occurred on your outing to the section Chairperson, the Outings Coordinator, and/or the National Office Executive Director as soon as possible. Contact the outings Coordinator as outings@alpineclubmontreal.ca
- Make sure that you return any equipment borrowed from the section. If anything was damaged or if anything was in poor condition or did not work please tell the Outings Coordinator so that he/she can arrange for replacement or repair.
- Please think about writing a few words or ask one of the participants to write something. Your inputs are gratefully received and are an important record of what the club achieves. It isn't necessary to write a long detailed report – a few lines for the website is fine. Send it and photos at outings@alpineclubmontreal.ca
- Make sure that the original copies of the signed waivers get to the Outings Coordinator for filing. All of the waivers must be kept for at least five years for legal reasons.
- Please contact the Outings Coordinator to tell them that the outing did go ahead and give them the number of people who took part.

And finally bask in the glory of a successfully run outing !!!



Appendix 1
Equipment requirements

The following list is the group or specialized equipment which may be required for particular activities. It is for guidance only. It may include items that are not required for a particular outing, or equally may not include some items which are necessary. Please use good judgement when you decide what equipment is required.

	Hiking	Rock Climbing	Ice Climbing	Cross-country Skiing	Back-country or Telemark Skiing	Snow Shoeing
First aid kit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bivy Tarp	If required	If required	If required		If required	If required
Rope	Slides/Scrambles	Yes	Yes			
Climbing Rack	Slides/Scrambles	Yes	Yes			
Ski Repair Kit				Yes	Yes	
Ski waxes				Yes	Yes	
Map	Yes	If required	If required	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compass	Yes	If required	If required	If required	Yes	Yes
GPS	Optional			Optional	Optional	Optional
Guidebook	If required	Yes	Yes			

Items such as water, food, suitable clothes, footwear, personal safety items such as climbing harness, and personal equipment such as skis are individual's responsibility and are not included on the above list.



Appendix 2
Levels of difficulty

As a guide to help outing leaders and members of the ACC Montreal section with the difficulty levels for outings, the following scale provides a basis for leaders to describe the outing difficulty level, and helps participants to choose outings within their capabilities.

Please note that the scale is for guidance only. Unique features of an outing may change the level of difficulty of an outing.

Activity	Level	Description
Rock Climbing	Beginner	Top roping up to 5.6 Single pitch leading up to 5.4
	Intermediate	Top roping up to 5.9 Sport climbing up to 5.9 Single pitch leading up to 5.7 Multipitch leading up to 5.4
	Strong Intermediate	Single pitch leading up to 5.10 Multipitch leading up to 5.8
	Advanced	Single pitch 5.10 and above Multipitch 5.8 and above
Note that remote access or multi-pitch climbs tend to increase the seriousness of the outing.		



Hiking	Beginner	8 km or less, under 4 hours Good trails with small elevation gain
	Intermediate	8 to 16 km, 4 to 8 hours Mostly on trails with significant elevation gain and some steep sections
	Strong Intermediate	Over 16 km, over 8 hours Trails with some bush-wacking or slides Significant elevation gain with steep ascents and/or descents Easy overnights
	Advanced	Over 16 km, over 8 hours Trails/Bush-wacking/Slides with significant elevation gain and steep ascents and/or descents Long overnights



Cross-country skiing	Beginner	Less than 10 km Groomed trails Typically green and blue trails at X-C ski areas.
	Intermediate	10 to 20 km Groomed with some ungroomed trails Typically blue or easy black trails at X-C ski areas
	Strong Intermediate	20 km or more Mostly ungroomed trails with some steep ascents and descents Moderate overnights
	Advanced	30 km or more Ungroomed trails with steep ascents and descents and challenging sections Long overnights
Telemark skiing	Beginner	Less than 8 km Wide trails allowing turns on the descents. Generally shallow descents Green and Blue runs at ski areas
	Intermediate	8 to 16 km Narrow sections of trail limiting the freedom for turns on the descents. Some steep descents Blue and Black runs at ski areas
	Strong Intermediate	16 km or more Double black diamond runs at ski areas Narrow trails with some steep descents Moderate overnights
	Advanced	20 km or more Narrow trails providing challenging terrain on descents. Steep descents Long overnights



	Where an outing is open to Telemark and Cross-country skiers the Cross-country level will usually be at least one level higher than the Telemark level.	
Ice Climbing	Beginner	Single pitch & top roped Up to grade III ice
	Intermediate	Single pitch up to grade IV ice Multipitch up to grade III ice
	Advanced	Single pitch climbs above grade IV ice Intermediate and above multipitch climbs
Snow Shoeing	Beginner	8 km or less, under 4 hours Good trails with small elevation gain
	Intermediate	8 to 16 km, 4 to 8 hours Mostly on trails with significant elevation gain and some steep sections
	Strong Intermediate	Over 16 km, over 8 hours Trails with some bush-wacking Significant elevation gain with steep ascents and/or descents Easy overnights
	Advanced	Over 16 km, over 8 hours Trails/Bush-wacking with significant elevation gain and steep ascents and/or descents Long overnights



Appendix 3
Rental Locations

The following is a list of outdoor stores where equipment may be available for rent. Inclusion on this list is not a recommendation for using the locations, nor are all places where equipment is available for rent included on this list. Please choose reputable locations when renting equipment for club outings as the success or failure of equipment does affect the enjoyment and safety of the outing.

La Cordée boutique (anciennement le Yéti)	La Cordée boutique (anciennement le Yéti)
5190 Boul Ste-Laurent	5190 Boul Ste-Laurent
Montréal QC	Montréal QC
Tel: 514-271-0773	Tel: 514-271-0773
http://www.lacordee.com/en/la-cordee-boutique?__from_store=fr	http://www.lacordee.com/fr/la-cordee-boutique



Appendix 4
ACC Montreal Equipment

The following is a list of equipment which may be borrowed for official ACC Montreal section outings.

Contact the Outings Coordinator to obtain the equipment.

While the equipment is in your care please take good care of it. Much of it is safety equipment and damage to the equipment can affect the safety of others. If you notice any damage to the equipment, or if it is damaged on your outing, please tell the Outings Coordinator when you return it so that the equipment may be repaired or replaced.

Email : outings@alpineclubmontreal.ca



Appendix 5
Letter to Leaders

This letter explains the waivers and why it is so important that they are signed by all participants.

To: ACC Section Leaders, Instructors and Staff ACC Section Leaders
From: ACC National Office
Date: June 24, 1998
Subject: Release, Waiver, and Assumption of Risk

You are required to have participants in activities sponsored by The Alpine Club of Canada sign the Release, Waiver and Assumption of Risk (hereinafter referred to as the Release). The importance of this document to The Alpine Club of Canada cannot be over emphasized. The way you conduct yourself in dealing with participants signing the Release is of great importance to whether the document "will stand up in court" later on.

As a result, the following are some guidelines that you should follow when having participants execute the Release:

1. You must ensure that the participant reads the Release before signing and dating it. Often people assume that documents like this are just a lot of "legal mumbo-jumbo" and they wouldn't understand it any way even if they read it. This Release is easy to read and is in plain English/French. You must emphasize to the participants the importance of reading it and understanding it before signing. Be sure that you tell each participant that if they do not sign the Release they will not be able to participate in the Activity.

2. You must ask each participant whether they have any questions about the meaning of the Release and, if they do have any questions, you should do your best to answer them. If you can't, questions should be referred to Bruce Keith, Executive Director of The Alpine Club of Canada who will be able to explain the document in detail.

3. The participant cannot change any terms of the Release prior to signing it. Pay careful attention to what the participant is doing and if he or she tries to change any of the terms you must advise them that the Release must be signed as it is and there is no opportunity for negotiation or changing of terms. Should the participant refuse to sign the Release without the changes made, you must advise the participant that he or she will not be able to participate in the Activity unless the Release is signed in the form in which it appears. If you get a Release back from someone on which changes have been made, you must have that person sign an unchanged Release and advise him or her that unless he or she agrees to the terms as set out in the Release, he or she will not be able to participate in the Activity.

4. You must understand the Release yourself. Read it very carefully and make sure that you understand its terms. If you do not understand any of its terms, or don't feel that you are



capable of explaining it to someone else, please contact Bruce Keith, Executive Director of The Alpine Club of Canada, who will provide you with an explanation to address your concerns.

5. Should someone ask you to tell them what the document says, be sure to emphasize that they are required to read it and understand it before signing, and before they will be able to participate in the Activity. You can tell them that it is a document which protects The Alpine Club of Canada from lawsuits in the event that a participant is injured or killed or has any of his property or personal belongings damaged or lost. The Release also protects The Alpine Club of Canada from liability for not only natural hazards but for the negligence of any of the other participants. You should also tell them that the document includes a clause where each participant agrees that, should evacuation or rescue become necessary, each participant agrees to pay the cost of that evacuation or rescue.

6. The witness to the participants' signature must be a non-family member. You can witness the person's signature or one of the other participants can witness the signature. The preferred approach, if possible, is to have the participant's signature witnessed by an Alpine Club member, volunteer or employee. Each witness should ask the participant if he/she has read and understood the Waiver, which is critical to its legal validity.

7. It is also of great importance that a participant reading the Release is not to be rushed through it and not feel that he or she has not had an ample opportunity to read it and understand its terms. The Releases should be provided to each participant well in advance of the Activity and they should have had an opportunity to read it before coming. If the participant has not signed the Release on the day of the Activity, you must ask the participant to sit down and take time to read and understand the document before it is signed. If this means a delay of a few minutes in start time, that can and must be accommodated.

8. If an individual refuses to sign the Release, you must advise them that he or she will not be able to participate in the Activity.

9. The Release is available in the following languages: English and French. The person should be provided with a Release that is written in the language that he or she is most comfortable with.

10. For "repeat" activities (eg. weekly or monthly sessions at the same climbing wall), participants need only sign the Release once per year. For all other activities, a separate Release must be signed prior to each activity.

11. Assuming that an accident does not occur, signed Releases must be retained for a period of five years, after which time they can be destroyed.

In the event of an Accident:

The trip leader or other designated individual must contact Bruce Keith, the Executive Director, as soon as possible regarding the accident.



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An accident report must be prepared as soon as possible and provided to the National Office. Do NOT talk to the media about the accident. Any questions from the media are to be referred to Bruce Keith, Executive Director.

The accident report, together with a copy of the signed Releases of all persons involved in the accident (victims and anyone who might be alleged to have caused the accident), must be forwarded to Bruce Keith, Executive Director, as soon as possible.

No one else, including the victim(s), should be given a copy of the accident report or Release(s).

Subsequently, a search should be conducted through all retained Releases to identify and extract any previous Releases signed by those involved in the reported accident. A copy of the previous Releases are to be forwarded to Bruce Keith, Executive Director, as soon as possible.

For legal reasons, all originals and copies of Releases and previous Releases, together with the accident report, must be kept for ten years from the date of the accident.



Appendix 6
Leave No Trace and Wilderness Code of Ethics

For more information see the Environment and Access page on the ACC Montreal website at www.accmontreal.ca/environment.html and the Leave No Trace website at www.lnt.org.

The ACC Wilderness Code of Ethics:

Stewardship of resources and protection of the environment are both essential to preserve the quality of the experiences which we value so highly. As more people take advantage of outdoor recreation, the level of protection must increase or the experience will deteriorate.

All wilderness users have four obligations:

- **Manage Waste:** eliminate adding solid waste to the wilderness by carrying in less, and carrying out that which you carried in.
- **Tread Lightly:** eliminate all visible signs of passage, and avoid contact with wildlife.
- **Natural and Cultural Resources:** treat protected areas, private property, other cultures and other users with respect.
- **Education/Advocacy:** educate yourself, volunteer your time, and ensure that all who will listen hear what you value in the wilderness.

Enjoy yourself in the wilderness, but protect it for the enjoyment of all, and for its own sake!



The Leave No Trace Principles:

● **Plan Ahead and Prepare**

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.
Repackage food to minimize waste.
Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

● **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
In popular areas: Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
In pristine areas: Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

● **Dispose of Waste Properly**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap.
Scatter strained dishwater.

● **Leave What You Find**

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

● **Minimize Campfire Impacts**

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

● **Respect Wildlife**

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.



- **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.

Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.

Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.